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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

On Marriages - We and Our Role Models

You must have had several opportunities to participate in marriage ceremonies in your family, locality or friend circle. Have you ever thought that, what you witness in these marriage, should be way of holding marriage ceremony of a Muslim boy or girl? The beloved Messenger of Allah (S) who, we believe, owned the honour and lordship in both the worlds, was not unmarried but, in fact the noble husband of many virtuous ladies; and except the one, all other marriages were solemnised only after he was conferred Prophethood. But, did such a pomp and show, lengthy succession of customs or any kind of reveling, which even an ordinary person of us considers necessary for the furtherance of his relations, take place in any of the weddings that he held? Or, God forbid, you harbour the belief of being loftier in honour and dignity than him?

Apart from the blessed personality of the Messenger of Allah (S), the other great figures whom we Muslims honour and name with respect and consider following their way the source of our salvation, were all married. All the four caliphs of the Messenger of Allah (S), Hadhrat Abu Bakr Siddiq, Hadhrat Umar Farooq, Hdhrrat Uthman Ghani, Hadhrat Ali Murtaza, his wife Fatima, their beloved sons Hasan and Husain and other daughters, all of them were married. Was the marriage of any of them held according to the customs and procedures that we have obligated on ourselves? Are we, God forbid, nobler or more

honourable than these towering personalities?

Did the series of customs prolong for months together in their marriages? Were the feasts at the time of their Nikaah also held with pomp and show as that of ours? Was it their practice to invite hundreds of guests from distant places by sending colourful and glossy invitation cards? Did these blessed souls also look at the invitational gifts a forced obligation on themselves? Didn't their marriage take place without traditional customs and display of gadgetry? On the occasion of such functions did a crowd of singers also make their noticeable presence? Was the Mahr of Sayyida Aisha and Sayyida Fatima of such proportion as of today?

Leaving aside the question of extravagance, can you find these customs of any advantage? To meet these expenses, considerable difficulties are assumed, countless mandatory tasks wasted, unjustified loans taken, property and assets put on stake, interest-based documents framed thus inviting grave disobedience and wrath of Allah. Irrespective of all these damages and misdeeds neither relatives are pleased nor friends satisfied. One points out faults in food and disapproves clothes and jewellery; and many other censure disarrangements. Not only wealth is lost but a complete share of neighbours' ridicule is also earned. Will such marriages progress and prove a cause of blessings?

أبرك الزواج أيسره معونة

“The most blessed nikah is the one with the least expenses.”

(Baihaqi)

Question Answer

Question.

I am continuously being afflicted by calamities and difficulties. I also have much debts to pay. Is there any cure for this? What should one recite when one is continuously afflicted with problems and difficulties? I have everything I could want. None of my duas have been accepted and it seems as if none of my actions have also been accepted. I am still faced with problems upon problems.

Answer.

The remedy for calamities is the following:

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

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

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

Question.

My heart has become very hard. It just would not melt with the remembrance or the fear of Allah Ta`ala. Please advise as to how I should soften my heart.

Furthermore, with the grace of Allah Ta`ala, I have been blessed with the tawfeeq (ability) of quickly repenting from my sins. The problem is that to remain steadfast on tauba (and not repeat the sin) is among the most difficult things for me. Please help me to overcome these maladies.

Answer.

It is necessary to always keep in mind the reality of tauba. The reality of tauba is that one should sincerely regret having committed the sin, as well as firmly resolve to refrain from the sin. The resolve should be such that even if you are thrown into the fire, you will not commit that sin again. One should also constantly make dua to Allah Ta`ala to grant one istiqamat (steadfastness) on one's tauba. If any rights (of people) have not been discharged, make an effort to fulfil the same. In this way one will Insha-Allah be blessed with istiqamat.

Question.

My mother is always very upset with me. I feel that she has enmity for me. Therefore, I have severed all relations with her. I have done the same with my brothers. Please guide me as to what I should do.

Answer.

It is essential and absolutely necessary to respect one's mother. To stop talking to her is a means of severe deprivation. Like-

wise, to cut off ties from your brothers is extremely detestable.

You are sure to have come across the following narration: "Join family ties with the one who cuts off ties from you, forgive the one who has oppressed you and be kind to the one who has harmed you." Therefore, never consider the ill-treatment of others towards you. Instead consider how you should be responding to their ill-treatment (in the light of the Hadith above). In this you will find peace and comfort.

A couplet says: "To return evil with evil is very easy; if you are a courageous person then be kind to those who have been ill-mannered towards you."

Question.

. . . I have acquired an extremely evil habit of backbiting. I also quickly start thinking ill of others. Kindly help me to overcome this malady.

Answer.

A person generally indulges in backbiting others and thinks ill of them because he regards them as an opposition. However, in the process he transfers all his good deeds to the one who he thought ill of or who he had made gheebat of. Consider what utter foolishness this is? The one whom one is angry with, one transfers one's good deeds to the very person by backbiting him. Does one give such a person (whom one is annoyed with) one's wealth and material belongings? Never. Then how is one suddenly prepared to give away one's good deeds to him on the day of Qiyamah and become destitute? Ponder over this deeply and repeatedly until it firmly settles into the recesses of the heart. May Allah Ta'ala grant you and I the ability to practice.

Question.

I hope you are well. My father has

joined a 'mentor' who has corrupted beliefs, does not perform salaah, watches T.V. and is involved in other evils. As a result of associating with this person my father is also adopting the same evil ways. In the hope of trying to convince him of the severity of his error, I took my father to Moulana *** so that he may speak to him and remove his misconceptions. Instead of understanding and accepting what was told to him, my father was very enraged upon having being taken to Moulana. He has now even threatened to throw me out of the house. Please make dua for him that Allah Ta'ala should guide him to the correct path. Kindly also advise me as to what should be done to bring him back.

Answer.

It is my heartfelt dua that Allah Ta'ala should guide your father to the straight path and save him from going astray.

Nevertheless, the real remedy was that you should have sent your father for a chillah (40 days in jamaat). The question would be that how would this be possible, since he would not accept to go. The simple procedure is that Moulana should occasionally come to your house to visit you. At the same time he should meet with your father as well. Nothing should be discussed with regard to your father's activities. Moulana should also sometimes invite you together with your father to come to his home. This should continue for some time. When your father becomes very comfortable with Moulana and Moulana's respect has settled in his heart, the books of our Akaabir should be given to him to read. Thereafter, take him to the weekly ijtimaa. (Eventually he will be willing to go for the chillah).

May Allah Ta'ala open the way forward for him. Also occasionally recite Surah Inshiraah (Alam nashrah) and blow over him.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Sura Baqarah—Verse 234-239

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ
بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۝ ٢٣٤

Those among you who pass away and leave wives behind, their wives keep themselves waiting for four months and ten days¹²⁸. So, when they have reached (the end of) their waiting period, there is no sin on you in what they do for themselves in recognized manner. Allah is All-Aware of what you do.

[2:234]

128. This is the period of 'iddah prescribed for widows. . They are not allowed to marry someone else during 'iddah, nor are men allowed to make a formal proposal (of marriage) to them in this period. However, the verse allows for men to give them an indirect hint that they are interested in marrying her after 'iddah, but it should not be a formal proposal. This rule is elaborated in the verse.

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ
النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ
سَتَدْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُؤَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ
تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۗ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ
حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي
أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ
There is no sin on you if you hint as a pro-

posal to the women, or conceal it in your hearts. Allah knows that you will make mention of them. But do not make a promise to them secretly, except that you speak in a recognized manner. Nor resolve upon a contract of marriage until the prescribed time is reached. Be assured that Allah knows what is in your hearts. So, fear Him and be assured that Allah is most Forgiving, Forbearing. [2:235]

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمْ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ
أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۗ وَ مَتَّعُوهُنَّ ۗ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ
قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدْرُهُ ۗ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝ ٢٣٦

There is no liability (of dower) on you if you divorce women when you have not yet touched them, nor fixed for them an amount. So, give them mut'ah (a gift),¹²⁹ a rich man according to his means and a poor one according to his means – a benefit in the recognized manner, an obligation on the virtuous. [2:236]

129. In this particular case, no dower is to be paid to the wife. However, it is obligatory on the husband to give her a gift. The nature and the value of the gift is not determined by the Qur'an. Instead, it has been left to the husband to choose it according to his financial status. But it should not be less than one set of full dress, as ruled by Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) and accepted by most jurists. (Qurtubi). This gift is compulsory if the wife is divorced before having privacy with her, when no

dower was fixed at the time of marriage. But in all cases where payment of dower is necessary, an additional gift is also commendable, though not obligatory.

وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنَصَفْ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ ۗ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى ۗ وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝٣٤

If you divorce them before you have touched them, while you have already fixed for them an amount (of dower), then there is one half of what you have fixed, unless they (the women) forgive, or forgives the one in whose hand lies the marriage tie¹³⁰, and it is closer to Taqwā (righteousness) that you forgive, and do not forget to be graceful to one another. Surely, Allah is watchful of what you do. [2:237]

130. When a dower was fixed at the time of marriage, and the husband divorced the wife before having privacy with her, half of the stipulated dower is still the obligation of the husband unless the wife forgives it with her free will. If the husband had already paid the full dower to her, he is though entitled, in this particular case, to claim half of it back, yet he can forgo his right though entitled, in this particular case, to claim half of it back, yet he can forgo his right by not claiming any amount. The verse says that it is closed to righteousness and preferable that the husband forgoes his right. The words, 'the one in

whose hand lies the marriage tie' refer to the husband.

حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ۝٣٨

Take due care of all the prayers, and the middle prayer, and stand before Allah in total devotion¹³¹. [2:238]

131. 'The middle prayer' is Asr prayer. Being at a time when people are normally busy in wrapping up their business, it is vulnerable to neglect. Therefore taking care of this prayer is emphasized with special force. 'Standing in total devotion' requires that no other act is done during prayer. According to ahadith, this verse prohibits talking to one another in the state of Salah (prayer).

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۖ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَدِّكُمْ ۗ اللَّهُ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَالَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ۝٣٩

But if you are in fear, then (pray) on foot or riding¹³². But when you are in peace, recite Allah's name¹³³ as He has taught you what you did not know. [2:239]

132. 'Fear' in this verse refers to the state of war. If one cannot perform Salah in this state properly, he can perform it while standing on earth or while riding an animal or a vehicle by making gestures for Ruku (bowing) and Sajdah (prostration).

133. 'Reciting Allah's name' in this context means to perform prayer. The sense is that the concession of performing prayer when riding or standing on foot is restricted to the state of war. Once one is in peace, he must perform prayer in its normal way.

TWO SPECIAL VERSES

Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "Indeed Allah Ta`ala has concluded Surah Baqarah with two verses. I have been given these two from his treasure which is beneath the throne. Therefore learn them and teach them to your women for verily it is a (means) of mercy and nearness (to Allah Ta`ala) and a Du`aa (supplication)" [Daarimi].

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Knowledge

باب خُرُوجِ النِّسَاءِ إِلَى الْبِرَازِ

Chapter 13 : The going out of women for answering the call of nature.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Islam has given great respect to women. It cuts the roots of all things which can lead to molestation or harassment of women. For this purpose, Islam wants the women to remain in veil. Now the question is whether the women should go out of their homes for answering the call of nature if they don't have the toilet facilities at home. Imam Bukhari here says that it is permissible for women to do so.

Hadith No. 144

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عُقَيْلٌ عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ أَسْمَةَ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ قَدْ أُذِنَ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ فِي حَاجَتِكُنَّ . قَالَ هِشَامٌ يَعْنِي الْبِرَازَ .

حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى بْنُ بُكَيْرٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا اللَّيْثُ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي عُقَيْلٌ عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ عَنْ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّ أَسْمَةَ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ قَدْ أُذِنَ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ فِي حَاجَتِكُنَّ . قَالَ هِشَامٌ يَعْنِي الْبِرَازَ .

Narrated Aisha (RA)

The wives of the Prophet used to go to Al-Manasi, a vast open place (near Baqia at Madina) to answer the call of nature at night. Umar used to say to the Prophet "Let your wives be veiled," but Allah's Apostle did not do so. One night Sauda bint Zam'a the wife of

the Prophet went out at 'Isha' time and she was a tall lady. Umar addressed her and said, "I have recognized you, O Sauda." He said so, as he desired eagerly that the verses of Al-Hijab (the observing of veils by the Muslim women) may be revealed. So Allah revealed the verses of "Al-Hijab" (A complete body cover excluding the eyes).

Hadith No. 145

حَدَّثَنَا زَكَرِيَّا قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو أُسَامَةَ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ عُرْوَةَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ عَائِشَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ قَدْ أُذِنَ أَنْ تَخْرُجْنَ فِي حَاجَتِكُنَّ . قَالَ هِشَامٌ يَعْنِي الْبِرَازَ .

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

The Prophet said to his wives, "You are allowed to go out to answer the call of nature. "

Comments

During the days of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), people were not having toilet facilities inside their homes. They used to go out in open spaces to attend the call of nature. In Madina, there was a separate open place specially earmarked for women for this purpose. The women used to adjust their dietary habits in such a way that they needed to attend the call of nature only during nights and that too under veil. Hadhrat Umar (RA) did not like this particularly for Azwaj-i-Muhahhiraat (wives of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)), so he used to request Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to instruct his wives not to come out of their homes. But, since Rasulallah

(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to do everything under the Divine command (Wahy), so only to wait for the Wahy he always remained silent whenever Hadhrat Umar (RA) raised this issue. One day one of the wives of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), namely Hadhrat Sawdah bint Zama' went out at night to answer the call of nature. Though she was under veil but due to her taller height, Hadhrat Umar (RA) recognized her and he shouted at her saying that he had recognized her. By this he wanted to tell her that her veil was not enough to hide her and secondly he wanted that Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) should consider his request that these women should not be allowed to go out like this. Hadhrat Sawdah bint Zama' turned back and told the whole episode to Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and at that very time Allah Ta'ala revealed the verses of veil to Rasulallah.

Hadhrat Umar (RA) used to say that Allah Ta'ala revealed the verses of Hijaab as per his desire.

Some clarifications

It is narrated in another narration that the verses of Hijaab were revealed in relation to the incident of Walimah (the marriage party hosted on the second day of marriage) of Hadhrat Zainab bint Jahash. When the marriage ceremony of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) with Zainab bint Jahash (RA) took place, Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) invited people for Walimah. People kept on coming to the house of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and indulged in gossiping after finishing the meals and stayed for longer time than needed. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) felt uncomfortable by this; he wanted the people to leave so that he could carry on his personal work but he felt shy in telling them to leave. It was at that time the verses of Hijaab were revealed to Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa-

sallam). In the Hadith of this chapter, it is mentioned that these verses were revealed in relation to Hadhrat Sawdah bint Zama'. The scholars of Hadith have answered this query by saying that actually this verse has been revealed twice, first in relation to Walimah of Zainab bint Jahash (RA) and second time in relation to Sawdah bint Zama'. Both times it was as per the desire of Hadhrat Umar (RA) (Eidha'ul Bukhari).

باب التبرُّزِ فِي الْبُيُوتِ

Chapter 14 : To defaecate in houses.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Toilets are considered dirty places and Shaitan has special predilection towards dirty places, so the question was whether constructing a toilet in the house was permissible or not. Imam Bukhari (RA) answers in affirmative i.e., it is permissible to have a toilet within the houses.

Hadith No. 146

حَدَّثَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ الْمُنْذِرِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا أَنَسُ بْنُ عِيَاضٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَبَّانَ عَنْ وَاسِعِ بْنِ حَبَّانَ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ ارْتَقَيْتُ فَوْقَ ظَهْرِ بَيْتِ حَفْصَةَ لِبَعْضِ حَاجَتِي فَرَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقْضِي حَاجَتَهُ مُسْتَدْبِرَ الْقِبْلَةَ مُسْتَقْبِلَ الشَّامِ .

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA)

I went up to the roof of Hafsa's house for some job and I saw Allah's Apostle answering the call of nature facing Sham (Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon regarded as one country) with his back towards the Qibla.

Hadith No. 147

حَدَّثَنَا يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى بْنِ حَبَّانَ أَنَّ عَمَّهُ وَاسِعَ بْنَ حَبَّانَ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ عُمَرَ أَخْبَرَهُ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَهَرْتُ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ عَلَى ظَهْرِ بَيْتِنَا ، فَرَأَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَاعِدًا عَلَى كَبْتَيْنِ مُسْتَقْبِلَ بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ .

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Advice

Three Gems

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA)

Hadhrat Moulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA) was an internationally renowned personality. He was an Aalim of a very high calibre and among the great thinkers of the time. Hence he was aptly titled as "Mufakkir-e-Islam". One of his outstanding features was that while he enjoyed the special attention of the great Ulama and Mashaayikh of the Indian sub-continent and was regarded among the giants of knowledge and piety, his expertise and position was likewise acknowledged by the Arab Ulama throughout the world.

Allah Ta`ala had blessed him with sincerity, in-depth knowledge, great piety, profound wisdom, and a deep, burning concern for the upliftment of the Ummah. Thus he engaged in serving the Deen of Islam and worked tirelessly in drawing the people to Allah Ta`ala. In this regard he also authored numerous books. Among other achievements he was a historian of note and produced several masterpieces that encapsulated the biographies of many luminaries of this Ummah. This great Aalim, thinker, spiritual mentor, author, and luminary of his time once summarized his life experience and the crux of his vast and in-depth knowledge of Muslim history in three priceless points. In fact this advice could be termed as his bequest. These gems of advice are worth more than all the gold, silver, and diamonds of the world. Adorning ourselves with these gems will give us true worth. It will Insha-Allah bring true peace and happiness in this world and unimaginable rewards and bounties in the Hereafter. These are the rubies and pearls that should be given to every child, and especially

every bride and groom, by their parents. May Allah Ta`ala make it a means of benefit for the Ummah and bless us all with the ability to practice upon them. (The advices that follow have been adapted from an article published in Tameer-e-Hayaat, Sept 2011)

Three Gems

Hadhrat Moulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (RA) once gathered all the children and people of his household. He then said to them: "I have called you all for a very special purpose. Alhamdulillah, I have undertaken a study of history. Therefore I am well aware of many great families in history - including families of Ulama and Ahlullah (pious personalities) - who lost the legacy of their great predecessors. Eventually irreligiousness crept into them and led to their destruction. Hence in the light of my study of history, I am mentioning to you three things which, if you act upon them, Insha-Allah you will continue to flourish and as a family you will be saved from destruction."

First Gem: Never be the Oppressor, rather be the Oppressed One

This is an extremely fundamental piece of advice and a foundational pillar for the existence of peaceful families and societies. It is, after all, among the most salient features of none other than Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam), that he never oppressed anyone, though he was oppressed by many. Instead he forgave those who oppressed him and never took revenge for his personal self.

The advice that Hadhrat Moulana (RA) gave was very much evident in his own life. He endured whatever difficulties came upon him but did not oppress anyone. This trait, among many others, was the direct result of the excellent nurturing of his mother. Describing the tarbiyat (nurturing) of his mother, Hadhrat Moulana (RA) explains: "From the time that I was a little child my mother instilled in me the quality to accept and acknowledge my mistake. It was also impressed upon me to immediately apologize and seek the pardon of seniors or juniors if I have erred. It was due to this training that I was never prepared to take on a fight. If ever I exceeded the limits, especially with regard to any family person, servant, or the child of any servant, she would immediately make me apologize and seek forgiveness."

Hadhrat Moulana (RA) further elaborated by relating the incident of his childhood when he once hit the child of the maid. As soon as his mother was informed, she immediately called Moulana and the child whom he had hit. She then instructed the child: "You hit Ali too. Hit him now, in front of me." The poor child was overawed and did not have the courage to hit Moulana. His mother then took the hand of the maid's child and hit Moulana with it. She then instructed Moulana to also seek the child's forgiveness. After this incident in his childhood, he never deliberately caused any inconvenience to anyone.

It was such exemplary training that instilled in Hadhrat Moulana (RA) this great quality – that if he erred in any matter he would unhesitatingly seek the pardon of the next person. Thus the first lesson was: "Never be the Oppressor, rather be the Oppressed One."

Second Gem: Refrain from Forbidden Wealth, Restrain Yourself from even Doubtful Wealth

Hadhrat Moulana (RA) was sharing

with his family the summary of his study of history and explaining the factors which are the root cause of the rise and fall of families and communities. The lesson he was imparting was nevertheless ingrained in him from his childhood. This can be gauged from the following incident. Hadhrat Moulana (RA) explains: "When I was a little child, we had a maid who took care of me as well. She used to seat me in her lap and feed me. One day during an errand she took me along. On the way she passed by a house where some food was being served which was actually an offering made on the third day after the passing away of some person. Being a very poor woman she sat there to partake of the food. I was a little child and hence I also extended my hand to partake of the meal. She immediately held back my hand saying: "You do not eat this. This is not for you." (The food of offerings on graves and in the name of saints, etc., is impermissible.)

Subhanallah! This was the calibre of even the maid of that time. This reaction is also evidence of the degree of caution that was generally exercised with regard to halaal and haraam by every person in his family, that even the maid was so conscious of it. Despite Hadhrat Moulana (RA) only being a child at that time, she still protected him from the doubtful food. Nowadays, doubtful food is consumed without any concern while an effort is even made to make the unlawful into lawful!!!

When the type of caution and restraint with regard to halaal described above was the norm, righteousness and piety prevailed in the society. The direct link between righteousness and pure sustenance is understood clearly from the Qur'aan, where Allah Ta'ala says: "O Messengers, eat from the pure sustenance and perform righteous actions." The consumption of doubtful or haraam wealth will have the opposite effect. History also bears testimony, as Hadhrat

Moulana explained that, the consumption of doubtful and haraam was a major contributing factor to the destruction of great families.

Third Gem: Treat Your Relatives Well even though they Behave Indifferently, however Painful it may be, always be Good to them.

Hadhrat Moulana (RA) lived by this rule - to always treat one's relatives well even though they are indifferent to one. On many occasions a relative came and spoke harshly to Hadhrat Moulana (RA). The general response in such situations was that before the person had left Hadhrat Moulana (RA) would have given him some mithai (sweetmeats) to eat. Some people actually joked about it, that if anyone wanted to eat some mithai, he should say some harsh words to Hadhrat Moulana. On one occasion a relative spoke harshly to him. Hadhrat Moulana (RA) placed a hundred rupees in an envelope and together with one set of clothing presented it to the person who spoke harshly to him.

Hadhrat Moulana's practice was in conformity to the Sunnah. In fact, this was the practice of all the lovers of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam). Imaam Abu Hanifah (RA) was one such Aashiq (true lover of Nabi (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam)). He had a neighbour who used to regularly abuse him verbally. The day the neighbour had abused him, Imaam Sahib (RA) would send him a gift.

After many days had passed in this manner, and after having received many gifts from Imaam Sahib (RA), the neighbour felt that the Imaam had great affection for him. He therefore stopped his abuse. However, he noticed that the gifts had also stopped coming. Hence he came to Imaam Sahib (RA) and asked: "What type of recompense is this? As long as I abused you, you sent me gifts. When I stopped abusing you, you stopped sending me gifts!" Imaam Abu Hanifah (RA) replied: "Brother, as long as you abused me, I made sabr (exercised patience). Thus, you were actually building my paradise for me (by giving me the occasion of making sabr and thereby enabling me to attain great rewards). Therefore in return I was giving you some worldly benefit. When you stopped building my paradise, I stopped your worldly benefit!"

Allahu Akbar! Look at their mindset. If only we develop the same mindset, we will also enjoy peace within ourselves and spread peace and happiness around us as well.

All the three advices mentioned by Hadhrat Moulana (RA) have been greatly emphasized in the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Those who lived by it prospered and flourished. Those who abandoned it deprived themselves and eventually fell into destruction.

It is therefore the duty of every Muslim to make his utmost effort to live by these great lessons and to also pass it on to others.

Etiquettes of Walking

Jabir (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to lag behind while travelling and urge the weak to walk quickly. He used to take up someone behind him and make supplication for him. [Abu Dawud].

Commentary: This Hadith tells us that the leader of a group (or Amir) should, during a journey, remain in the rear instead of the vanguard so that he may prop up the weak people and provide succour to the resourceless ones. Furthermore, he is presumed to pray for such people as the blessing of his prayer is likely to make up their deficiencies.

Sacrifice

The Making of a Muslim

"Do people imagine that they will be left at ease because they say 'We have faith!' and will not be tested? But certainly We tested those who were before them.." [29:2-3]

"Whoever is not concerned with the problems of Muslims is not one of us." [Hadith]

We read these and similar verses of the Quran, Hadith, and sayings of our leaders, yet often forget the implications of the powerful message contained in these statements: the need to sacrifice our wealth, time, pleasures, desires, comfort, and if need be, our life for Islam. Even though the spirit of sacrifice is an inherent part of each of Islam's fundamental pillars, it is perhaps best realized and exemplified in the timeless journey of Hajj, the pilgrimage to the Sacred House in Makkah. To understand what true sacrifice is, it would be enough for us to ponder over the selfless response of Prophet Ibrahim when he heard the extraordinary call of Allah - to willingly give up his greatest love and hope for the future, his son, for His sake.

Just Imagine

Just imagine where we would be today without the heroic efforts, sacrifices, and patience of Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and his devoted Companions in building the vibrant Islamic society of Madinah? What would the Muslim community in the West be like without the outstanding struggles of our civil-rights activists, Islamic leaders, social workers and sincere scholars who laid the foundations of our existence here?

What allowed them to accomplish such monumental feats was their conviction

that no matter how great the task, how steep the obstacles, how scarce their resources, and how few the people to assist them in their cause, they have to do the work! It was this burning desire to please Allah that compelled them to believe: "If I don't do the work today and if I do not take the initiative, who else will?" To them Islam was a responsibility, a passion, and indeed the totality of life! But how hesitatingly we walk in their footsteps today. For sure, each and every one of us has something extraordinary and positive to offer to the cause of peace and justice today!

It Ain't No Piece of Cake

Nobody says Islam is easy. Nothing of any value ever is. Indeed it is not easy to wake up for Fajr prayer on a cold winter morning. It may not be convenient to cook food for your ill neighbour. Nobody thinks that going to Islamic classes every day is undemanding, when everyone around you is partying. Nor is volunteering at an Islamic conference or a local food bank effortless. It may not be pleasant to offer others your shoulder to cry upon when their personal or family life is in crisis. Sure, resisting the peer pressure at school, university, or work place is extremely challenging. And we know it requires real faith and guts to speak out against oppression, racism, and tyranny.

Therefore, Islamic life is a life of sacrifice par excellence. It entails a struggle that must be ceaselessly waged, to actualize Is-

lam, inwardly and outwardly, to make it a living reality.

Sacrifice: A Struggle to Surrender

"There is no Islam without struggle, and there is no struggle nobler than sharing Islam with those deprived of its beauty and blessings." [S.Qutb]

Sacrifice means giving up things which are valued or desired. Those things may be:

- (1) tangible, countable like our time, wealth or life, or
- (2) intangible, immeasurable like our feelings, attitudes, opinions or aspirations. They are given up for the sake of something that is more worthy or more urgent to us (Quran 6:162). Without sacrifice, our lives would be devoid of harmony and cooperation, full of conflict, a prey to self-centeredness and immediate gratification of desires.

Islam: It's Shahadah at Work

"We are perhaps living in times when living for Islam is more difficult than dying for it." [Abdul Malik Mujahid]

Why must Islam be so emphatically linked with the idea of struggle? Cannot a person be a good Muslim without involving himself or herself in a struggle requiring sacrifices? The answer is: No. And for very obvious reasons. Islam is not merely the confession of a faith which is made once in a lifetime. It requires a radical reorientation of life and thought.

The confession is not merely verbal; it is an act of witnessing (Shahadah) which must transform our life into a living testimony of faith. You enter Islam by saying Shahadah (bearing witness). But you can live in Islam only by constantly doing Shahadah (Quran 2:143, 22:28). This will bring you in ceaseless confrontation with false gods inside you and outside you. Every act of sacrifice nourishes your Iman; for it transforms a ver-

bal confession into a living reality. Therefore, it is through sacrifice that you can truly learn to love Allah, and to live and die for Him!

Sacrifice: Your Path To Becoming Muslim

Being Muslim requires becoming Muslim. Becoming Muslim, after the seed of Iman (faith) has been sown in the heart, is a two-fold process:

- (1) to invite one's own self and
- (2) to call humanity, to live under the sovereignty of One God alone. Both are inextricably linked together, both are to be taken up simultaneously. As with reforming oneself, inviting humanity too is not a passive call, to be practised for a certain number of days or to be done only in speeches or certain occasions. It is an active, dynamic process; a movement. And it is at the collective level that struggle, and hence serious sacrifices, are required.

Allah's Best Gift

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your way of life." [5:3]

Indeed, today we take Islam for granted. Do we really treasure Islam as a gift? Islam is not just one gift among many; it is the choicest gift of God! Out of all the countless bounties of Allah, none can be greater than His gift of guidance and knowledge to us. How blessed and comforted we are to have certainty of the true meaning and purpose of our mundane life, while we see so many around us in our own communities, struggling with hopelessness, depression, and hollowness in their lives!

Not much comes to us in life without endeavour. We gain only what we earn by our strivings. The soil is there, the water is there, the seed is there; but the soil will not turn seeds into crops unless we dig it, plough it, sow the seeds, water the plants, protect them and harvest the crop. Without sweat

and toil, the gifts of God all around us will not yield their full treasures to us.

Collective Struggle: Walking & Working Together

"You are a corner among the many corners of Islam, so don't let Islam be attacked from your side!" [Hadith]

It is obvious that while walking on your personal way to God, you will need to attain greater and greater heights of sacrifice and self-discipline to succeed in seeking His pleasure. But once you decide to come together with others to struggle, you stand in greater need of making sacrifices. Without them, neither your organized collective struggle can take a durable shape, nor can you aspire to be successful in your mission. "God loves those who, fighting in His way, join ranks as if they are a wall of molten lead", says the Quran (61:4). What a beautiful and meaningful parable! Strong and solid, fused and welded, without cracks or divisions. That is how members of a Muslim community, joined together in bonds of love, marching to the beat of the 'drums of hope and faith', strive to invite people to do good and eliminate evil.

Building Our Communities Brick By Brick

How is a wall built? How do the individual blocks 'join ranks' to turn into a solid and impregnable wall? As a wall is composed of many building blocks, so must our communities be built upon the strengths of individuals like yourself. As each brick supports and builds upon others, so must Muslims cement their bonds, and gain in height and strength at each step. When the wall is seen from a distance, the blocks may look indistinguishable due to their uniformity, but like human beings, each retains its inner individuality. No one is required to sacrifice this, as indeed it is the diversity of strengths that is the beauty of an Islamic community.

But if each block is unwilling to carry the burden of others above it or build upon those below it, it is impossible to construct a strong wall. Similarly, the most valuable bricks will have to go into the foundations below ground, never to be noticed or appreciated by anyone. Yet they are bearers of the greatest load, and without their sacrifice the building can not even begin to rise. Indeed many blocks may have to be broken in the process!

Similarly, without the help of the individuals in the Muslim community, through their unique and creative skills, their time for counselling of those in need, their activism and financial contributions, Islam cannot be expected to survive, let alone spread to the hearts of individuals of other communities. Every single one of us has something exceptional to offer to Islam and our communities, no matter how little it may seem, and whether we recognize it or not. Ask yourself today: "What little can I do to make a difference in the life of others?", "What is so unique about me, my skills, and my personality that could be of benefit to Islam?", "When was the last time I did some good action that truly required sacrifice on my part, which may be known to Allah alone?", "What have I done to thank Allah for all His blessings, the greatest of which is the guidance of Islam?"

Let us turn to Allah to help us lest our human frailties overwhelm us when sacrifices are demanded of us, and to seek His forgiveness for all our shortcomings and failures:

"Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which You did lay on those before us; Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Release us from our sins, grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us." [Quran 2:286]

Character

Cleaning House

By S. Abdullah

I remember some years back when a relative announced that he was in the process of "cleaning house." No, he wasn't reorganizing his home or getting ready to move to another one—rather, he was doing a major life-assessment and confronting all the things that had made him unhappy throughout the years. In order to do that, he had to shift through the baggage he had been carrying from his childhood, some of it quite unpleasant, and work on unloading each and every burden, piece by piece.

At some point most of us find it necessary to scrutinize our own lives in a similar manner to see if the behaviors, attitudes and habits we are carrying into our adult lives are a true reflection of what we believe inside our hearts and what we aspire to be in the future — or if they are simply carry-overs from our younger days. In this manner, "cleaning house" can represent an important step in one's transition from youth to adulthood as we learn to deal with the world on mature terms, broadening our outlook and putting the past in its proper perspective.

Failure to clean house periodically can have bad consequences as we clutter our minds with outdated ideas, resentment towards people who may have wronged us, and attitudes that address old situations rather than our present circumstances. So often, we see the results of a cluttered house in our family relationships and in the way we approach the world as we trip over the baggage we've left unattended beyond its time.

Where to begin

Cleaning your inner house may seem like an overwhelming task, especially if you have let a number of issues build up over the years. But think about how you would clean

and organize a real home or office. Most likely, you would divide the chore into parts and concentrate on just one area at a time. Let's say you wanted to start with an untidy attic, for example. You would probably need to get some big boxes — one for garbage, one for items to give to charity, one for things that should be fixed, etc. By placing each item in the attic into its proper category, you will have already identified part of its eventual solution.

We can approach our personal clutter in much the same manner. Think about the areas in your life that may need some work. It may help to make a list in a special notebook for self-improvement, where you specify special categories for things like bad habits, relationships, problems at work and others. Let's take a look at a sample (fictional) notebook:

Bad Habits: procrastination, oversleeping, interrupting others when they speak;

Relationships: don't know my neighbors, haven't called my aunt for two years, strained relations with parents;

Problems at Work: want to wear hijab but afraid of boss's reaction;

Unpleasant Memories: being bullied in school, parents getting divorced;

Things I want to Change: difficult to

trust others, tendency to underachieve, critical of other people.

By making lists like these, you can see for yourself some of the patterns that are affecting you in life. It is no surprise, for example, that someone who had been bullied in school would have trouble trusting others or find it hard to take a major step like wearing hijab to work, something that might trigger an adult version of bullying by co-workers. Making these connections can help you change things around for the better and find ways of removing the stumbling blocks that might be hindering your progress.

Intention

Abdullah, like so many others, was tired of the way his life was going. A successful university student in his early 20s, he was depressed by his lack of achievement outside the academic world especially regarding his relationship with Allah, which he perceived as virtually non-existent. Yearning to start anew, he developed a plan for his personal revival — beginning with the tiniest habits and character traits he disliked in himself and striving to change them one at a time - while simultaneously working on the bigger things such as salah, gaining knowledge of Islam, and adopting Islamic habits as part of his normal routine. After just a short while, he started to feel the immense power of his new approach to life and finally caught a glimpse of his potential to be a positive force in the Muslim Ummah. For Abdullah, the important factor in his plan has been to make each and every change for the sake of Allah, asking Him, the Almighty, to guide him continuously to the Straight Path and make it possible for him to live up to his role as a servant of God.

Indeed, doing things for the sake of Allah can make all the difference in how we deal with our personal struggles. Picture, for example, two women having loads of house-

work to take care of each day. One feels resentful and complains endlessly about her situation, while the other feels great pleasure in keeping a clean home for her family and believes that she is pleasing Allah by managing the household so efficiently. It's not hard to imagine the difference in how each views her burden. Even if the second one needs more help from her husband or children, chances are that she will know how to influence them more effectively and get the help she needs without a fight.

Going back to the sample list above, it is easy to see that it becomes much easier to do things when we relate them to our faith. So, you didn't call your aunt for two years because she is a bit hostile towards Islam and your lifestyle? By calling her and rekindling your relationship, you are actually taking a meaningful step towards showing her good Islamic manners and a concern for family ties. If she uses the opportunity to insult you, it might be a chance for you to work on having patience and developing the skills necessary to engage her in positive dialogue. No matter what, though, when you hang up the phone, you will at least know that you have tried your best to do something constructive, an important part of cleaning house effectively.

Gaining knowledge

we have seen from Abdullah's example, gaining Islamic knowledge has been one of the keys to his awakening. Whether or not you were raised as a Muslim, there is always something new to be learned and applied. Sometimes, it happens that our newfound knowledge is at odds with the way our parents raised us, or with the general culture around us. It takes courage to examine our long-held beliefs and attitudes and see if they are in harmony with Islamic principles. A lot of people, for example, practice various forms of racial or gender discrimination without even realizing it. By

being aware of such issues, we can do more to purify our hearts from such harmful concepts. Again, a notebook can help one keep track of such matters, especially if you use it to chart your progress, set new goals and write down the things that give you special cause to reflect.

Gems and heirlooms

One of the best things about cleaning a home that has been neglected for many years is the opportunity to find some special items that you may have forgotten about, like an old piece of jewelry from your grandma or the toys your father played with as a child. These are things you would be unlikely to throw away due to their sentimental value and the powerful images they evoke. If you are like most people, you have your own gems and heirlooms deep inside of yourself, which you should find, dust off and use in your journey towards self-renewal. These are your positive qualities like strong faith, inner strength, kindness, optimism, and so many others. By getting our homes in order, separating the assets from the liabilities, and putting the former to good use, we prepare ourselves to do better and more worthwhile things with our time.

Source: Al-Jum'ah Vol 16 Issue 10

Buddhist Killer Pardoned by Muslim Victim's Family

Relatives of a Muslim Sri Lankan worker murdered by his Buddhist colleague in Abu Dhabi told court they have decided to pardon the killer, prompting the judge to bring forward hearings for sentence.

An official from the Sri Lankan embassy in Abu Dhabi handed the pardon document from the victim's relatives to court on Tuesday, the semi official Arabic language daily Alittihad said.

"They just pardoned the Buddhist killer without demanding any diya (blood money) taking into consideration that the killer's family is poor," it said.

It said the pardon prompted the judge to bring forward hearings to February 27 to issue a sentence after they were scheduled for June.

Imagine if the Buddhist killer had been Muslim and the Muslim victim been Buddhist, who doubts Spencer would link the killing to Islam, relating it to jihad or some other convoluted made up theology that only exists in the feverish mind of Sheikh Spencer?*

Instead, Spencer chooses to focus on another story reported in the same article, about a man who murdered a European woman he was paying for sex. The man murdered her and then went to pray, which certainly is odd (and proves more about his lack of conscious than any link to religion), but the fact that Spencer would try to relate it to Islam is just plain sick yet not surprising.

For Spencer this is another opportunity to denigrate Muslims and Islam while also trying to link the killing to "honor killings" and "jihad."

Spencer writes in a post titled, Dubai: Muslim murders woman, then goes to mosque to pray,

We have seen this phenomenon in the past with some honor murderers and jihadists: they apparently believe that they have done something pleasing to Allah, and so are almost serene after the murders.

*(*Robert Bruce Spencer (born 1962) is an American author and blogger best known for Criticism of Islam)*

Islamophobiatoday.com

Belief

Revelation and its True Nature

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Since the Holy Quran was revealed to our beloved prophet Sayyiduna Muhammad al-Mustafa (upon him blessings and peace) by means of wahi (revelation), an understanding of some particulars about wahi is imperative at the very outset of delving into the study of the Quran and its exegesis.

The Need for Revelation

Every Muslim knows that Allah Almighty sent man into this world as a matter of testing him and that in return for his being obligated with certain duties the entire universe was placed at his service. For this reason, man, once he is in the world, must do two things:

Make the best use of this world and of things created in it.

While using this world to his advantage, keep the injunctions of Allah Almighty in sight and do nothing that goes against His will and pleasure.

For these two functions man needs knowledge. Therefore, unless he knows the reality of this world, the properties of different things, and the manner in which they can be put to use, he cannot use anything in this world to his advantage. Likewise, unless and until he knows the will of Allah Almighty as to what pleases Him and what displeases Him, it will be impossible for him to lead a life in line with the will of Allah Almighty.

Allah Almighty, along with the crea-

tion of man, created three things through which he could continue receiving knowledge of the above-mentioned matters of concern. These are:

1. The five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch.
2. Reason.
3. Revelation (wahi)

Consequently, man discovers many things through his senses, many others through reason, and the knowledge of things he cannot attain through these two sources are bestowed upon him through wahi.

The arrangement between these three sources of knowledge is such that each one has its limits and a particular sphere of activity beyond which it does not work. In natural sequence, the knowledge of things man collects through his senses cannot be deduced through bland reason. For instance, one knows by seeing a wall with one's eyes that its color is white. But, should one close their eyes and try to discover the color of the wall on the sole strength of their reason, it would be impossible. Similarly, the knowledge of things that comes through reason cannot be discovered by senses alone. For instance, one cannot discover who made the wall by simply seeing it with one's eyes or touching it with one's hands. Reason is needed to arrive at that conclusion.

In short, reason gives no guidance as far as the five senses work efficiently, and when the five senses become helpless reason

starts to function. But even the guidance given by reason is not unlimited. It too has its limits. There are things the knowledge of which can neither be acquired through senses nor through reason. For instance, to find out how that very wall can be used to please Allah Almighty and in what manner of its use will it displease Him, neither the senses nor reason can be of use here. In order to provide man the answer to such questions, the source that Allah Almighty prescribed is what is known as wahi (revelation). The method it follows is that Allah Almighty selects one of His servants, ordains him as His messenger, and then to him He reveals His Word. This Word is wahi.

It should thus be clear that wahi is the highest source of knowledge for man which offers him the answer to questions about life which cannot be solved by means of reason and the senses but which are nonetheless necessary to know. It should further be apparent that reason and perception alone are not sufficient to show man the way. It is rather all the more necessary, almost inevitable, that divine revelation be there for his guidance. Since wahi is needed where reason does not function, it is therefore not necessary that everything communicated through wahi be compulsively comprehended through reason.

On the contrary, as reason is of no help in ascertaining the color of some object since that is the job of the senses, so is the gracious transmission of knowledge of many religious beliefs the sole prerogative of wahi and not of reason. Furthermore, trusting reason alone for their comprehension is not sound or correct.

To begin with, it is totally senseless to discuss the issue of wahi with a person who, Allah forbid, does not accept the very existence of Allah. But, for a person who believes in the existence of Allah Almighty and has faith in His perfect power, it is not at all

difficult to understand that wahi is a rational need, that it is possible, and that it is real. If one has faith in the fact that the universe has been created by an absolutely powerful entity and that He is the One who has sent man down here to accomplish some particular mission, how then is it possible to imagine that He, after once having created man, would leave him off in total darkness without explaining to him why he came into the world, what his duties were, where he was destined to go, and how he could realize the purpose of his life? How could a person, sound in intellect, send one of his servants on a trip with a designated mission without ever telling him the purpose of the trip while he is leaving, nor explaining it to him later on through some message? When a man of ordinary reason cannot do such a thing, how then can it be imagined with respect to the most Holy Lord of the Universe under Whose ultimate wisdom the system of all the worlds is functioning? After all, how is it possible that the Being that created such a mind-boggling system composed of the moon, the sun, the sky, the earth, the stars and the planets, would remain unable to institute some arrangement of communication with His servants through which human beings could be given guidance about the purpose of their lives? If one has iman, or faith, in the ultimate wisdom of Allah Almighty then admitting that He did not forsake His servants in darkness and ignorance will become all the more necessary. Surely, He has instituted some regular system for their guidance. This regular system of guidance is known as wahi (revelation) and risalah (prophethood).

It is thus crystal clear that wahi is not only a religious belief but also a rational need the rejection of which amounts to a rejection of the ultimate wisdom of Allah Almighty.

The Modes of Descent

This sacred sequence of wahi

(revelation) and risalah (prophethood) came to an end with the last of the prophets, Muhammad al-Mustafa (upon him blessings and peace). Nevermore shall wahi descend upon any man nor is there any need for it. Wahi used to come to the Holy Prophet (Upon him blessings and peace) in several forms and modes. In a hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari, Sayyidah 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says that Sayyiduna Harith ibn Hisham (may Allah be pleased with him) once asked the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) as to how wahi came to him. The Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) replied that "there are times when I hear something like the chiming of bells and this mode of wahi is the hardest on me. After that, when this chime-sequence ends, that which has been said by the sound seems to have been committed to my memory. And then there are times when the angel appears before me in the shape of a man." (Sahih al-Bukhari 2:1)

As regards the likening of the sound of wahi to the sound of bells in the hadith cited above, Imam Muhi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi has provided two explanations. First, the sound of wahi is continuous like the sound of a bell which does not break off in between. Second, when a bell rings continuously it is generally difficult for the listener to determine the direction of its sound because its sound seems to be coming from all directions. And the Divine Word too carries with it the distinction that it has no one single direction. In fact, the sound gives the impression of being heard from all directions. A correct realization of this phenomenon is just not possible without auditory experience. However, for ease of comprehension the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) simply likened it to the sound of bells. (Fayd al-Bari 1:19,20)

With the descent of wahi in this mode, the Holy Prophet (Upon him blessings

and peace) came under very heavy strain. Sayyidah 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says towards the end of this very hadith that she had seen the coming of wahi to him during days of extreme winter. When the progression of wahi ceased, his blessed forehead would have already become dripping wet with sweat despite the chilly weather. In yet another narration, Sayyidah 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) relates: "When wahi came to him, his breath would seem to stop, his radiant face would change, turning pale like the branch of a date palm, the front teeth would shiver from cold, and he would perspire so much that its drops would roll down like pearls." (al-Itqan1:46)

On occasions, so much intensity would be generated in this state of wahi that the animal he would be riding at that time would sit down, wilting under his weight. Once, when he was resting his blessed head on the lap of Sayyiduna Zayd ibn Thabit (may Allah be pleased with him), wahi began to descend. This released so much weight upon Sayyiduna Zayd's thigh that it seemed like it would break. (Zad al-Ma'ad 1:18,19)

There were times when a low-volume sound of the revelation could be perceived by others. Sayyiduna 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) says: "When wahi came to him, a sound somewhat similar to the buzzing of honey-bees could be heard close to his luminous face. (Tabwib Musnad Ahmad 20:212)

Under the second mode of wahi an angel would come to him in some human form and deliver Allah's message. Generally, under such occasions Sayyiduna Jibra'il (upon him be peace) used to come to him in the form of Sayyiduna Dihyah al-Kalbi (may Allah be pleased with him). At other times, he would come in other forms. In any case, this mode of the revelation through Sayyiduna Jibra'il (upon him be peace) appearing in human form was the easiest on the Holy

Prophet (upon him blessings and peace). (al-Itqan 1:46)

The third mode of the coming of wahi was when Sayyiduna Jibra'il (upon him be peace) would appear in his original form without having taken the shape of a man. This, however, only occurred thrice in his entire lifetime. The first instance was when the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) himself wished to see Jibra'il in his real form and shape. The second time, it was during the Mi'raj (the Ascension to Heaven), and the third time it was at Ajyadd in Makkah during the very early days of prophethood. The first two occurrences stand proven authentically. The last incident, however, suffers from weak chains of authority and is therefore doubtful. (Fath al-Bari 1:18,19)

The fourth mode of revelation is distinguished by being a direct two-way conversation with Allah Almighty. This honor was bestowed upon the Holy Prophet only once, that is on the occasion of the Mi'raj while awake. Additionally, once in a dream it is reported that the Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) engaged in a conversation with Allah Almighty.

Under the fifth mode of wahi, Sayyiduna Jibra'il (upon him blessings and peace) would, without appearing physically in any form, allow some words of the divine message to fall into his heart. This is technically known as nafh fi 'l-ruh, or blowing into the heart. (Fath al-Bari 1:18,19)

[Taken from the introduction to Mufti Muhammad Shafi' al-'Uthmani's Ma'arif al-Qur'an.]

Provision for the Hereafter

Method to acquire the rank of martyrdom

The Person who remembers death 25 times a day, he will be, through the order of Allah, blessed with the death of a martyr. So recite the following prayer 25 times a everyday.

اللهم بارك لي في الموت وفي ما بعد الموت

O Allah! Grant me blessing in death (death of Iman) and after death i.e., success in the hereafter.

The Nourisher of both the worlds grants 124000 virtues to a person reciting the following due 100 times a day:

سبحان الله وبحمده

Purity belongs to Allah, All praise be to him.

History

How Heraclius Examined the Prophet

By: Thomas Cleary

The Prophet wrote to the Caesar of the Byzantine Empire, inviting him to Islam, sending a letter to him with Dihya al-Kalbi. The Prophet directed him to present the letter to the governor of Busra, who would forward it to Caesar.

When God had relieved him of the Persian armies, Caesar walked from Emesa [in central Syria] to Jerusalem, out of gratitude to God for having inured him to trial. So when the letter of the Prophet reached him, Caesar read it and said, "Look for someone from his people around here, so that I may ask about this Messenger of God."

Now, it happened that Abu Sufyan was then in Syria with some men from the Quraish tribe who had come on business during the truce that then existed between the Prophet and the disbelievers of the Quraish.

- Abu Sufyan later said, "The emissary of Caesar found us in a part of Syria, and he took me and my companions to Jerusalem. There we were brought to Caesar, who was sitting at his royal court, his crown on his head, around him the grandees of Byzantium."
- Now, Caesar said to his interpreter, "Ask them who among them is closest in kinship to this man who claims to be a prophet."
- Abu Sufyan [who was not a Muslim at the time] responded that he was nearest of them in kinship.
- Caesar asked, "And what is the relationship between you and him?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "He is a son of my paternal

uncle." Then Caesar said, "Bring him closer," and had Abu Sufyan's companions placed behind him, at his shoulders. Then he told his interpreter, "Tell his companions that I am going to question him about this man who claims to be a prophet; so if he tells a lie, immediately repudiate it as a lie."

Later Abu Sufyan admitted that he would have lied when asked about the Prophet, if not for the fact that he would have been shamed to have others spreading reports that he was a liar. So he told the truth.

Now, Caesar asked through his interpreter, "How is the lineage of this man among you?"

- Abu Sufyan replied, "He is of noble descent among us."
- Caesar asked, "And has any one of your people previously said what he has said?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "No."
- Caesar asked, "Had you found him a liar before he said what he has now said?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "No."
- Caesar asked, "Was any among his ancestors a king?"
- Abu Sufyan replied, "No."
- Caesar asked, "And do the highborn people listen to him, or the powerless among them?"
- Abu Sufyan answered, "Rather the powerless."
- Caesar asked, "And are they increasing or decreasing?"
- Abu Sufyan replied, "Increasing."

- Caesar asked, "And does anyone turn away discontent with his religion after having gone into it?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "No."
- Caesar asked, "Is he treacherous?"
- Abu Sufyan replied, "No, but we are in a truce with him now, and we fear he may betray us." Later on, Abu Sufyan admitted that this was the closest he was able to come to putting in a bad word against Muhammad.
- Caesar went on, "Then have you fought each other?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "Yes."
- Caesar asked, "And how did your wars turn out?"
- Abu Sufyan said, "Our contests have had alternating results; sometimes he wins over us, and other times we win over him."
- Caesar asked, "What does he enjoin upon you?"
- Abu Sufyan replied, "He enjoins us to worship God alone, not associating anything with the sole divinity. And he enjoins us not to worship the fetishes of our ancestors. He also enjoins us to pray, to give charity, and to be chaste; and to fulfill promises and discharge trusts."

When Abu Sufyan had said this, Caesar told his interpreter to say to him, "I asked you about his lineage among you, and you stated that he is of a sound lineage. And so were all prophets called forth from sound lineages of their people.

"Then I asked if anyone had said what he said before him, and you stated that none had. I would have said, if someone had said this before, that he was a man following something that had been said before him.

"And I asked you if you had found him a liar before he had said what he has said, and you stated that you had not. So I knew he would not lie about God if he did not lie about humans.

"And I asked you if any of his ances-

tors was a king, and you stated that none had been. I would have said, if any of his ancestors had been a king, that he was seeking the kingdom of his ancestors.

"And I asked you if the highborn people followed him, or the powerless ones; and you stated that it is the powerless. And they are the followers of the Messengers.

"And I asked you if they were increasing or decreasing, and you stated that they were increasing. And so it is with Faith, until it is complete.

"And I asked you if anyone turns away disaffected with his religion after having gone into it, and you stated that none did; and so it is with Faith, with which no one is displeased when its cheerfulness mixes into hearts.

"And I asked you if he acts treacherously, and you stated that he does not. And so it is with all Messengers; they do not act treacherously.

"And I asked you if you fight with each other, and you stated that you did, and that your fortunes in war alternated, now in his favor, now in yours. And so are all Messengers tried, and final victory will be his.

"And I asked you what he enjoins upon you, and you stated that he enjoins you to worship God, and not to associate anything with God, and not to worship the fetishes of your ancestors. And he enjoins you to pray, to give charity, to be chaste, to keep promises, and to fulfill trusts. And this is the description of a prophet.

"I knew he would appear, but I did not know he would be from among you. If what you have said is true, he will soon rule the ground beneath these two feet of mine. If I could expect to reach him, I would take it upon myself to go and meet him; and if I were with him, I would wash his feet."

Then Caesar called for the letter of the Prophet, and it was read aloud. In it was this:

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. From Muhammad, slave and messenger of God, to Heraclius, ruler of Byzantium. Peace upon all who follow Guidance.

Now then, I call you with the call to submission to God. Surrender to God, and you will be safe. Surrender to God, and God will give you a double reward. If you turn away, then the misdeeds of the peasants will be your fault.

And, people of the Book, come to a Word common to both of us, that we worship only God and do not associate anything with God, and that none of us takes any for lords but God. And if they turn away, then say, "Witness that we have surrendered to God."

Now, when Heraclius Caesar finished his speech, a cry arose from the grandees of Byzantium around him. So great was their uproar that Abu Sufyan did not understand what they said; but he and his companions were ejected. When the men of the Quraish had left the court of the Byzantine emperor and were alone, Abu Sufyan said to them, "The affair of Muhammad has grown powerful; even the king of the pale people fears him!"

Later, Abu Sufyan related, "I lay low, by God, certain that the affair of Muhammad would emerge triumphant, until God brought my heart into Islam in spite of my aversion to it."

Excerpted from "The Wisdom of the Prophet" by Thomas Cleary.

24 (Vol.13, No: 158)

Search for a True Friend

*A poem by Imam Shafi'i
Translated by Amir Toft*

*When friends are in hard times of no avail,
They're near to foes when weighed upon the
scale.*

*What get you now from all of God's creation
Save now and then some shallow consolation?
In vain has been my weary lifelong search
For a friend who'd never leave me in the lurch.
The world and those thereon have grown so brutal,
That now its people seem no longer people.*

Original Arabic:

صديق ليس ينفخ يوم بُؤس قريب من عدو في القياس
وما يلقى الصديق بكل عصر ولا الإخوان إلا للتأسي
عبرت الدهر ملتتمسا بجهدى أختا ثقة فألهاني التماسي
تنكرت البلاد ومن عليها كأن أناسها ليسوا بناسي

Cont'd from page 8

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (RA)

Once I went up the roof of our house and saw Allah's Apostle answering the call of nature while sitting over two bricks facing Bait-ul-Maqdis (Jerusalem).

Comments

These narrations have been quoted earlier also. Here they have been quoted as a proof for permission to construct a toilet within the house. Though Shaitan has special affinity for dirty places like latrines, the believers have been taught the Dua to be recited before entering the latrine which will keep the accursed Shaitan away.

Islamophobia**‘What if my daughter is afraid of her?’**

Women who wear the niqab usually remove it when no men are present, as was the case at the daycare.

Not too long ago, if I saw a woman walking down the street with her face covered by a niqab, I would feel it was my duty to glare. As a non-religious feminist, I had decided that a woman who covers her face is oppressed – that she is uneducated, and that her husband is making her cover up because he’s crazy and/or jealous.

OK, I’m exaggerating a little, but you get the point.

And yet until two months ago, I didn’t even really know a single Muslim. I went to high school in an Ottawa suburb, where I was baptized a Catholic so that I could qualify for schooling in the Catholic school system, which was considered better than the more open public system.

We had one year of religious education that gave us a glimpse of world religions. But I’m pretty sure my education about Islam came mainly from CNN, or Fox. I went to university in a small town in Ontario. I didn’t meet any Muslims there, either.

My real education about Islam came very recently, courtesy of a Montreal daycare.

Last December, I was seeking daycare for my daughter. At only 10 months old, she was still very dependent on her parents, and we wanted to find a place that would nurture her – rock her to sleep if need be, warm up my expressed breast milk and even be open to using our cloth diapers.

I punched our address into the margardie.ca database, and the first one that came up was a 30-second walk from where we would be moving in a matter of weeks. The daycare provider, Sophie, had outlined her views on discipline, praise, healthy foods and the child-centred approach of Montessori. She was someone I felt I could get along with.

I phoned her and we talked for an hour, laughing and chatting and eventually deciding on a time to meet. She shared a great many of the values that my partner and I do. She was also highly educated, trained as a civil engineer.

Before we said goodbye, she added, “Oh, just so you know, I’m Muslim.”

I said I didn’t care, because I didn’t.

She assured me that her daycare didn’t teach religion. Cool.

But then she told me that when she’s in public, she covers her face.

She said the last time she didn’t warn a family over the phone that she wears the niqab, they walked into the meeting and then walked straight out.

I said I didn’t care, but when we got off the phone, I realized I did care. The first thing I thought was, “What if my daughter is afraid of her?”

My family drove over to meet Sophie, her husband and son.

She came to the door, dressed in

black from head to toe.

It was the first time I had been in the same room as a woman wearing the niqab.

I felt nervous. But my daughter didn't flinch.

The daycare was cozy; most of the toys were made of natural materials. There were lots of books, a reading corner and a birdwatching area. Books on Montessori activities lined the shelves. Nothing was battery-operated; there was no television.

It was perfect.

We spoke for a bit, all together in the room before Sophie's husband put a hand on my fiancé's back and they went downstairs to see the other half of the daycare. Once the guys left, Sophie took off the niqab.

I could feel my heart and my mind open at that very moment.

My daughter has been going to this daycare for more than two months now, and we are very happy with the care she is given.

When they are inside with the children, the daycare providers (the majority of whom are Muslim) are mostly dressed in plain clothes. These women do not cover their faces in the presence of children, women or close family.

My daughter isn't afraid of any of the women who take care of her, whether they have their faces covered or not. On the contrary, she reaches out to them for a hug every morning. To my daughter, the women who work at the daycare are simply the women who hold her when she's sad, wipe blueberries off her face, clean her snotty nose and change her cloth diapers.

My daughter isn't growing up with the same ideas about Muslim women that I did.

I'm glad she's learning something in daycare. So am I.

By Jenn Hardy,

Freelance journalist and blogger

Source: The Montreal Gazette

Fable

A Miser and His Lump of Gold...

A miser sold all that he had and bought a lump of gold, which he buried in a hole in the ground by the side of an old wall and went to look at daily. One of his workmen observed his frequent visits to the spot and decided to watch his movements. He soon discovered the secret of the hidden treasure, and digging down, came to the lump of gold, and stole it. The Miser, on his next visit, found the hole empty and began to tear his hair and to make loud lamentations. A neighbor, seeing him overcome with grief and learning the cause, said, "Pray do not grieve so; but go and take a stone, and place it in the hole, and fancy that the gold is still lying there. It will do you quite the same service; for when the gold was there, you had it not, as you did not make the slightest use of it."

Life

10 Steps to a Happier Life!

By *Ustahdha Bint Ahmad*

Each and every human is in pursuit of happiness, whether it be a child, or an adult, a Muslim or a non-Muslim, and this is a true fact. In order to achieve this true happiness, one must comprehend what this emotion really is. Happiness is 'feeling, causing, or giving pleasure' and it is being 'satisfied' according to the Oxford dictionary. It is essential to understand the psychology of happiness so we know how much of it we have control over.

James Montier published his research into 'The Psychology of Happiness' and learned that happiness was composed of three elements:

About 50% of individual happiness comes from a genetic set point. That is, we're each predisposed to a certain level of happiness. Some of us are just naturally more inclined to be cheery than others.

About 10% of our happiness is due to our circumstances. Our age, race, gender, personal history, and, yes, wealth, only make up about one-tenth of our happiness.

The remaining 40% of an individual's happiness seems to be derived from intentional activity, from "discrete actions or practices that people can choose to do".

As humans we have no control over our genetic set-point, and hardly any control over our circumstances. This 50% of happiness in Islam is called 'ridha bi al-qadha' (being content with our lot on life). This means that as believers if we truly loved Allah the necessary effect of it would be that

we are content with our lot in life. The Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would supplicate with words that would highlight the importance of satisfaction with our fate, therefore we too should make the effort to recite these sorts of supplications:

"I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islam as my religion, and with Muhammad as my Prophet" (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

[Abu Dawud].

"O Allah, make me content with what you have provided me, send blessings for me therein, and replace for me every absent thing with something better" [Bukhari].

"O Allah, I seek refuge with You from knowledge which does not bring benefit and from a heart which is not fearful and from a self which is not content and from a supplication which is not answered." [Muslim]

Thereafter, the main conclusion to be drawn from Montier's research is that we can only work on the last 40% to make ourselves happier. It must be noted that this 40% cannot be achieved in pursuit of money, fame or anything else materialistic. These are all transitory, and anything transitory will never result in true happiness. True happiness is contentment, and this is only attained through activities which are not fleeting. So here are 10 steps to make our lives happier:

1. Seek the pleasure of Allah – nothing can make us happier than seeking the pleasure of Allah. Whether we are university, home or on holiday never forget to seek the countenance of Allah.

2. Be grateful – The more grateful we are to have the things we do, the more Allah will shower you with His bounties. Appreciation of what Allah has blessed you with is vital.

“If you express gratitude, I shall certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, then My punishment is severe.” [Ibrahim: V7]

3. Satisfy your soul and not your physical body – Work on activities that result in eternal happiness that bring a smile to the heart and not merely a smile to the face. Do meaningful work; strive to partake in feeding the homeless at hospices, assisting the distressed and helping others over and above excessive shopping, excessive eating out, and time spent in worldly activity.

“True enrichment does not come through possessing a lot of wealth, but true enrichment is the enrichment of the soul.” [Bukhari]

4. Avoid comparisons – do not look towards celebrities, rich or affluent people above you in worldly matters. The lives of such individuals are not ‘ideal’ in the eyes of Allah, look towards the lives of the likes of the Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Khadija (May Allah be pleased with her) who are our guiding stars in religious matters. *“Look at those below you (less fortunate than you), and don’t look at those above you, for this is better.” [Muslim]*

5. Have no expectations in other than Allah– place all reliance and expectations in Allah alone, any favour that we do, and good character that we display is not for us to be met with the same. All that we do is in hope

“O Allah, give me enough of what You have made lawful to suffice me from what You have made unlawful, and enrich me by Your bounty giving me independence from all other than You.” [al-Tirmidhi]

6. Serve others and cultivate good relations – We should have an altruistic nature always ready share our warmth and sup-

port to others. The Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) strongly advised to maintain family ties, keep strong relations and relayed to us the etiquettes of social relations.

“All created beings are the dependants of Allah, and the most beloved of creation to Allah is the one who is good to His dependants” [Bayhaqi]

*God gives us people to love
and things to use,
not things to love*

and people to use. – Max Lucado

7. Be in routine- If we are in routine we will get adequate sleep and that solves half the problem! A person with a sleep deficit is often grumpy, tired and unproductive – all of this counteracts the characteristics apart of the 10 steps to happiness.

The Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) chose a simple live over an affluent one, and he was always content in life. One lesson to extract from his life full of happiness is his routine. A person that plans their day is much more productive than a person that doesn’t.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had carefully apportioned his time according to the demands on him for: *offering worship to Allah public affairs, and personal matters.*

After the early morning prayers he would remain sitting in the mosque reciting praises of Allah till the sun rose and more people collected. He would then preach to them. After the sermons were over, he would talk genially with the people, enquire about their welfare and even exchange jokes with them. Taxes and revenues were also distributed at this time [Muslim]

8. Promote brotherhood/sisterhood – feeling a part of a larger group gives us a sense of security and a safety net to fall onto in occasions of happiness and hardships. The concept of brotherhood and sisterhood is

one of the central themes of Islam.

“The (example of) believers (in their mutual love, care and concern) is like a single person: if his eye complains of pain his whole body complains of pain, and if his head complains of pain his whole body complains of pain.” [Muslim]

9. Eat good halal pure food. Eating well maintains our physical well-being, this too keeps us happy.

10. Keep Fit – Scientists claim the best benefit of exercise is that it makes us feel happy.

Exercise is described by many doctors as an anti-depressant. The presence of certain chemicals like endorphins and phenylacetic acid increases drastically after a good work out and it is this that contributes to that ‘feel good’ feeling after a good workout.

There are two chemicals apart of exercising that contribute to that ‘feel good’ feeling after a good workout.

Cortisol

Endorphins

With these supplications and ten steps with the divine assistance of Allah it is hoped we can all live a happier life to transport us to our final abode – PARADISE, where eternal happiness lies. May Allah be pleased with us always. Ameen.

al-muhsinaat.org

Etiquettes

Humility in Knowledge and Arrogance in Ignorance

By Khalid Baig

Imam Malik bin Anas (b. 93 AH, d. 179 AH) was one of the greatest Islamic scholars of all times. Among his 1300 disciples were people from all walks of life; rulers, judges, historians, Sufis, poets, and scholars of Qur’an, Hadith, and Fiqh. The Khalifah attended his class as an ordinary student along with others.

In the best traditions of this Ummah Imam Malik considered his knowledge as a trust. When he knew something to be right or wrong, no intimidation could stop him from declaring so. It was his fatwa that divorce given under compulsion is invalid, that earned him the wrath of the ruler (as it implied that pledge of allegiance given under compulsion was also invalid). He was punished with lashes and at every strike he said, “I am Malik bin Anas and I declare that divorce given under compulsion is invalid.”

Yet it was the same Imam Malik who was more likely to say “la adree” (I don’t know) or “la ahsin” (I don’t know it very well) in response to the constant flow of queries directed toward him. Once a person approached him and told him that he had come from Marrakesh — after a six month journey — only to ask a question. “My people back home are waiting for your answer,” he said. After hearing the question Imam Malik replied, “Please tell your people that I do not know the answer to your question.” In one case he was asked forty-eight questions and in response to thirty-two of them he said, “I don’t know.” It was commonly said that if somebody wrote down Imam Malik’s answers to questions, he could easily fill pages with “I don’t know” before writing a real answer.

The reason for this extraordinary care was nothing but a deep sense of accountability before Allah. It was the caution of a person who was standing between Hell and Heaven, fearful that one wrong step could lead him to the former. “Before you answer a question about religious law,

visualize that you are standing at the gates of Hell and Heaven,” he used to advise others.

Of course, he was not alone. Ibn Jarreej used to attend the majlis (sitting) of Abdullah ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhum. “In answer to more than half the questions he used to say I don’t know.” Ibn Abi Layla saw 120 Sahaba (companions). “Whenever one of them was asked a question he wished that someone else would answer it.”

Nor was this caution restricted to Fiqh (Islamic Law). In interpreting the Qur’an or the Hadith, they exercised same care. Imam Muslim whose Sahih Muslim is unanimously considered second of the two most authentic collections of Hadith, had set for himself only the task of Hadith collection leaving the job of interpreting them to others. He was so concerned about this that he did not even divide the book into chapters for such classification would amount to interpretation.

They were the authoritative source on Islamic teachings, having devoted their lives to learning and practicing them. They knew very well the tremendous burden inherent in a statement that begins “Allah says”, or “The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says”. For here stating something that is not so means that a person is attributing something to Allah or the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that is not true. What can be a greater sin than that! They always remembered that it is Haram to give fatwa without knowledge. They always remembered the Hadith, “Whoever interprets the Qur’an without knowledge should make his abode in Hell.”

Fast forward to today and you are in a totally different world. Across the Muslim world today there are innumerable “experts” who are willing to interpret the Qur’an and Hadith, give fatwas, even do Ijtihad — all without the benefit of even the minimum religious education and training. If such a per-

son is a good writer or speaker that is qualification enough. For the audiences today readily confuse eloquence with scholarship. If the “expert” also carries the magic title “Dr.” that certainly fills any gaps in his authority. It does not matter whether his educational achievement maybe in gynecology or business administration, journalism or nuclear science, physics or animal husbandry.

The results have been disastrous. The vast confusion and ignorance of even elementary subjects in religious teachings among the seemingly “educated” classes today is unprecedented. Today one can find all sorts of un-Islamic ideas and practices, conjectures, whims, and desires finding approval in the “Ijtihaddom” that has been concocted. What is more we also make a virtue out of this catastrophe by bragging that we have broken the “shackles of blind following” and opened direct access to the original sources of Islamic teachings. But no amount of bragging can hide the fact that this is the equivalent of allowing unlicensed and untrained people to practice medicine. Although in this case the resulting death and injury is not physical and is therefore less visible.

The reasons for this malaise are complex but two stand out. First, the schooling of our “educated” people included very little or none of Islamic education. Plainly, we do not know and we do not know that we do not know. Second, many of us harbor great mistrust of those who have received formal Islamic education. In turn this is also based on ignorance of what constitutes such education. It is a distant world, a black box, and all we know is that there is something wrong with it.

For a change let us visit a darul-uloom where they are screening candidates for admission to the next ifta class. The top scorers from the regular alim course were given a test and just the top ten scorers from the test will be brought for interview. They

are tested not only for their knowledge of Arabic and religious texts but also their ability to understand complex real life situations and to communicate well. Once they graduate, they will do an internship for years under qualified and experienced muftis. But even the best of their teachers will consult others when they face a difficult issue. After exercising the best of caution they will learn to say "Allah knows best" at the end of their answers.

It is not to say that the decline of Muslim political power and the general decline of Muslim civilization has had no effect on this area of activity or our darul-iftas are running problem free. But can anyone in all honesty declare that an alternative that misses each and everyone of these features is better? There is a famous saying in Urdu. "A pseudo doctor is danger to life. A pseudo religious scholar is danger to faith." Do we know the danger?

Book Review

Slippery Stone

An Inquiry into Islam's Stance on Music

Reviewed by Dr. Mahmood Ghazi

The dawn of the colonization of Afro-Asian world in general and the Muslim world in particular brought in its wake efforts by the western academia to justify colonization in a variety of ways. The so-called "white man's burden" to educate and civilize the barbaric, primitive and illiterate masses of Asia and Africa was based on the presumption of the total absence of all culture, civilization, religious beliefs and knowledge in the countries occupied by the colonial powers, initially for commercial purposes under purely economic motives.

The colonial powers of Britain and France particularly faced formidable resistance at the hands of Muslim freedom fighters almost everywhere in the colonized regions of Asia and Africa. What prompted Muslim freedom fighters to resist foreign occupation was their deep desire to preserve their Islamic identity, and protect Islamic culture and civilization in their respective regions. This fierce resistance necessitated thorough study of the Orient, its history, culture and religion. During the next two centuries the conflict got intensified and regenerated interest in the study of Islamic culture, civilization and religion.

In this process, many western scholars tried to create confusion about those aspects of Islamic culture, civilization and religion which were responsible for reinforcing Muslim resistance to western powers and which were the main cause of the difficulties and obstacles faced by the colonizers. The Islamic unity as exemplified in Khilafah, love for freedom and dedication to make sacrifices for the sake of Islam as exemplified in Jihad, condemnation of any form of dissociation from Islam and Muslim community, represented in the punishment of apostasy, were some such aspects considered by western observers as serious obstacles in the way of the success of the colonial agenda.

With the passage of time, it was felt necessary that in order

to ensure the protection of their interest on a long term basis, the colonial powers should create a generation within Muslim countries which would be western in their opinion and taste, but oriental in color and ethnic affiliation. Macaulay, the author of this idea, was perhaps the most successful colonial thinker who gave a new dimension to western colonialism which may be termed as intellectual colonialism.

This new intellectual and academic policy soon resulted in cultural and civilizational colonialism as well. Although political and military colonization allegedly come to an end during the second half of twentieth century, these three forms of colonization, namely intellectual, cultural and civilizational are still continuing. It is now evident that some western powers have the continuation of these forms of colonization at the top of their agenda. The elimination of cultural identities of other civilizations, obliteration of distinct features of non-western cultures, rejection and condemnation of non-western legal systems and spurning oriental social patterns constitute the fundamental elements of this agenda. The media tirade against Islamic laws, targeting social habits in Muslim societies and caricaturing cultural patterns of Muslim societies has become the order of the day.

In pursuance of this agenda, some orientalist undertook to portray Islamic culture and civilization as representing some archaic, outmoded, inhuman, and barbaric remnants of the medieval ages. That is why Muslim aversion to carnal expressions of human sentiments in fine art was projected as a major handicap in the way of cultural sophistication. To deal with this 'malady' they started efforts to popularize their social ethos and life styles in the Muslim world.

Muslim concept of artistic performance and finer expression of their sense of aesthetics was different from the prevalent

western styles. In fact, Islam represented a stage of perfection and maturity of the human mind. Most primitive religions and primitive societies emphasized the physical aspect of life at the cost of its moral and spiritual aspects. To them, the sensual aspect of human existence outweighed the inner and higher human values. This primitiveness was reflected in worshipping physical phenomena believed to be representing the Reality. Music and dance thus became integral part of worship in many primitive religions.

In fact, Islam declared the inauguration of a perfect religion, a final way of life, an accomplished legal and moral system and a panhuman culture and civilization. The Islamic Shariah contemplates intellectual maturity of human beings and presumes the moral perfection of human life and behavior. The laws of the Shariah are based on higher moral ideals and finer spiritual virtues. Islam's approach to the reality of life is constructive and positive. It is forward-looking. It is morally motivated and spiritually oriented. To Islam, human physique is the vehicle of moral ideals; body is the locus of the spirit.

This has given a new dimension to the idea of beauty and aesthetics in Islam. This morally rich and spiritually impregnated concept of aesthetics is reflected in Islamic fine arts, Muslim poetry, architecture, calligraphy, book decoration, pottery, carpet-designing, and so on, which represent only the higher moral ideals and spiritual values. . There is hardly anything in Islamic art which demonstrates any sensual motivation on the part of their respective authors.

In this conception of society, of aesthetic and fine arts, music had little place, if at all. Muslim societies, by and large, have been averse to music and dancing. These two expressions of sensuality in the name of art have been extremely rare in Muslim societies and were always confined to a very limited and insignificant section of the society,

mostly representing the periphery, despite involvement of and encouragement from the ruling class. Muslim history bears testimony that carnal and sensual expression of art and aesthetics have never occupied any respectable place in Muslim societies. Those who took interest in these expressions were always denied a central position in Muslim social hierarchy.

This situation however underwent a change by the middle of twentieth century in general and by the introduction of powerful print and electronic media in particular. The result of this media crusade for the promotion of music and dance culture has been tremendous. Soon, the domestic media within the Muslim world also entered the arena in a much wider and powerful way and filled Muslim societies with general enchantment with sensual pleasures.

It is in this background that Khalid Baig decided to undertake a comprehensive inquiry into the whole issue. Such an exercise was needed in view of a series of writings by some modernists and pseudo-jurists of Islam in the twentieth century who styled themselves as the new reformers of Muslim society and tried to save it from the monotony of religious life. Many such self-styled mujtahids have also played up some of the practices of the Sufis who used to listen to moral or devotional poetry. Although, even this practice, done under strict conditions, was never approved by the over-whelming majority of the jurists, some modernist writers rely on this practice to justify music and even dance. Some writers also refer to the interest taken by some companions of the Prophet in Arabic poetry to justify excessive involvement in music and the musical instruments, thereby justifying the introduction of the western culture of night life in Muslim societies.

The present volume by the author is a welcome addition to the existing literature on Islam's position on art and poetry, use of

music and musical instruments. The author has very rightly and succinctly discussed the question of the terminology used in this discussion in the very beginning. This is important since much confusion resulted from the use, or misuse, of various terms interchangeably, sometimes unintentionally and at times intentionally.

He has established that the word music has never been used in Islamic literature. This is originally a Greek word and now used in all western languages and many Muslim languages as well. It only found its way in Muslim writings much later. The Quran, the Sunnah, and writings of early jurists are not familiar with this word. Therefore, any effort for the justification of music from early Islamic literature is preposterous. The terms used in early Islamic literature are: ghina', mazamir, ma'azaif, malahi. Some modern writers have either ignored the negative mention of these terms in Islamic literature or have arbitrarily interpreted them in such a way that their negative nuance is extremely diluted.

One basic thing the author has brought to limelight is the concern of the Shariah to ensure constant vigilance and presence of mind on the part on the believers. The Quran disapproves of every such thing that diverts attention from serious matters of life to non-serious concerns. The terms lahwa and malahi are very significant. Literally meaning instruments or means of diversion, these are effective vehicles for projecting, promoting and communicating baser sentiments. These emotions are kept hidden in everyone's deep self for a limited and controlled use for constructive purposes. Attempting to bring these emotions to the forefront only to occupy a central place in human life has been discouraged even by those Sufis whose references are used to justify the new life style in which the control of human psy-

che, mind, heart and body is lost and both the individual and the society are carried away by carnal desires.

The author has divided the book into three broad sections or parts. Part one surveys the historical perspective. Consisting of four chapters, it deals with the position of Islam on poetry and the role played by poetry in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabia. A history of music in Arabia before and after Islam has also been briefly surveyed. One significant contribution of this part is the discussion on the role of the orientalisists in highlighting the hidden stories of musicians and projecting their limited influence on a wide level.

Part two constitutes the core of the book and is entitled: Clearing the Fog. Consisting of six chapters, it surveys the whole range of Islamic literature starting from the Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Prophet of Islam to the writings of the jurists of various schools. In this chapter, the learned author has consulted the writings of leading Muslim scholars, jurists and the Sufis. He has also given a summary of the rulings of the jurists of all major schools is Islamic law.

In chapter eight, entitled "The Sufi Perspective," he has summarized the views of the great Sufis including Imam Ghazali on sama'. This exposition of the Sufi perspective pulls the carpet from underneath the feet of those who try to justify the introduction of music culture on the basis of the Sufi practice of sama'.

Part three surveys the present situation and highlights some of the problem faced by Muslim youth in the present day. At the end of the book, four appendices have been added containing rulings on anashid, music debate in history, biographical notes and glossary of important terms.

Slippery Stone is well researched and thorough work on its subject. It deals with the core of the subject as well as with many relevant issues which further throw light on it. I am confident that the book will be widely read by students of Islamic law as well as by general readers interested in understanding the position of Islamic culture on music and other similar forms of artistic expression.

Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi was the president of the International Islamic University, Islamabad.

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unreliable, though about one quarter of these traditions handed down by other narrators are found in Bukhari and Muslim's Sahih collections. In other words, Bukhari and Muslim have accepted identical reports with more satisfactory isnad . The only reason for discarding these traditions was that one of the narrators, Zakariya did not hear them himself from Anas. Even though the reports of Zakarya were supported or corroborated by other channels, these were not accepted by the traditionists for they fell short of their canon of historical criticism. Actually, the matter cannot but impress an honest scholar and strengthen his trust and reliance on the books of ahadith, but nothing can convince those who more often deliberately mistranslate the reports and then produce them as an evidence of the unauthentic character of the ahadith. It is also equally surprising that modern Western writers hardly ever pay any attention to the researches exploding these charges and go on repeating them ad nauseam, without least regard to their pretensions of unbiased and sympathetic approach to Islam). Out of these were compiled the Sihah or the six authentic books of ahadith after careful sifting and evaluation of each report according to the historical and subjective canons of criticism. There are also other compilations known as musnads, the largest of which is the al-Musnad of Ibn Hanbal consisting of six voluminous parts of about 500 pages each printed in small Egyptian type. It lists separately all the authentic traditions pertaining to the Prophet and handed down by various companions and throws a floodlight on the life and character of the Prophet.

Identity

The Backward Muslim and the Modern Slave

“The first generation of Muslims did what was within their capacity to protect the identity of the Muslims and give us something to inherit and take forward”

By: Shaykh Shams ad-Duha Muhammad

I was invited to be a guest along with Imam Abdullah Hasan on a recent televised programme called 'Let's Talk, hosted by br Ajmal Masroor to discuss the relevance of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) today. Many brothers and sisters called in to make some valid points showing the relevance of our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) in our lives.

One brother called in and challenged the community on the relevance of Masjids and Islamic schools. His argument was that we had to develop our children with a focus on mainstream education. He posited further that 'Islamic schools' and 'masjids' were only taking us backwards. There is much that can be said in response to such a statement, but I thought at the time that brother Ajmal challenged him sufficiently. However, what has played on my mind since that phone call is the thinking, and rationale behind it. The nature of phone-ins is such that the person calling in will represent (however small that minority may be) the views of at least a small minority. It is a view which champions the 'modern' technological schools over the 'traditional' Madrasah approach which they believe is followed by Islamic schools and masjids across the globe. The problems in regard to such a belief are two-fold. Firstly, the case is always such that those who champion the modern, secular schools have never

taught in a State school, or seen its inner workings. The Muslim teachers I know who have worked in State schools openly testify that State schools irrevocably, and unalterably destroy a child's perception of Islam without necessarily giving them an education that is noteworthy. The child who finishes his or her education in a State school, having had no Islamic input from say, a weekend Quran class, or spent any time in the Masjid, will come to hold the belief held by the State school they went to: 'Islam' is confined to Ramadhan, and the two Eids, and there is no problem with Muslim children celebrating diversity and taking part in the end of year Christmas party, and (perhaps most destructive of all) the Year 11 Prom. The Prom asks every boy and girl to attend with a 'date' of the opposite gender. Students see their teachers drinking alcohol in their presence. As is nearly always the case, one student always manages to sneakily steal a bottle of champagne from the teachers' lounge, and this results in students drinking large amounts of alcohol also. Although this happens every year in State schools, the prom continues to occur in the same fashion, because it is a part of a school's fabric, and because the Year 11 need some time to 'relax' after having prepared so for their GCSE exams.

The second problem lies in the ap-

proach taken by those who hold the view that Madrasahs are 'backward' in their approach. At the time of the telephone call in Let's Talk, following Ajmal Masroor's response, we, the guests pointed out that the brother may have articulated things in a manner that he did not intend (some of what he said, if taken literally, would've brought his faith in to question). His experience of 'madrasah-backwardness' (if that term can be coined) was based on what he witnessed in the majority of poorly-run Masjids, at the helm of which are people who really know nothing about taking a community forward, and leading it Islamically. The unfortunate state of our Masjids in the UK is such that the majority of the Imams are brought over from abroad, and they struggle to relate their knowledge of the Deen to a community and context which is largely alien to them. Their struggle is further compounded by their language problems and, in many cases, an unwillingness to develop.

While the above is no doubt true, there is another way to look at people who bring up these types of criticisms against Masjids, which was very kindly pointed out to me by a colleague the next morning who, as it happens actually did try to call in to the programme, but did not get through. People who say things like, 'masjids are backwards, and Islamic schools don't achieve anything and the solution is in mainstream western education', need to be reminded that the first generation of Muslims did what was within their capacity to protect the identity of the Muslims and give us something to inherit and take forward. They had, at the time, little or no support and were building everything from the ground up in a country and community which was completely alien to them. Rather than simply working to passively assimilate, they were proactive in their approach to their Deen, and took those vital steps towards creating barriers around their

practice of their Religion here in the UK. In doing so, they knowingly went up against the Christian Church, and in a somewhat Post-colonial way, reversed the process of colonisation; now there were Muslims coming to England and setting up their own Islamic learning centres, and places for prayer. Of course, there were things they could have done differently, but we need to remember that they had no real modern template to follow. They were taking those first initial steps, and their constraints, restrictions, and limitations were many not least the fact that they were farmers from rural areas of the sub-continent.

What we often find is that those who openly and actively criticise the Madrasahs which do exist now, have themselves done little (if anything) for the community. They believe in assimilation and that whatever we get from the mainstream schools is sufficient and better for us. As mentioned previously, they have little if any knowledge of the inner workings of State schools in Britain.

The question I would like to pose is, 'if the complaint is that masjids are backwards, what are these armchair critics of our generation doing to get involved and change things?' There are masjids up and down the country that are crying out for some 'forward' thinking. They need a critical mass of fresh input from people who know what they are doing. Sons and daughters should now be taking over the running of Masjids from their parents and elders, who have really done their bit. But this critical mass is not forthcoming. One or two come forward but get caught up in the politics, and then lose their enthusiasm. Being proactive does not mean becoming pessimistic about progress, and stepping down as soon as one faces a problem, or a polemic. Being proactive means continuing to actively strive, and it was pro-activity, not pessimism which created the original Madrasahs and masjids. It is

true that there is a lot of dirty politics in our institutions, but there has to be a longer term strategy by the current generation to get involved in Masjids, work with the elders for some time, pick up membership forms, and wait until they have enough numbers and an established track-record of services to the masjid or Islamic organisation, so that other members will vote them in.

What we see instead is young people coming into masjids, not liking what they see, and trying to take this over by force. Change is a process that takes time, and patience. Our conduct should not pour water on the efforts of the first generation by way of a coup, but we should congratulate them on their efforts and then gradually take the helm from them.

If the likes of the brother who called in to the programme are expressing their grievance on the basis that Islam is not relevant and we have to be like the West and assimilate, or even that we are backwards, then such people have not yet come out of the colonised/slave mentality. They suffer from an inability to see what they have as good because the 'other' was their 'master' during the process of colonisation, and they were the master's slave. Until they can break away from these mind-forged manacles, their view will always be something along the lines of, 'what my master has must be better'. In the postcolonial era, while their countries of origin are no longer colonised, it is clear that their minds are. They are still ideologically colonised by values that will come and bite them when they realise that their children are not quite what they wanted them to be. I can say without reservation that such people are materially colonised by the glitz and glamour of a Western capitalist life, centred around the self. Colonised by their aspiration to do what they want to do and whatever makes them happy, 'as long as they are not harming anyone'. Such people are in need of

mental emancipation, rather than a new masjid committee, or even a better Islamic school. They need to learn to look at the world objectively and ask themselves what modernity has given the majority of the world aside from wars, injustice, famine, climate change, crippling debt, political and economic instability, and weapons of mass destruction. These brothers and sisters need to wake up and smell the coffee, latte, double-espresso, or whatever it is they drink while sitting on their armchairs, and seriously ask themselves the question: 'do I want my child to be like the people drunkenly staggering into black cabs on a Friday or Saturday night?' I myself live on the border of the city of London, and have seen these 'modern', State educated people going to the limits of depravity for the sake of their own selfish pursuits. They are all going 'forward' into a time-tunnel that is projecting them back a whole millennia, back in to the dark ages, albeit a sophisticated version of it where brutality, slavery, depravity, immorality and injustice are made to look good because they have been intellectualised, glamorised on the silver screen and made 'mainstream'.

There is much more to be said on this topic, but I hope this much will at least get us thinking and make us truly utilise our freedom in the west by 'unplugging ourselves from the matrix' that is the 'mainstream'. Then we will be the revolutionaries and heroes who will be remembered as people who freed our brothers and sisters in humanity from the slavery that they exist in.

Allah's Presence

"A person's desire to commit a sin will only be abated when he realizes that Allah is looking at him, feels ashamed and, consequently, discards the sin". (Ibn Jawzi)

The Ideal Prophet

The Historic Aspect of Prophet Muhammad's Life

Maulana Syed Sylaiman Nadvi (RA)

That the compilation and *hadith* literature was taken up by *tabiy'in*, i.e. the sons and disciples of the Prophet's companions, there has been a widespread misunderstanding amongst the people not well-versed with the science, such as, the orientalist. They deduce from it that since many companions remained alive by the closing decades of the first century after *Hijrah*, the compilation of *Hadith* by the *tabiy'in* would have been initiated in the second century of the Islamic era. This is far from the truth. *Tabiy'in* are the persons who did not have the opportunity of the Prophet's company, but who had conversed and were associated with the companions of the Prophet. As already stated, the term applied even to those persons who had been born during the lifetime of the Prophet but were either too young or could not somehow wait upon the Apostle, or were born immediately after his death. Thus every such person born around 11 A.H., when the Prophet left this fleeting world, would be known as a *tabiy'ee*. The era of *tabiy'in*, thus, begins immediately after the Prophet's demise in 11 A.H., or even earlier, and not a hundred years thereafter. It is also a fallacy to think that the *tabiy'in* took up compilation of *hadith* literature after a hundred years, when all the companions of the Prophet had left the world. The period after the death of the Prophet to the end of the first century after *Hijrah* is really coterminous with the *tabiy'in's* period for none could claim that honour after every companion of the prophet had bidden farewell to this world. It would now be clear how grievously mistaken are they who

claim that the compilation of *hadith* literature was started a hundred years after the Prophet's death.

The period during which collection and compilation of the traditions and the related historical data was completed can be divided into three parts. The first extends to the period when the people having first hand information themselves collected the whole data. Then comes the period when a number of persons took upon themselves the collection and recording of these eye-and-ear-witness accounts by contacting the companions possessing this first hand information. Finally, in the third phase, the writing of the treatises existing today was taken up. The duration of the first phase stretches, more or less, up to the close of the first century after *Hijrah*; the second lasts up to 150 A.H.; and the third extends from 150 A.H. to the opening decades of the fourth century. Thus the first phase coincides with the time of the Prophet's companions and elders among the *tabiy'in*, the second co-exists with the younger *tabiy'in* and the disciples of the elder *tabiy'in*, and the third was the period when the traditionists like Muhammad b. Isma'il al-Bukhari, Muslim b. Al-Hajjaj al-Qushairi, Muhammad b. 'Isa Tirmidhi, and Ahmad b. Muhammad ibn Hanbal wrote their works after digesting the then available material. It would also be clear from what has been explained here that the *hadith* material collected in the first phase, that is, by the Prophet's companion and elder *tabiy'in* was incorporated in the writings of the second phase, and this was in turn utilised for the com-

pilation of dissertations in the third phase. We still have the written record of the second and third phases which is the most precious, authentic and trustworthy material possessed by history. No other historical material of past events extant today is so methodical, continuous and reliable as *the hadith* literature.

My revered teacher, the late 'Allama Shibli, who was also a historian of repute, used to say that almost every other nation had had to record its oral traditions, very often after an interlude of centuries between the happenings and their being put into writing, for the compilation of its history. What they normally did in almost every case was to jot down every prattle and retail gossip without caring to know the sources of those stories. Thereafter probable events were selected by historians through the process of elimination of the incredible reports, and this is how the history of every nation has come to be written. The ancient annals of the European nations are no exception.

The criterion for historicity set by the Muslims was much more severe, however. Its first principle was that the initial narrator of any event, from whom a narration was handed down, should be an eye-witness to the happening recounted by him. Similarly, if there was a chain of narrators who have transmitted the information from one person to another, the characters and antecedents of each should be fully known (*Purporting to be scientific and applying the so-called historical method some Western scholars like Schacht have claimed that the Isnad i.e. the transmitting links of the Ahadith were forged later on. Apart from the fact that these scholars normally take up the books of history or jurisprudence- by no means a right field for the study of Isnad- instead of the hadith literature, their theory of "projecting back" of the isnad is refuted by their own studies which show a number of transmitters belonging to scores of provinces giving the same isnad for a particular tradition*). It required the scholars to satisfy themselves about the moral conduct, intelligence and reliability of each intervening narrator. It was, of a fact, a herculean

task to find out all these details about hundreds of thousand persons who formed the chain in the transmission of *ahadith*. And, thus came into existence what is called the science of *asms-ur-rijal*, or the dictionary of biographers, which sheds light on the lives of at least one hundred thousand persons connected, in any way, with the transmission of the Prophet's traditions.

This was, however, the principle laid down for verification of the antecedents and reliability of the narrators. Rules were also framed for internal criticism and evaluation of the reports handed down by the narrators. These were meant to evaluate, rationally, the correctness of the content of every narration. However, the scholars gave foremost priority to the reliability of the narrators, and were so candidly honest in giving their verdicts about them that their endeavours should be deemed to form a shining chapter of the Islamic history. Among the narrators of traditions, there were also kings and powerful potentates who ruled with an iron hand, but the scholars of *hadith*, knowing not what fear was, accorded them the place they rightfully deserved by virtue of their personal character, piety and truthfulness or otherwise. Imam Wak'i was a traditionist whose father presided over the state exchequer. Wak'i used to accept traditions handed down by his father only when he found another reliable narrator to support his father, and rejected them if they were narrated by his father alone. Mas'udi was another scholar of *hadith* who was paid a visit by another scholar, Mu'adh b. Mu'adh, in 154 A.H. (770 A.D.), but since Mas'udi had to consult his writings in the course of narrating *ahadith*, Mu'adh was not satisfied with his memory and had no hesitation in declaring him as untrustworthy. On one occasion Mu'adh b. Mu'adh was offered ten thousand gold dinars merely for withholding evidence in regard to the reliability or otherwise of a certain person, but he turned down the offer contemptuously with

the remark: "I can never conceal what is right." Is there any example of similar candidness and veracity in the annals of other nations?

Strange though it may seem, this entire material of encyclopedic proportions, consisting of reports considered correct or incorrect, authentic or spurious by the scholars who accepted some and rejected others, is available even today for being sifted and evaluated by us in accordance with the principles laid down for their examination.

The discussion relating to the primary historical data of the Prophet's biography, important though wearisome it might have appeared to you, has taken too much of the time of this lecture; nevertheless, the matter-of-fact nature of this record demonstrates how very methodical and verifiable is this material. Now let us explain what constitutes the extant sources for the biography of the Prophet of Islam and how these put were together. The first and the foremost source, which is most authentic and reliable is the Quran itself whose veracity remains unchallenged even by the most inveterate enemies of Islam. All the important facts about the life of the Prophet, his character and deportment prior to his being invested with the mantle of prophethood, his poverty and orphanhood, his search for truth and bestowal of apostleship, the coming of revelations and the announcement of his mission, his preaching of the faith and enmity of the infidels, his ascension and migration, his wars and conduct of peaceful negotiations, his character and deportment, in short, every important fact and event of his life finds a reference in this Book which is peerless in its undisputed origin and genuineness.

The second major source is the great mass of traditions, numbering about a hundred thousand, inclusive of all the corrected as well as the so-called incorrect reports. *(It would be relevant to mention here, briefly, the misunderstanding purposely created by almost every Western orientalist. They are never weary of pointing out*

the large number of traditions rejected by the earlier scholars as a proof of the unreliability of the entire hadith literature. It is contended, for example, that the fact that ibn Hanbal selected 30,000 out of 7,50,000 traditions and al-Bukhari had made his collection from a collection of six hundred thousand, shows that it was all a mass of forgeries and dubious reports, [c.f. A. Guillaume, Islam, Penguin Series, pp. 66,91; Muir, The Life of Mohomet, London (1894) Vol. 1p. XXXVII, R.A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs, Cambridge (1962), p. 146; HAR Gibbs, .Mohammadanism, London (1964), p. 791. The problem, so puzzling to the orientalists is, however, more an evidence of their slipshod approach to the science than the unauthenticity of the traditions. The traditions do not include only the utterance, deeds and tacit approval of the acts done in the presence of the Prophet but they also cover similar reports in regard to the companions and their successors. Then, every single report transmitted through different channels of narrators, which sometimes run to a hundred or more [c.f. Mustafa Siba'i, Al-Sunnah wa Makana-tuha fi at-Islam, Cairo (1390/1961), p.2224], is counted as a separate hadith for purposes of its evaluation. It is, thus, not at all surprising if about 10,000 reports handed down by about 4000 companions of the Prophet were multiplied into several hundreds of thousand narrations by the scholars in order to facilitate their scrutiny. Naturally, if a traditionist selects a particular hadith as authentic because of its more trustworthy narrators, and rejects the reports of other narrators containing almost or even exactly the same narration, it does not mean that all the other reports rejected by him are 'unauthentic' or 'spurious'. In fact Al-Bukhari or any other compiler of ahadith never claimed that what had been left out by him was spurious or lacked authenticity. According to the criteria laid down for the criticism of traditions, the traditionists first make a search about the isnad or chain of narrators of a report and they call it defective, without any further scrutiny of the subject matter, if it falls short of their stern criteria of historical criticism. Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Azami has given in his 'Studies in Early Hadith Literature', a collection of traditions, transmitted by Bishr b. al-Husain on the authority of Zakariya b. 'Adi from Anas b. Malik from the Prophet, (pp. 305-310). It has traditions rejected as

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