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**THE TRUTH**  
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*Tasawwuf*

*“In short, Tasawwuf (Sufism) comes down to this, overcoming the laziness in doing virtuous acts (ta’aat) and getting them done, and overcoming the desire to commit sinful act (gunah) and abstaining from that sin. Whoever attains this condition does not need anything more since this is the very condition that creates a bond with Allah (SWT) (Talluq Ma’Allah), protects this bond and strengthens it”*

*Hakeem ul Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi R.A*

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## EDITORIAL

*All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted*

# Fear Allah

If you consider yourself a Muslim then you must also know its meaning. A person doesn't happen to be a Muslim simply by being born in a Muslim family or having a Muslim name. A Muslim is the one who is exclusively obedient to Allah. The decrees of Allah are those that have reached to us through the Qur'an and demonstrated practically before us by Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) during his blessed life. Therefore, a Muslim is the one who treads the path illustrated by Allah. There are two sources to know this path, one – the words or the Qur'an and, two – the acts of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. Every aspect of life is to be managed by this standard, weighed on this balance and observed in this light.

But how astonishing is it that even as Muslims, you, instead of fearing Allah, feel scared of human authority; you get shivered by man made laws; you find it apprehensive to open your mouth against the social customs; and you let yourself be crushed by the pressure of caste and fraternity. You have well understood that Allah dislikes extravagance, but - only to earn the praises of people, you spend lavishly on useless things. You know well that it is totally prohibited in your pure and pristine religion and also a cause of Allah's unhappiness to burst crackers on Eids, participate in Muharram mourning, resort to pomp and show in marriage ceremonies, still

you keep mum and witness all this right before your eyes only because you fear people might label you as unsolicited.

A Muslims is supposed to fear none but Allah and remain unconcerned with the displeasure of the people. The Revealed Book is more than enough for his reformation. The customary and traditional restrictions are worthless and insignificant to him. If you have some love left for Islam and if you still harbour some honour for it then, for God's sake, prepare yourself and have a firm resolve from this very moment that nothing, other than the fear of Allah, is going to obstruct you in the execution of religious obligations. The reformation of the whole world is not incumbent upon you but you are certainly bound to correct and reform yourself and those under your dominion. For you, the first and the foremost is your complete adherence to the Islamic decrees and then to present yourself as an example to your wife, children, neighbours and so on. If you are truthful and sincere then Allah will definitely bless you for your efforts and exalt you in this world and the next. If you are a soldier of truth, then the truth itself is your associate and you would certainly be the shareholder in the victory. A true Muslim is never awestruck by the worldly encounters, instead he, by virtue of the radiance of truth, keeps on illuminating every inch and corner.

*“Those who follow my (Allah's) guidance shall have no fear on them and neither shall they grieve.” 2: 38*

# Question Answer

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## Question.

I have a family member who can be very difficult at times. We have had some issues in the past but I have always tried to maintain the relationship. Recently, when I called her, she took off with me. After saying what she wanted to say, I told her that she has a very bad mouth. She then slammed the phone down on me. I wanted to call her a little later after cooling off. Before I could do this, she called and we both apologised to each other. My husband wants to keep away now.

My question is how do I maintain this family tie. I know that if I see her somewhere I will at least have to greet her. But, I no longer wish to call her. If I call, it will be a problem and if I don't, it will also be a problem.

## Answer:

Maintaining family ties is an extremely important aspect in deen. Astounding virtues have been mentioned for those who make an effort to strengthen the bonds of kinship. The gist of some of the many ahaadeeth in this regard are:

1. "The one who wishes to have blessings in his life and wealth should maintain family ties." (Bukhaari)
2. "Kinship is suspended to the Throne of Allah and continues to make this du'aa: 'The one who maintains me, may Allah maintain him. The one who severs me, may Allah sever him!'" (Muslim)

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3. "Join ties with the one who severs relationship with you, give the one who has deprived you, and forgive the one who has oppressed you." (Musnad Ahmad)

If you fear that by visiting the said person it may create further tension, restrict the contact to calling occasionally. Make the call short. Alternatively, you may send her a sms if you feel it appropriate. If she responds positively, Alhamdulillah. If she responds negatively, you respond in a positive manner, keeping in mind the ahaadeeth mentioned above. insha-Allah by your continued positive response, her heart will change and become positive. However, whether that happens or not, you will still have received the great benefits in this world and the Hereafter.

Also make a point of daily making du'aa for her. Take her name and make du'aa. Do this with diligence. Insha-Allah you will see the positive results of this in a short time.

## Question:

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

## Answer:

Due to one's experiences with some people to harbour ill-thoughts and suspicion

against others is detested. The moment some ill-thought comes to mind, immediately ponder thus: "I have so many faults and sins. I am not innocent. Yet, I am hopeful of the forgiveness of Allah. In the same way others may also be forgiven by Him. However, if I am taken to task due to harbouring ill-thoughts, what answer will I give? On the other hand it is possible that there is some hidden good quality in these people, due to which all their sins will be converted into good deeds on the day of Qiyaamah.

**Question:**

Kindly advise me how to overcome Riyaa (show) and Ujb (conceit)?

**Answer:**

When an act of worship, which must be done for Allah, is done for the creation, this is Riyaa (show). Allah detests Riyaa since this is shirk (associating partners with Allah). On the Day of Judgment Allah will say, "I detest shirk (partnership). Therefore in whichever action you have included someone as a partner to me, go to that person and seek your reward". Now ponder for a moment. For example we perform Salaah to earn the grace of Allah. We discharge it with concentration and devotion so that Allah becomes pleased with us. However, if someone was made a partner in it, then we have destroyed all our efforts to please Allah. When Allah will announce on the day of Judgment that so and so person is guilty of Riyaa, what a humiliation it will be for us! On that day our book of deeds will be empty of any good actions.

When a person has a good opinion about his action or his opinion, then this is Ujb (conceit). In such a situation he should recall his sins, that "I have as many sins in my

account. Thus, could I be happy and pleased with myself? If my sins were to be exposed to others, then how low and evil will they think of me." Sit in solitude and reflect over these words. Insha-Allah, it will protect one from Riyaa and Ujb. May Allah safeguard each one of us from such spiritual diseases.

**Question:**

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

**Question:**

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

Hadhrat Anas (RA) served Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) for almost ten years. He says: "At times Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) instructed me to do some work but I would reply that I will not do it. Sometimes Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) would send me to do some work but I would get involved in some play and amusement. Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) would wait and then come looking for me. He would find me sleeping in some place. He would wake me up and dust off whatever sand may have settled on me. He never ever said, "Why did you do this?" or "Why did you not do that?" Never did he ever say "Oof" as well." Thus we should follow the way of Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). After all Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) most definitely had in mind the reformation of Hadhrat Anas (RA).

*Stay Away*

*The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "The proof of a Muslim's sincerity is that he pays no heed to that which is not his business." (Tirmidhi)*

# Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Tafsir Division, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

## Surah Al-Imran

### Helpers of Sayyiduna Isa (AS)

**So, when Isa sensed disbelief in them (that they plotted to kill him), he said: "Who are my helpers in the way of Allah<sup>1</sup> (against His enemies)?" The disciples<sup>2</sup> said: "We are helpers of Allah. We believe in Allah (i.e., accept the truth); so be our witness (O Isa) that we are Muslims (acknowledging Allah by worshipping Him and declaring His divine Oneness)." (52) "Our Lord, we have believed in what You have revealed (of the scripture), and we have followed the messenger (Isa). So, record us with those who bear witness<sup>3</sup> (to Your Oneness and to the truthfulness of Your messenger)." (53) They (the opponents of Isa) devised a plan (to kill Isa), and Allah devised a plan (against them). And Allah is the best of all planners<sup>4</sup>.(54)**

1. Here, the conclusion can be drawn that it is permissible to seek help from the religious scholars with regard to the religious matters and that it is not against *tawakkul* (trust), because this kind of help is being sought on the basis that they (i.e., the scholars) are the manifestations of Allah's help. (*Bayanul Qur'an*)

2. *Hawari* (disciples) could mean 'helpers'. This is strengthened by the hadith in which the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) pulled Zubayr ibn al-Awwam (RA) to himself and said: 'Every Messenger has his Hawari. My Hawari is Zubayr. (*Ibn Kathir—q.f. Ishraq al-Ma'ani*)

3. The fact that they address their pledges

specifically to Allah is very significant. A believer makes his covenant directly with his Lord. When the messenger conveys Allah's message, the messenger has discharged his task in as far as faith is concerned. The pledge is made between the believer and Allah and it remains binding on the believer after the messenger has passed away. The disciples' statement also includes a pledge to Allah to obey His messenger. This is again significant because it shows that the matter is not simply a question of simple beliefs to be accepted. It is also a commitment to a certain way of life which is received through the messenger. This is a basic factor of this Sura

which is repeatedly emphasized in different moods and styles. (*In the Shade of the Qur'an*)

4. *Makr* (Plan) in Arabic denotes a subtle and secret move or plan. If it is for a good purpose, it is good; and if it is for a bad purpose, it is bad. That is why the restriction of *saiyy* (evil) is placed with *makr* in (35:43) (And evil

plan *المكر السييء* besets none but its perpetrator). The ruler ordered the arrest of Sayyiduna Isa (AS). While this was the scene on one side, the subtle and secret move made by Allah Almighty was countering their evil plans more effectively. (*Ma'ariful Quran*)

## Allah's Promise to Sayyiduna Isa (AS)

(Recall) **When Allah said: "O Isa , I am to take you in full<sup>1</sup> and to raise you (away from the world without death) towards Myself, and to cleanse you<sup>2</sup> (i.e., clear you from false charges and unworthy accusations) of those who disbelieve (in your prophethood), and to place those who follow you<sup>3</sup> (in your religion) above (in arms or in arguments, or in both) those who disbelieve (in your prophethood) up to the Day of Doom. Then to Me is your (i.e., of Isa (AS), his followers and his detractors) return, whereupon I shall judge between you (finally and in a practical, demonstrable way) in that over which you have differed.(55) And as for those who disbelieved (in Allah and His messengers), I shall torment them with a severe torment in this world<sup>5</sup> (through being killed, taken captive etc.,) and the Hereafter (in the fire). Nor shall they have any helpers<sup>6</sup> (to save them from Allah's punishment in this world or in the Hereafter).**

(56)

1. The prevalent opinion among the Companions (RA) was that it refers to the death that Isa (AS) will meet with at the end of his second mission on earth. This is based on several hadiths. (*Ishraq al-Ma'ani*)

2. The Jews threw slanders on the parentage on Isa (AS) because of his having been born without a father. The Qur'an refuted this slander by declaring that he was born without a father because such is the power and will of Allah. And that too does not call for much of a surprise. More surprising is the birth of Adam since he was born without both a father and a mother. (*Ma'ariful Qur'an*)

3. It means that the followers of Isa (AS) will be made to overcome those who deny and oppose him. This promise was fulfilled in the sense that following here means the belief in and confession of the prophet-hood of Isa (AS). The belief in and the practice of all injunctions ascribed to him is not a precondition. Thus, the Christians and the Muslims both fall in this category as they believe

in the prophet-hood and messenger-ship of Isa (AS). However, this is a different matter that holding this much of belief is not enough to bring forth salvation in the Hereafter. Instead, the salvation in the Hereafter depends on believing in all the injunctions brought by him; one of which was that his followers should believe and have faith in the last of the Prophets (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). (*Ma'ariful Qur'an*)

4. The terrible plight of the Jews in Germany and elsewhere is only a matter of recent past. (*Tj. Majidi*)

5. This applies generally to all kinds of unbelievers including the Jews who have been punished with ignominy and wretchedness and subservience to the people until the Day of Judgement. This does not mean that the Muslims are not punished. They are. But it is not a result of the curse or out of anger rather, out of mercy and as a means of expiation of their sins. (*M. Thanvi (RA)- q.f. Ishraq al-Ma'ani*)

## Repayment to Believers

**And for those who believed (in Allah, the scripture and His messengers) and worked righteous works (sincerely between them and their Lord) He shall repay them their wages in full, and Allah loves not the ungodly<sup>1</sup> (the idolaters, with their transgressions and association of partners with Allah) (57)**

1. The condition of believers who, when struck by suffering in the mortal world, have their sins forgiven and they find the due punishment in the Hereafter lightened or warded off. For this reason, a hint to this effect has been made in - 'And Allah loves not the ungodly', i.e., believers are dear because of their belief, as such the beloved ones are always treated like that. The disbelievers are detested because of their disbelief, and those detested do not receive such a treatment. (Bayanul Qur'an)

## Likeness of Sayyiduna Isa (AS)

**This (the story of Isa) We recite unto you of the signs<sup>1</sup> (revelations of the Qur'an, conveying commands and prohibitions) and of the wise admonition (that enjoins what is lawful and what is unlawful). (58) Surely the likeness (i.e., creation) of Isa (without a father) with Allah is as the likeness of Adam,<sup>2</sup> him He created out of dust (without a father or mother; this is a comparison of one remarkable thing with another more remarkable, so that it convinces the disputer and establishes itself in one's mind more effectively); then He said to him, 'Be' (a human being) and he became. (59) This is the Truth from your Lord (that Isa was not Allah, His son or His partner), so be you not of the doubters<sup>3</sup> (i.e., uncertain regarding the creation of Isa without a father). (60)**

1. The 'signs' here imply either the Qur'anic signs or those miracles which point towards the authenticity of the prophethood of Muhammad (S), for - irrespective of being unaware of these facts, he narrated them exactly as recorded by their priests. (Tf. Mazhari)
2. Adam (AS) being created without a father and a mother. This is the point of comparison and resemblance. Isa's (AS) wonderful nature is like that of Adam (AS). He is not substantial with Allah. He is as much a created being as Adam (AS). The divinity of Isa (AS) has been denied by some ancient Christian sects themselves. (Tf. Majidi)
3. The truth does not necessarily come from priests, or from the superstitions of whole peoples. It come from Allah, and where there is a direct revelation, there is no room for doubt. (Yusuf Ali)

### **The Gift of a Partner**

*In a marriage there are many signs by which we can recognize our Creator, Allah. One such sign is that Allah has created for us partners from amongst ourselves, from amongst our own class and type. It is not asked of us to marry some other species of creation. Thus do not just look at one's spouse as one's beloved partner in life, but rather as the "gift" that has been presented to us by Allah. When one receives a gift, instead of looking at the quantity and quality of the gift, one should instead look at the one who has given the gift. Any sensible person greatly treasures a gift given to him/her by a pious personality, even though it maybe something insignificant. In the same way Allah has given us our partner as a gift. Therefore, always consider this and express gratitude to Allah for his gift.*



# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

*Dr. Rafiq Ahmad*

## *The Book of Ablution*

### **Chapter 42 : (Without Tarjamatul Baab)**

#### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

The Hadith of this chapter (Baab) is actually in continuation to previous chapter, So Imam Bukhari has not mentioned any word for its Baab. In some compilations even the word "Baab" is also not mentioned and this Hadith is quoted as another Hadith of previous Baab.

#### **Hadith No. 185**

#### **Narrated As-Sa'ib bin Yazid (RA)**

*"My aunt took me to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle! This son of my sister has got pain in his legs." So he passed his hands on my head and prayed for Allah's blessings for me; then he performed ablution and I drank from the remaining water. I stood behind him and saw the seal of Prophethood between his shoulders, and it was like the "Zir-al-Hijla" (means the button of a small tent, but some said 'egg of a partridge.' etc.)*

#### **Comments**

Sa'id bin Yazid says that his aunt took him to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and requested him to make Dua in his favour

as he was suffering from pain in his legs. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) rubbed his blessed hand over his head and made Dua in his favour. Then Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed Wudu and Sa'ib bin Yazid drank the leftover water.

There are two possibilities, one is that Sa'ib bin Yazid drank the water which remained in the pot after Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) completed his Wudu, and the second is that the water used by Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for Wudu was drunk by him.

### **Chapter 43 : One who rinsed his mouth and sniffed water in his nose with a single handful of water.**

#### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

There is difference of opinion between Shafa'ee and Hanafi schools of thought over the issue whether Madhmadah (to rinse the mouth) and Istinshaaq (to clean the nose) should be done with single handful of water or separately. Imam Bukhari (RA) seems to have kept this issue open by saying "who" does it with single handful of water.

**Hadith No. 186****Narrated 'Amr bin Yahya (RA)**

*"(on the authority of his father) 'Abdullah bin Zaid poured water on his hands from a utensil containing water and washed them and then with one handful of water he rinsed his mouth and cleaned his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out. He repeated it thrice. He, then, washed his hands and forearms up to the elbows twice and passed wet hands over his head, both forwards and backwards, and washed his feet up to the ankles and said, "This is the ablution of Allah's Apostle (Sallallahu Alahi Wasallam)."*

**Comments**

Imam Nawawi (RA) says that as per Shafa'ee school of thought, Madhmadah and Istinshaaq should be done with single handful of water.

The Hadith of this chapter is in their favour. The Hanafite school of thought says that these two things should be done separately and that is better and also Sunnah of Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). As quoted in Abu Dawood, that Hadhrat Uthmaan, Hadhrat Ali and many other Sahaaba used to do it separately. Imam Tirmidhi has quoted that even Imam Shafa'ee preferred to do these two acts with separate handfuls of water.

**Chapter 44 : The passing of wet hands over the head (Masah) once only (while performing Wudu).**

**Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Here Imam Buikhari (RA) expresses his decisive opinion that Masah on head is to be done only once and that rubbing hands first from the front to back and vice versa are two action of same Masah and not to be counted as two actions. Further more, had these been two action, then for each action unused water should have been taken. The

majority of Ulema like Imma Abu Haniefah (RA), Imam Maalik and Imam Ahmad are of the opinion that Masah on head is to be done only once.

**Hadith No. 187****Narrated Amr bin Yahya (RA)**

*"My father said, "I saw Amr bin Abi Hasan asking 'Abdullah bin Zaid about the ablution of the Prophet. Abdullah bin Zaid asked for an earthenware pot containing water and performed ablution in front of them. He poured water over his hands and washed them thrice. Then he put his (right) hand in the pot and rinsed his mouth and washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out thrice with three handfuls of water Again he put his hand in the water and washed his face thrice. After that he put his hand in the pot and washed his forearms up to the elbows twice and then again put his hand in the water and passed wet hands over his head by bringing them to the front and then to the back and once more he put his hand in the pot and washed his feet (up to the ankles.)"*  
*Narrated Wuhaib: that he (the Prophet in narration) had passed his wet hands.*

**Chapter 45 : The performance of Wudu by a man along with his wife. The utilization of leftover water after a woman has performed her Wudu.**

Hadhrat Umar (RA) performed Wudu with warm water brought from the house of a Christian woman.

**Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

This chapter has two parts. One is that a husband and a wife can perform Wudu together with same water. There is no controversy over it and everyone agrees with this point. Second part is that if a wife has performed Wudu in absence of her husband and some water is left in the pot, can that water be used by her husband? Here only two

scholars—Dawood Zahiri and Imam Ahmad say that this water is not Taahir (ritually pure) for her husband while all others are of the opinion that this water is Taahir for him.

#### Hadith No. 188

##### Narrated Abdullah bin Umar (RA)

*“During the lifetime of Allah’s Apostle (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) men and women used to perform Wudu together”.*

#### Comments

This Hadith says that the men and women used to perform Wudu together during the days of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The learned scholars of Hadith say that men and women here mean a husband and wife, so there arises no question of Hijaab. Some people say that if men and women are taken as general people then this Hadith must be of the period before the decree of Hijaab. But in any case, there is no problem if a husband and wife perform Wudu together with the same water.

By mentioning that Hadhrat Umar performed Wudu with warm water that he took from the house of a Christian lady, Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to eradicate all such superstitions that warm water cannot be used to perform Wudu as heat is an attribute of fire and also that the water taken from non-Muslims is not Taahir. In nutshell, pure and clean water is necessary for Wudu irrespective whether it is hot or cold and taken from a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

#### Chapter 46 : The sprinkling of the leftover water of Wudu by the Prophet (Sallallahu

#### Alaihi Wasallam) on an unconscious person.

##### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) further supports his view point that the left over water of Wudu is Taahir and when it is of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), it is blessed also as it was used to cure unconsciousness.

#### Hadith No. 189

##### Narrated Jaabir (RA)

*“Allah’s Apostle came to visit me while I was sick and unconscious. He performed ablution and sprinkled the remaining water on me and I became conscious and said, “O Allah’s Apostle! To whom will my inheritance go as I have neither ascendants nor descendants?” Then the Divine verses regarding Fara'id (inheritance) were revealed”.*

#### Comments

Hadhrat Jaabir bin Abdullah (RA) says that once he had fallen ill to such an extent that he had lost his consciousness and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had come to see him. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed Wudu and sprinkled the left over water on Jaabir bin Abdullah who had regained consciousness with it and got cured. He then asked some questions to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and among those questions, he also asked a question about the inheritance of that person who neither has parents or grand parents nor any children and grand children. Such a person is called Kalala. On this occasion the verses regarding the Kalala were revealed to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

#### **FULFILMENT OF PROMISES**

*Allah says: "And fulfill (every) covenant. Verily! The covenant will be questioned about." (17:34)*

*The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "Three are the signs of a hypocrite: When he speaks, he lies. When he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is trusted, he betrays his trust." (Bukhari and Muslim)*

# The Story Of a Story

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*In August 1954, there appeared in America a remarkable book, written by an author named Muhammad Asad and bearing the title *The Road to Mecca*. The book, a combination of memoir and travelogue, told the story of a convert to Islam who had crossed the spiritual deserts of Europe and the sand deserts of Arabia, on a trek that brought him ultimately to the oasis of Islamic belief. The first few interesting pages of the marvelous book are reproduced here.*

*By Muhammad Asad*

The story I am going to tell in this book is not the autobiography of a man conspicuous for his role in public affairs; it is not a narrative of adventure - for although many strange adventures have come my way, they were never more than an accompaniment to what was happening within me; it is not even the story of a deliberate search for faith - for that faith came upon me, over the years, without any endeavour on my part to find it. My story is simply the story of a European's discovery of Islam and of his integration within the Muslim community.

I had never thought of writing it, for it had not occurred to me that my life might be of particular interest to anyone except myself.

But when, after an absence of twenty-five years from the West, I came to Paris and then to New York in the beginning of 1952, I was forced to alter this view. Serving as Pakistan's Minister Plenipotentiary to the United Nations, I was naturally in the

public eye and encountered a great deal of curiosity among my European and American friends and acquaintances. At first they assumed that mine was the case of a European expert employed by an Eastern government for a specific purpose, and that I had conveniently adapted myself to the ways of the nation which I was serving; but when my activities at the United Nations made it obvious that I identified myself not merely 'functionally' but also emotionally and intellectually with the political and cultural aims of the Muslim world in general, they became somewhat perplexed. More and more people began to question me about my past experiences. They came to know that very early in my life I had started my career as a foreign correspondent for Continental newspapers and, after several years of extensive travels throughout the Middle East, had become a Muslim in 1926; that after my conversion to Islam I lived for nearly six years in Arabia and enjoyed the friendship of King Ibn Saud; that

after leaving Arabia went to India and there met the great Muslim poet-philosopher and spiritual father of the Pakistan idea, Muhammad Iqbal.

For years I devoted myself to studying, writing and lecturing, and in time gained something of a reputation as an interpreter of Islamic law and culture. When Pakistan was established in 1947, I was called upon by its Government to organize and direct a Department of Islamic Reconstruction, which was to elaborate the ideological, Islamic concepts of statehood and community upon which the newly born political organization might draw. After two years of this extremely stimulating activity, I transferred to the Pakistan Foreign Service and was appointed Head of the Middle East Division in the Foreign Ministry, where I dedicated myself to strengthening the ties between Pakistan and the rest of the Muslim world; and in due course I found myself in Pakistan's Mission to the United Nations at New York.

All this pointed to far more than a mere outward accommodation of a European to a Muslim community in which he happened to live: it rather indicated a conscious, wholehearted transference of allegiance from one cultural environment to another, entirely different one. And this appeared very strange to most of my Western friends. They could not quite picture to themselves how a man of Western birth and upbringing could have so fully, and apparently with no mental reservations whatever, identified himself with the Muslim world; how it had been possible for him to exchange his Western cultural heritage for that of Islam; and what it was that had made him accept a religious and social ideology which - they seemed to take for granted - was vastly inferior to all European concepts.

Now why, I asked myself, should my Western friends take this so readily for granted? Had any of them ever really both-

ered to gain a direct insight into Islam - or were their opinions based merely on the handful of clichés and distorted notions that had been handed down to them from previous generations? Could it perhaps be that the old Graeco-Roman mode of thought which divided the world into Greeks and Romans on one side and 'barbarians' on the other was still so thoroughly ingrained in the Western mind that it was unable to concede, even theoretically, positive value to anything that lay outside its own cultural orbit?

Ever since Greek and Roman times, European thinkers and historians have been prone to contemplate the history of the world from the standpoint and in terms of European history and Western cultural experiences alone. Non-Western civilizations enter the picture only in so far as their existence, or particular movements within them, have or had a direct influence on the destinies of Western man; and thus, in Western eyes, the history of the world and its various cultures amounts in the last resort to little more than an expanded history of the West. Naturally, such a narrowed angle of vision is bound to produce a distorted perspective. Accustomed as he is to writings which depict the culture or discuss the problems of his own civilization in great detail and in vivid colours, with little more than side glances here and there at the rest of the world, the average European or American easily succumbs to the illusion that the cultural experiences of the West are not merely superior but out of all proportion to those of the rest of the world; and thus, that the Western way of life is the only valid norm by which other ways of life could be adjudged - implying, of course, that every intellectual concept, social institution or ethical valuation that disagrees with the Western 'norm' belongs to a lower grade of existence. Following in the footsteps of the Greeks and Romans, the Occidental likes to think that all those 'other' civilizations

are or were only so many stumbling experiments on the path of progress so unerringly pursued by the West; or, at best (as in the case of the 'ancestor' civilizations which preceded that of the modern West in a direct line), no more than consecutive chapters in one and the same book, of which Western civilization is, of course, the final chapter. When I expounded this view to an American friend of mine - a man of considerable intellectual attainments and a scholarly bent of mind - he was somewhat sceptical at first.

'Granted,' he said, 'the ancient Greeks and Romans were limited in their approach to foreign civilizations: but was not this limitation the inevitable result/of difficulties of communication between them and the rest of the world? And has not this difficulty been largely overcome in modern times? After all, we Westerners do concern ourselves nowadays with what is going on outside our own cultural orbit. Aren't you forgetting the many books about Oriental art and philosophy that have been published in Europe and America during the last quarter-century ... about the political ideas that preoccupy the minds of Eastern peoples? Surely one could not with justice overlook this desire on the part of Westerners to understand what other cultures might have to offer?'

To some extent you may be right,' I replied. 'There is little doubt that the primitive Graeco-Roman outlook is no longer fully operative these days. Its harshness has been considerably blunted-if for no other reason, because the more mature among Western thinkers have grown disillusioned and sceptical about many aspects of their own civilization and now begin to look to other parts of the world for cultural inspiration. Upon some of them it is dawning that there may be not only one book and one story of human progress, but many: simply because mankind, in the historical sense, is not a homogeneous entity, but rather a variety of groups with widely divergent ideas as to the meaning and purpose of human life. Still, I do

not feel that the West has really become less condescending toward foreign cultures than the Greeks and Romans were: it has only become more tolerant. Mind you, not toward Islam - only toward certain other Eastern - cultures, which offer some sort of spiritual attraction to the spirit-hungry West and are, at the same time, too distant from the Western world-view to constitute any real challenge to its values.' 'What do you mean by that?'

'Well,' I answered, 'when a Westerner discusses, say, Hinduism or Buddhism, he is always conscious of the fundamental differences between these ideologies and his own. He may admire this or that of their ideas, but would naturally never consider the possibility of substituting them for his own. Because he a priori admits this impossibility, he is able to contemplate such really alien cultures with equanimity and often with sympathetic appreciation. But when it comes to Islam - which is by no means as alien to Western values as Hindu or Buddhist philosophy this Western equanimity is almost invariably disturbed by an emotional bias. Is it perhaps, I sometimes wonder, because the values of Islam are close enough to those of the West to constitute a potential challenge to many Western concepts of spiritual and social life?'

And I went on to tell him of a theory which I had conceived some years ago - a theory that might perhaps help one to understand better the deep-seated prejudice against Islam so often to be found in Western literature and contemporary thought.

To find a truly convincing explanation of this prejudice,' I said, 'one has to look far backward into history and try to comprehend the psychological background of the earliest relations between the Western and the Muslim worlds. What Occidentals think and feel about Islam today is rooted in impressions that were born during the Crusades.

**To be Concluded**

# Who Are Your Friends?

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*Sadaf Faruqi*

*"Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken such-and-such as a friend!" [25: 28]*

The one who is always there to console you when you want to talk about a problem, the one who sticks by you through thick and thin, the one whom you can count on to be there for you - this is the person who leaves no doubts in your mind that he or she is your "best friend". You like each other's company and love to spend time together. If something important happens in your life, they're the first to know. You trust them and depend upon them in times of need.

They may be a classmate, a colleague, a neighbor, a sister, a mother; or even your spouse! It could be anyone who fits this description.

But are they really your "true" friend? How can you find out? Ask yourself: are they taking you towards the most certain and perpetual success and benefit: that of the Hereafter, or are they going to be the cause of regret for you on the Day of Judgment? See for yourself.

Here is a checklist. When in each other's company, you both:

1. Comfortably backbite and make fun of

people.

2. Laugh at others together, be it a passerby or someone you are discussing.

3. Call each other demeaning names in fun.

4. Start a conversation with "Hi!" and plunge into an exchange of the latest gossip.

5. Hardly ever mention or discuss Allah, the Quran or Hadith in the time spent together.

6. End up spending money on things you don't need.

7. Feel hesitant to discuss religion, unless it is a criticism of any aspect of Islam.

8. Never point out each other's faults politely; if one does, the other quickly changes the subject or gets defensive.

9. Get involved in activities that delay/do away with Salah (Islamic Prayer), the major obligation from Allah.

10. Have never prayed any Salah together.

11. Support each other in fulfilling every desire - a dress that caught your fancy, or the in-fashion shoes, even if they are not needed.

12. Discuss unimportant things and events in meticulous detail, such as a film, the latest clothes you got tailored, or a wedding party you attended.

13. When one of you feels guilty about having

committed a sin, the other quickly offers reassurance that "It's no big deal, everyone does it", and comes up with convincing excuses for the other not to feel guilty about it.

About a 'friendship' that has most of the above characteristics, Allah says in the Quran:

*"Friends on that day will be foes to one and another - except the Righteous Ones." [43: 67]*

Allah makes an exception to this situation in the Quranic verse above: "except those who are Al-Muttaqin: the righteous ones".

So who are these 'righteous ones'? How can you tell whether your friend is really and truly your sincere "friend"? Here is another checklist of characteristics that depict a friendship that will lead to success in the Hereafter. When together, you both:

1. Remind each other of Allah when you set eyes on each other.
2. Leave each other's company with a higher level of Iman (faith in Allah).
3. Inevitably start the conversation with the Islamic greeting 'As-Salamu-Alaykum', and receive the proper reply for it.
4. Almost always mention Allah, the Quran, or Hadith in some context or the other, in your conversations.
5. Strengthen each other's belief on the Hereafter.
6. Always end up exchanging useful and mature ideas and thoughts.
7. Love each other above and beyond worldly benefits.
8. Give each other more Du'as (well wishes) than material gifts.
9. Enquire regularly about the health of the other's family.
10. Attend religious study-circles/ Halaqahs together.
11. Have prayed Salah together many times.

12. Have watched each other cry, out of fear of Allah or out of regret for committing a transgression.

13. Listen attentively if the other is saying something that pleases Allah.

14. Politely point out and reform each other's mistakes or bad habits in the best way possible.

15. Laugh a lot together, but with decent, non-malicious humor.

16. Become uninterested and change the subject if the other starts to say something that is impermissible.

17. Always discourage the other if they plan to do something wrong.

18. Always encourage the other if they intend to do a good deed that they're hesitant to do.

19. Never waste each other's time in useless activities.

20. Never invite the other to a place or gathering of sin.

21. Have full trust that they will never reveal secrets or personal problems to others, nor will they gossip about you behind your back.

22. Address each other in a respectful and loving manner.

23. Forgive each other's faults and shortcomings, and hide them from others.

Those whose friendships possess most of the above characteristics are those who shall be saved from all kinds of discomfort and pain on the Day of Judgment when their Lord will provide them with a special place under His Throne, according to His promise:

Narrated by Abu Hurairah: Allah's Messenger (RA) said:

*"Verily, Allah will say on the Day of Standing: 'Where are those who had mutual love for the sake of My Glory? Today I shall shelter them in My shadow when there is no other shadow but the shadow of Mine.'" [Muslim]*



# Top 10 Reasons to Turn Off Your TV

**Mark Stibich**

Turning off your television will gain you, on average, about 4 hours per day. Imagine if you took that time to exercise, give your brain a workout and develop strong relationships. Not only would you be adding years to your life, you would become more interesting, energetic, and fun. So take the plunge and try not watching TV for a week. At first it will be strange and awkward, but stick with it and soon you will love all the extra time.

## **1. Television Eats Your Time**

The average U.S. adult watches more than 4 hours of television a day. That's 25 percent of waking time spent every day. Imagine if you suddenly had 25 percent more time -- that's three extra months per year! You could get in all your exercise, cook your meals from scratch and still have time left over to write a novel.

Over a lifetime, an 80-year-old person would have watched 116,800 hours of television, compared to only 98,000 hours of work. As a nation, adults watch 880 million hours of television every day or 321 billion hours per year. Whew! Imagine what could get done if we all just stopped watching TV.

## **2. Television makes you stressed**

With the average of four hours a day gone, it's no wonder everyone is feeling stressed out and overwhelmed. We put aside paying bills, finishing projects, making phone calls and cleaning our homes to watch TV. We feel overwhelmed because of all the things we should be doing (exercising, spending time with family, eating right) go undone.

And when we feel overwhelmed, tired, and exhausted we don't have energy to anything but -- you guessed it -- watch TV. It is a dreadful cycle. So take a break from TV for a week and see what happens to your life.

## **3. Television Makes You Overweight**

Eating while distracted limits your ability to assess how much you have consumed. According to Eliot Blass at the University of Massachusetts, people eat between 31 and 74 percent more calories while watching TV.

This could add, on average, about 300 calories extra per TV meal. Now consider that at least 40 percent of families watch TV while eating dinner. It becomes clear that TV is a big part of the obesity epidemic in the U.S. and that TV, in fact, makes you gain weight.

## **4. Television Makes You Uninteresting**

Many people have whole conversa-

tions that are recaps of TV programs, sporting events and sitcoms. When asked about their real lives, there is little or nothing to report and no stories to tell (except the TV shows they have watched).

Life is too interesting and wonderful to spend your time either watching TV or recapping television to your friends. Find something interesting to do: volunteer, read, paint -- anything but watch more TV.

### **5. Television Ruins Your Relationships**

A television is turned on an average of 7 hours and 40 minutes per day in many U.S. households. With the TV on that much, there is little time for you and your significant other or children to spend time together, share experiences, and develop deeper relationships.

Sitting together and watching TV does not grow a relationship. Turn that TV off and find something to do together --cooking, exercising, taking a walk, anything.

### **6. Television is Not Relaxation**

TV is the opposite of exercise. If you are watching TV you are usually sitting, reclining or lying down. You are burning as few calories as possible. All that extra food you eat while watching TV does not get burned off. Your brain goes into a lull.

But you are not relaxing -- your mind is still receiving stimuli from the TV, you are processing information and reacting emotionally. Have you ever found yourself thinking about TV characters? Do you ever dream about TV shows? These are signs that the brain is working hard to process all the TV you have been watching.

### **7. Television Loses Opportunities**

If you are sitting and watching TV, nothing new or exciting is going to happen to you. New opportunities and ideas come from being out in the world, talking to people, and reading interesting things.

Watching TV isolates you. Nothing is going to change in your world if you are watching TV. Turn off the TV, go out into the world, talk to people, and see what happens.

### **8. Television is Addictive**

Television can become addictive. Signs of TV addiction include:

- using the TV to calm down
- not being able to control your viewing
- feeling angry or disappointed in how much TV you watched
- feeling on edge if kept from watching
- feeling a loss of control while watching

If the idea of giving up TV for a week is horrifying, you may be addicted to television. Luckily, TV addiction is a habit and not a physical addiction like smoking. You should be able to control it once you are aware of the problem and make a decision to change.

### **9. Television Makes You Buy Things**

By age 65, the average American has seen 2 million commercials. Your knowledge of products and brands comes from these TV commercials. Your perception of what you need also comes from these commercials.

If you didn't know that your iPod could talk to your running shoes, you wouldn't feel like your current shoes are too low-tech. If you didn't know about vacuums that never lose suction, your current vacuum would seem fine. Our perception of need is determined by what we see. Need less by watching less TV.

### **10. Television Costs Money**

A basic cable package costs \$43 per month and many packages cost much more than that. That comes to at least \$500 a year spent on TV. For that much money you could: buy a membership to every museum or zoo in your town, get a gym membership, buy a nice bicycle, invest it every year for 10 years at 10 percent interest\* and have more than \$10,000.

# Qur'anic Sciences

*Justice Maulana Taqi Usmani*

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

## **2. EXEGESIS OF THE SUFIS (MYSTICS)**

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

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

About it some Sufis have said

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. SELF-CONCEIVED INTERPRETATIONS

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said,

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

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

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

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

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

the same time firmly negate the deliberations of other scholars.

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

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

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

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

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#### **Cont'd from page 37**

In light of all this, we can ascertain that while recreation and entertainment are necessary to lead balanced lives, we should not however allow it to take up too much of our time. Nor should we engage in it to the point where it ceases to be beneficial. Furthermore we should not let it become our habit to perpetually seek recreation and diversion and lastly our means of recreation and our entertainments must be completely free from anything that is unlawful in Islam

# How you Live..... is how you Die

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'To tell the truth, he looked like he was staring into the eyes of death'

A police officer in a Muslim country wrote the following letter to a Shaykh describing the events that led to his return to Allah. He recalls:

Seeing accidents and crash victims was a normal part of my day, but one incident was different.

My partner and I had parked on the shoulder of the highway and began to chat. In a random second, the scene shattered to the hideous sound of metal bodies becoming one. We threw our heads back to see what had happened: a head-on collision, the result of a vehicle slipping into the lane of the oncoming traffic.

You couldn't describe the carnage. Two young men sprawled in the first car, both in critical condition. We carried them gently away from the car and rested them on the ground.

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

My partner began dictating the Shahadah to them. "Say: La ilaha illAllah (there is no god but Allah), La ilaha illAllah..."

... their tongues wouldn't acknowledge. They started humming the hypnotic lyrics of some song. I was terrified. My part-

ner had experience however and he kept repeating his instruction.

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

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

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

The police officer fell back into routine, as he narrates, and started to drift from Allah. But another event happened to him that sealed the return. He continues... What an odd world. After some time, about six months, a strange accident took place.

A young man was moving along the highway normally, but within one of the tunnels leading to the city, he was maimed by a flat tire. To the side of the tunnel he parked and stepped to the back to remove the spare tire. The whistle of a speeding car from behind. In a second, it collided with the crippled car, the young man in-between. He fell to the ground with critical injuries.

I rushed to the scene, myself and

another partner other than the first. Together we carried the young man's body into our patrol car and phoned the hospital to prepare for his arrival. He was a young adult in his blossom years. Religious, you could tell from his appearance. He was mumbling when we carried him, but in our rush, we had not paid attention to what he was saying. However, when we placed him on his back in the patrol car we could make it out. Through the pain his heart was reciting Quran! He was so immersed in the recitation... Subhan Allah, you would have never said that this person was in intense pain.

Blood had soaked his clothes crimson red, his bones had clearly snapped in several places. To tell the truth, he looked like he was staring into the eyes of death. He continued to read in his unique, tender voice. Reciting each verse in proper rhythm. In my entire life, I had never heard any recitation like it. I said to myself, I'm... I'm going to instruct him to say the Shahadah just like I saw my friend doing; especially since I had previous experience.

My partner and I listened intently to that soft voice. I felt a shiver shock my back and up my arm, the hair stood. Suddenly, the hymn ceased. I watched silently as his hand rose softly. He had his index finger pointed upward to the heavens, saying the Shahadah "(La ilaha illAllah / There is no god but Allah)." Then... his head slumped. Nothing. I jumped to the back seat, felt his hand, his heart, his breathing. He was dead!

I couldn't stop staring at him. A tear fell but I hid it in shame. I turned back to my partner and told him that the boy's life had ceased – he burst out loud crying. Seeing a

man cry like that, I could not control myself and my partner faded away behind the fall of my own tears. The patrol car fogged from the emotions.

We arrived at the hospital. As we rushed through the corridors, we told all the doctors, nurses, and onlookers what had happened. So many people were affected by what we said, some stood there speechless and tearful. No one wanted to lose sight of the boy until they had been assured of the time and place he would be buried.

One of the hospital staff phoned the boy's home. His brother picked it up and was told of the accident. His brother told us about him: He used to go out every Monday to visit his only grandmother outside of town. Whenever he visited her, he made sure to spend time with the poor children idling the streets and the orphans. The town knew him – he was the one that would bring them the Islamic books and tapes. His dusty Mazda would be filled with rice and sugar and even candies – couldn't forget the candies – for those families who were in need.

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

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So let us take lesson from these incidents and make a firm vow to start changing our lives from now on.

Source: islaminfo

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

# Qur'anic Dialectics

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*M. Shahid Alam*

In the Qur'an man appears in a variety of capacities: as prophet, messenger, sage; as Muslim, Momin, Jew, Christian, Magian, Sabian; as disbeliever, skeptic, hypocrite, idolater; as tyrant and his victims crying out for justice; as one whose self-regard has made him deaf, dumb and blind to the signs of Allah; as men whose hearts tremble with awe when Allah is mentioned.

**Allah speaks to all of them.**

Directly and indirectly, and at different levels, the contest for man's soul undergirds nearly all the exchanges in the Qur'an, whether these exchanges occur between Allah and the angels, Allah and Iblis, or Allah and man. Of necessity, these exchanges turn their attention to nearly everything in Allah's creation, seen and Unseen - from the design of the heavens to the manner in which cows are put together to produce pure milk, sweet to the drinker.

**In order to bring man to the straight path, the Qur'an harnesses the resources of human language, reasoning, rhetoric, and prosody; it infers the Unknown from the known; it draws lessons from the history of human arrogance; it borrows images from this life to illustrate the felicity and pain of**

**the Hereafter; it speaks to each interlocutor in a manner suited to his or her capacity and needs.**

Since the Qur'an had to speak to audiences that were often hostile to its message - Arab pagans or followers of previous revelations jealous of a new revelation given to a people without a Scripture - it was forced to respond to their objections, using reason and rhetoric to bring them into the new faith.

Repeatedly and without flinching, the Qur'an records the objections and taunts of its adversaries: mushrikin who associate other divinities with Allah; munafiqin who entered Islam in order to undermine it from within; and the kafirin, disbelievers, among Jews and Christians. It also answers their objections.

In large parts, the Qur'anic mode of revelation is dialectical. Allah listens and speaks to men, answering their objections, addressing their concerns, guiding, giving comfort. Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) did not go up to the mountains to receive the Qur'an inscribed on tablets, nor was the Qur'an delivered as a manuscript written out on papyrus scrolls. Instead, at least as things appear to us, the Qur'an emerges out of the social matrix in which Muhammad



(Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) finds himself - in Mecca and Medina - daily wrestling with the task of saving souls, unraveling the plans of his adversaries, and bringing guidance and comfort to those who had chosen to stand by his side.

Allah sent down portions of the Qur'an to Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) - communicated to him by the angel Jibra'il (AS) - over a period of twenty-three years: the first revelation came in 610 when

he was alone, on one of his customary retreats in the mountain cave of Hira outside Mecca; he received the last verses shortly before his death in 632. Step by step He has sent the Scripture down to you with the truth, confirming what went before. This was contrary to the notions the Meccan pagan had about a revealed book: and they ask, Why was the Qur'an not sent down to him all at once? Allah answers, We sent it in this way to strengthen your heart [Prophet]; We give it to you in gradual revelation.

Often but not always, the Qur'an comments upon events as they unfold, giving instructions on how Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) should respond to them, or, after the fact, draws lessons from these events. In order to make sense of these exchanges, the early Muslims developed a genre of writing describing the 'occasions of revelation' (asbab al-nuzul) for each verse. In later times, these would become indispensable aids to the understanding of the Qur'an.

Allah and man are constantly in conversation in the pages of the Qur'an. Nearly always, moreover, these conversations are reported directly, so that we can listen in to the conversations that take place between the prophets and disbelievers. In these conversations, we can see ourselves mirrored - for man was created weak - in the disbelievers, as they demanded proofs, signs, and miracles. We too face the need, more than our ancestors, to overcome doubt and disbelief:

to resist the downward pull of our appetites.

Equally, we can hear the prophets in conversation with Allah, His angels and the disbelievers. We listen in to Allah, as He answers the disbeliever's questions, confronts them with questions, demands that they provide proofs for their rejection of the revelations, urging them to observe, think, ponder, and reason. In short, Allah insists on engaging the disbelievers: in order that He may dispel their doubts.

As a result, the

Qur'an contains a great variety of arguments: including questions, parables, analogies, syllogisms, contrasts, comparisons, and conditional, probabilistic and disjunctive arguments. As if to compensate for Allah's refusal to deliver miracles to the polytheists and disbelievers of Arabia, the Quran offers a nearly endless array of dazzling insights into the physical world, society, and human nature; it also brings - depending on our ability to receive them - endless intimations of the Un-

*The Qur'an to speak to the skeptical and disbelieving man across all ages, to appeal to his sensate experiences, his feeling of shame, his innate sense of the just, true, and beautiful, his sense of wonder and awe, his quest for meaning, but above all, his powers of thinking, reasoning and imagination: constantly urging him to use all his cognitive faculties to see the Unseen in the visible world, to discern Allah in His signs, and, eventually, to awaken his latent cognitive powers, to see all things with the eye of the heart.*

seen.

In some ways, Qur'anic dialectics transports the reader to the time and locale of the revelations. We can witness the events of the Qur'an as if in real time; we can hear the voices of blessed Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) companions; we become witnesses to the sacred history taking shape in the environs of Mecca and Medina. Above all, the reader can hear Allah speaking to man in a hundred different voices, in a hundred different circumstances. In other words, the Qur'an seeks to incorporate its readers into its revelation: and by so doing it recreates some of the impact which had it on those who first heard its inimitable symphony of sense and sound.

In its dialectical method of discourse, the Qur'an finds the amplitude to record and respond to the objections of the disbelievers, pagans and the hypocrites who opposed and challenged the prophets and their mission.

Its dialectical method allows the Qur'an to speak to the skeptical and disbelieving man across all ages, to appeal to his sensate experiences, his feeling of shame, his innate sense of the just, true, and beautiful, his sense of wonder and awe, his quest for meaning, but above all, his powers of thinking, reasoning and imagination: constantly urging him to use all his cognitive faculties to see the Unseen in the visible world, to discern Allah in His signs, and, eventually, to awaken his latent cognitive powers, to see all things with the eye of the heart.

The Qur'an addresses the integral man: for only the integral man is capable of discovering Allah. Allah seeks to restore wholeness to men and women whose worldly ambitions and cares have denuded them, reduced them to truncated creatures who view the world only as appetite and quantity: so that they measure life primarily in terms of growth that satisfies their appetites.

The Qur'an strives to re-center man in his spirit, from where he can see things as they really are, that is, as Allah sees them. This was the blessed Prophet's constant prayer: it should be ours too.

### ***Seeing may be Deceiving!***

*Qaasim (RA), the son of Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) passed away in infancy whilst still being suckled by his mother Sayyidah Khadeejah (RA). Due to her natural motherly love and compassion for her child she said to Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam): "My bosom is still filled with milk for him. How nice it would have been if he was first weaned off before passing away." To console her Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) replied:*

*"Arrangements for his breastfeeding have been made in Jannah." Khadeejah (RA) said: "I was unaware of that."*

*Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) mentioned: "If you so wish, I will supplicate to Allah who will make it possible for you to hear Qaasim's voice." At this she replied: "There is no need for that, for I have (more) conviction in what Allah and his Rasool (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) have mentioned (than in what I perceive through my senses)." (Sunan Ibni Maajah)*

***Lesson:*** *The only safe option for a blind person is to follow one who can see.*

*In terms of the Aakbirah, and with regard to what is the route to success in this world and the next, we are all blind and Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) is the one who can see. Therefore we should "blindly" follow in his footsteps and be hundred percent convinced that what he has said is the reality.*

*Khadeejah (RA) has given us this beautiful lesson from her spontaneous response.*

# The Daily Race

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*It's a daily race to outdo the negative with the positive. Frequently examining your actions lead to better habits that makes one a positive, pious, caring and contributing individual. While we may be examining our own deeds, the All-Knowing is the most Merciful and wants the best for us.*

*Zeba Hashmi*

Every day is a race to fulfill our responsibilities. Those basic responsibilities can involve studying, earning a living, looking after our family, and giving time to friends. As we are busy in the race to complete the items on our daily checklist, another type of recording takes place at another level; the recording of our good and bad deeds. While our daily routine is part of our deeds, the daily race to accumulate good deeds breaks down the daily routine and allows us to examine our each action and intention.

Did we wake up for Fajr? How much devotion was involved in our praying today? Did we speak gently to our mother today? Did we help anyone in anyway today? Did we overindulge in talking, spending, eating, relaxing? Did we learn good knowledge? Did we impart it to others? There are innumerable ways to gain rewards and to negate the rewards without even realizing it at times.

Imagine charting the good and bad deeds on an average day. For the individual

who is consciously aware of their deeds, the chart would resemble somewhat of a zigzag line. For example, my day started off with Fajr prayer on time but said groggily and quickly. I then visited a sick friend to make him feel better. I met some friends and perhaps we spoke too much about another brother. I saw a community member struggling with her groceries while walking home so I helped her carry her bags. My mother reminded me of some chores I was expected to complete and I didn't reply back to her. I was going to the university just at Dhuhr time and was able to join the congregation at the masjid which was on my way.

It's a daily race to outdo the negative with the positive. Frequently examining your actions lead to better habits that makes one a positive, pious, caring and contributing individual. While we may be examining our own deeds, the All-Knowing is the most Merciful and wants the best for us. A beautiful hadith qudsi narrated by Abu Huraira is that the

Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: Allah says: *Whenever My slave intends to do a bad deed. (I say to the deeds recording angels): Do not record it against him until he (actually) commits it. If he has done so, write it down exactly as one in his record book. But if he refrains from it for My sake, write down this as a virtue in his favour. And when he intends to do a good deed, but does not actually do it, write it as a virtue for him And if he puts it into practice, write its reward equal to, from ten to seven hundred times (in his account). [Bukhari, Muslim, and Tirmidhi]*

It has been made so easy for us to accumulate rewards provided our intention in our obligations, work and with others remains good. We may be able to fool ourselves with our intentions at times but we cannot fool our Creator. In another hadith reported by Muslim, it is narrated that the purity of intention is behind every deed. The hadith states that the following three types

of cases will be decided on the Day of Judgment to enter the gates of hell; a martyr who fought to be called a brave warrior, a scholar who studied to gain worldly popularity, and a rich man who gave to be recognized as generous.

Although bad intentions that haven't been committed aren't recorded, the best of visible deeds cannot be fulfilled without the clearest of intention. And for those good intentions Allah bestows upon us multiple rewards. Allah's mercy is generous. It's human nature to err, however, if we are conscious of God's basic commands that keep harmony and balance with others and overall on Earth then we can keep our records in the positive. The Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that Allah said: *My mercy has preceded My wrath. [Muslim]*

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### ***A Beautiful Response to Abusive Insults***

*A man once verbally abused Abu Zar Ghifaari (RA) the illustrious Sahaabi of Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), he replied to the man's insult with the following words: "Brother! There is a steep and rocky road between me and Jannah. If I pass through safely, then your insult means nothing to me. But on the contrary, if I fail to cross that path and hence I am prevented from reaching Jannah then indeed I am worthy of insults much worse than what you have mentioned." (Nafhatul-Arab)*

*Lesson: Those who are conscious of the reality of this world and are focused towards their real destination, i.e. the Hereafter, they are not distracted by petty issues. Thus they easily dismiss the silly insults of people and happily continue on their journey towards the Akhirah.*

*On the contrary if a person does not focus on his destination, or if one is consumed by his ego, such a person will be deeply affected by every little comment.*

*Therefore ignore the side issues. Keep your gaze on the way ahead and insha-Allah you will stay happy.*

# On the Path of the Beloved

## *The Battle of Badr*

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*The battle of Badr was the first battle between Muslims and Quraysh, and the first victory for Islam and the truth against Quraysh and falsehood.*

*Amr Khalid*

When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) arrived to Madinah, there were many challenges: The migrants from Makkah who left their families, homes and properties were homeless and unemployed in Madinah. The nature of work in Madinah (farming) was different from what they were used to in Makkah (trade). Accordingly, their financial status was getting worse and they were getting poorer. Many of the poor migrants were called "Ahlul-Soffa" due to their abject poverty. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) assigned a small place for them in his mosque, where they were to live until they find a better option. Furthermore, the customs in Madinah and the health atmosphere were totally different. The migrants felt lonely and estranged, being away from their homeland.

As for the Ansaar (Muslims from Madinah), there was rivalry between the two tribes "Aws" and "Khazraj" even after they

embraced Islam. They were challenging each other: which of them would play the key role in the new society? Besides, there were still some disbelievers from Aws and Khazraj in Madinah. As the power of Islam was growing, there appeared the new category of hypocrites in the Muslim society. They declared themselves Muslims, yet they held grudges and hatred towards Muslims and plotted against them. In addition, there were three major Jewish tribes controlling the economy of Madinah: trading grains, dates, liquors, and clothes, and even owning the water wells. The Jews felt they were far better than the Arabs, as they thought the last Prophet would be one of them. Hence, when the Prophet came from the Arabs, the Jews felt angry and envious. Outside Madinah, Quraysh was still there, monitoring the events and bearing in mind that the struggle did not end.

To control the internal affairs, the

Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) implemented the following three tactics:

1- Building the mosque: not only for worshipping but also as a place where all Muslims (migrants and Ansaar, Aws and Khazraj) would meet, and their hearts and minds would converge.

2- Establishing brotherhood between migrants and Ansaar: by making one Muslim from the migrants live with a Muslim from the Ansaar. Hence, the problem of residence would be solved for the migrants, the migrants would teach the Ansaar about Islam, and the society would experience collaboration.

3- Setting a constitution of the rights and duties of citizenship for the inhabitants of Madinah: This would apply to the Muslims and the Jews, as they were to live together and co-exist in a new society based on the principles of Islam.

Accordingly, the society started to move towards charity and goodness. People were very positive and reacted positively to what the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did. Unfortunately, nowadays people in our countries are the exact opposite. Let us examine an example of charity in Madinah. A poor migrant went to the Prophet as he was homeless. The Prophet asked the Muslims to host that poor man for the night. A man and his wife from the Ansaar took the man to their home, and started preparing dinner; unfortunately, the food was not enough, and their children were hungry. They were really poor, but they wanted to do something good. We have to learn that charity and generosity are not restricted to rich people only; anybody who loves Islam can do this. Well, the poor couple put their children to sleep without dinner, dimmed the light, and placed the food before their guest. They pretended that they were eating with him so that he would have all the food. They did this without intending to tell anybody in order to gain Tha-

wab (reward) and be rewarded by Allah (SWT). In the morning, when they went to perform the morning prayer, they found that the revelation was sent with an Ayah to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Allah sent what can be translated as, "... and prefer (the Muhajirn) above themselves, even though penury be (their portion)" (59:9). They wanted to keep it as a secret, but Allah (SWT) wanted to announce it; they wanted to do it faithfully for the sake of Allah, and Allah wanted the news to spread and good to prevail. After the prayer, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told them, "Allah is satisfied with what you did with your guest last night". Allah (SWT) did this because the society was very poor and needy, hence values of good and beneficence had to prevail.

On the economical level, the society was very poor, but they moved towards developing all aspects of life. At that time the role of businessmen started. Othman Ibn-Affan (RA), who was very rich, bought a water well from the Jews and offered it to the Muslims as a gift. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also set up a new market in Madinah, as the Jews were controlling the trade. This was to prepare new Muslim businessmen who would be able to shoulder the mission, e.g. Abdel-Rahman Ibn-Ouf (RA). Youths also started having a role; 70 youths from the companions established a group to teach Ahlul-soffa some crafts (small projects) to practice by day like; turnery and smithery. At night, these youths used to teach them Qur'an. Those 70 companions were named "The Readers" because they taught people the Noble Qur'an. For their help in solving the economic problem in the society, Allah (SWT) rewarded them all with martyrdom at the same day. You can have a message in media, art, or business, and this would still be considered a big deed for Islam. Dear brothers and sisters! we have to note that good and beneficence does not only mean spending on

orphanages or teaching Qur'an.

At this time, the duties of Islam started to be revealed. Prayer was obligated during Al-Israa and Al-Mi'raj, but each prayer consisted of 2 Raka'as (unit of the prayer). However, in Madinah they were set to what we know now. Forms of worship were set here because Muslims were in need for a huge spiritual boost. Fasting was ordained for the first time in Madinah, two years after the migration. Hijab was set as a duty, and Zakat too. Notice that everything in our religion was revealed at the right time, when the society needed it.

Creativity found an outlet as well: using the Mimbar (pulpit) was the idea of a woman from the companions. She told the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that to achieve better communication, he should stand on a high place to see the people and to be seen by them while delivering his speeches. As for the Adhan (call for prayers), Muslims were wondering how to gather people for prayers. They wanted to have some method that is different from other religions. Abdullah Ibn-Zaid (RA), one of the companions had a dream that a man taught him the words of the Adhan. He told the Prophet about the dream and the Adhan wording, and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that it was a good vision. This man was thinking hard for the sake of Islam, and this was why Allah (SWT) guided him to what he was seeking. If you love Islam and dream for it, Allah (SWT) will send you ideas. Can you see that Abdullah (RA) is gaining Thawab until the Day of Judgment because he cared for Islam and dreamt for it? Notice that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked Bilal (RA) to make the call for prayers with the Adhan because he had a beautiful voice. Islam cares a lot for values of beauty, and the Prophet wanted the Adhan to be performed in the best way.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasal-

lam) represented a role model for the people in this society. They were very poor, and when one of them went to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to complain of hunger, he found him in the same state too. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) never ate except after the people ate; months would pass before any cooking would be done in his house, and he mainly ate dates and water. Being such an example, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) helped the people to be patient. If you can visit the houses of his wives, you will find them very small, although at that time they used to have big and nice houses.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) set an example in selflessness as well. One time when it was very cold during a winter in Madinah; a woman from the Ansaar weaved a woolen outfit for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was very happy to have it, and wore it for Fajr prayer. One of the Ansaar saw it and said, "What a beautiful outfit! Would you give it to me, Messenger of Allah?" The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) immediately took it off and put it on the man. The companions blamed the man for doing this, but the man said, "I didn't want it because of the cold, but to be shrouded with it in my grave".

As for the situation outside of Madinah, the conflict between truth and falsehood did not end, although the "truth" left Makkah. Actually the battles and wars would start. There is something very important we have to note: within the current world events, we are not ashamed of Jihad, or of the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) ahadith about martyrs and mujahedoon (fighters for the sake of Allah). We have to understand the reasons behind the Prophet's jihad. Remember the first words for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) when he entered Madinah, "O people! Spread peace

among you ...You will get in Jannah peacefully". The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) hated spilling blood; the total number of those who got killed during all the battles of the Prophet was 400, in 17 or 18 battles. The Prophet could have turned battles into blood baths, especially when conquering Makkah, but he did not. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) got into these wars only for the sake of the Message. The Prophet wanted Quraysh to allow him to convey his message to the whole of mankind. Then they would be free to choose, because embracing the message cannot be enforced. Leaving Makkah was a solution for the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) because he was at a safe place where he was able to communicate his message freely to people. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not escape from Makkah to live a luxurious life. Nevertheless, Quraysh was still an obstacle in the way of delivering the message. Arab tribes refused to listen to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) because they had treaties and they allied with Quraysh, so they feared spoiling their relations and interests with them. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) insisted on delivering the message of Allah, even if he was obliged to go into war.

On the day of the battle of Badr, Otba Ibn-Rabi'a said, "O people of Quraysh! Let's get back to Makkah. Let Muhammad deliver his message to the people. If the Arabs kill him, you will be relieved. If he con-

quers the Arabs, his glory and honor is then yours." Abu-Jahl told him, "What a coward you are! Do we leave our money?" Again the problem was the personal interests: money, positions, superiority, idols, and the treaties with Arabs. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) felt that if there would be no solution but war in order to deliver the message, then he would go for it, even he would get killed.

Remember that many of the companions were deprived of their money and properties when they left Makkah; even the Prophet's house was taken and sold. The Prophet would never leave the rights of these people, and the ones who were killed, like Sumaya (RA). One may ask, why didn't the Prophet fight them when he was in Makkah? No! The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) respected his home and its system; he respected the rights and duties of citizenship. He knew he had no right to destroy his hometown. But after going to Madinah, he and Quraysh became two separate entities. Above all, Quraysh was preparing itself to fight the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) anyway. So the Prophet's wars were not defensive, and at the same time Islam did not prevail by the sword. The whole issue lies in the fact that the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) wanted Quraysh to give him the opportunity to deliver his message to the people, but they refused.

*To be Concluded*

### *Five before Five*

*The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Take benefit of five before five:*

*your youth before your old age,  
your health before your sickness,  
your wealth before your poverty,  
your free-time before your preoccupation,  
and your life before your death."*

*(Hakim)*



# Conveying The Message With Clarity

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*New generations are there for the first time, people who have started taking their religion seriously are there for the first time, new converts, etc. By being clear, you are only helping all of them out.*

*Omar Husain*

The student of knowledge, Da'ee (caller), or Scholar has been given a great blessing by Allah to be in a position to learn, and teach others. However, with teaching comes a great responsibility, as you are responsible for people's spiritual well being. With this in mind, I feel it is important to highlight a few ways to be more effective for those who are in positions of teaching or preaching, be it a small weekly halaqa (study circle), a course, or an Islamic conference.

## **Do Not Assume People Know**

This is a mistake we see often in our religious teachers. Just because you don't even think twice about who Imam Nawawi is, or who Ibn Qayim is, does not mean anyone else has a clue who these great individuals were. It would be more effective to perhaps mention something briefly about them, and proceed. I remember one time, someone mentioned the term "Malikis", as in followers of Maliki fiqh (jurisprudence), and a brother, who regularly prays and fasts, asked, "Are

they Muslims too!!!" This was not intentional; he just had no idea what the term meant. Also, people in your audience are constantly changing. New generations are there for the first time, people who have started taking their religion seriously are there for the first time, new converts, etc. By being clear, you are only helping all of them out.

## **Don't Forget to Translate**

An inspiring or informative class or lecture could be even better by not leaving Arabic terms or phrases untranslated. I have seen this many times with teachers, especially the more advanced they get. Sometimes, it is central to the theme of the subject. So, for example, you have to translate "urf", or Qur'anic verses completely, otherwise it is less effective for the audience. It is frustrating for a listener to be following you every step of the way, and then lose you at your main point because you used language they don't understand.

**Observe General Etiquette on Stage**

Nothing is more discouraging or disheartening to your audience than seeing a presenter or speaker texting away on the stage, or looking around randomly. It shows, fairly or unfairly, that you don't care, and that you don't want to be there. If you don't want to be there, why should anyone else? Like it or not, this is what people are thinking. Yes, sometimes it is necessary in coordinating events, but keep it to a bare minimum.

**Do Not Be Sarcastic When Answering a Question**

No matter how ridiculous a question seems to you, laughing sarcastically is the worst thing that can be done. Keep in mind, at least that person is asking to try to find out the truth. By mocking their question, you are

telling them, "What a stupid question to ask." Is that going to encourage them to come to the masjid, lecture, or class in the future or discourage them from doing so?

**Come Prepared**

Your audience is giving their time, and often money, to be there. They could be several other places, but they chose to come listen to you. Showing up without properly reviewing your material and wasting time gathering your thoughts because you did not before kills the momentum of the class, lecture, presentation, etc. Unless you've been teaching a subject for years and don't need to review, you owe it to the audience.

May Allah make us amongst those who have the ability to convey the message, and more importantly, follow it. Ameen.

### *Free time before preoccupation*

*Islam always encourages us to make the most of our time, and to spend as much of it as possible in the way of Allah. We should utilise the time we have available to do as much good as we can, because before we know it, this time will have passed. As mentioned above, we should use the time we have in our youth to do as much in the way of Allah as possible, because as time passes, as well as having to contend with old age and all that entails, we will inevitably have a lot more things to worry about, like jobs, homes and families – things that most of us at this present moment aren't necessarily worried about. If we think that finding the time to practice Islam is difficult now, what will we do when life really starts to pick up pace? There is nothing wrong with getting married and having a family, but we should appreciate the relative freedom that we have now, and spend as much of it as we can on good deeds.*

*The concept of time is so important in Islam that Allah swears by it in the Qur'an: 'By Time. Verily Man is in loss, except such as have faith and do good deeds, and in the mutual teaching of truth, of patience and constancy.'* (Surah Al-Asr)

*In line with the above verses, we have to discipline ourselves by giving value to the importance of time. We should be prompt in doing good deeds, which will increase our faith and subsequently enable us to gain Allah's pleasure and mercy.*

## *Praiseworthy Morals*

# Taubah

*Maulana Maseullah Khan (RA)*

Allah says:

*“O Believers! Make taubah (repentance) unto Allah, a pure taubah.”*

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) said: “O people! Make taubah unto Allah.” (Muslim)

### **The Nature of Taubah**

Taubah (repentance) is the regret and sadness which arise in the heart when remembering a sin. For the validity of the taubah, shunning the sin, firmly resolving to abstain from it in future and controlling the nafs when it urges for the sin, are necessary.

The meaning of taubah is to return and to return from the far side to the near side. It has a beginning and an end. The beginning (ibtida') of taubah is the spreading of the rays of Nur-e-Ma'rifat (the Light of Divine Recognition) of the heart which thus realises that the sin committed is a fatal poison which wroughts great spiritual disaster. This realization induces regret and fear which result in a true and sincere yearning to compensate for the sin. This yearning is to such a degree that shunning of the sin is immediate. Further, a firm resolve and intention are made to totally abstain from the sin in future. Along with this intention a full effort is made to compensate for the past shortcoming. When the result is this fruit of taubah pertaining to the past,

present and future, then perfection of taubah has been acquired. This then is the end (intiha) of taubah.

### **The Need for Taubah**

It should be clear that taubah is Waajib (compulsory) upon every person because Allah addresses all Muslims in the ayat:

*“O Believers! Make taubah unto Allah, a pure taubah.”*

Since the reality of taubah is to regard sin as a fatal poison and disaster for the life of the Hereafter, and to firmly resolve to shun sin, and this much is part of Imaan, it therefore being waajib and necessary is apparent to every Mu'min. Hence, Allah says:

*“He who makes taubah after his transgression and reforms, verily Allah turns towards him.”*

The meaning of this ayat is:

Allah will forgive, have mercy upon and aid the person who after having sinned renders taubah according to the rule of the Shariat and reforms his acts for the future, i.e. he abstains from all evil, practices in conformity with the Shariat and remains firm on his taubah.

### **The way of making Taubah**

Taubah or repentance is to confess to Allah one's sins and to regret such com-

mission. Resolve firmly to discharge all hu-  
qoquq Ibaad (rights of others) and other du-  
ties which are obligatory, but which have not  
been rendered. This intention should be im-  
mediately made and thereafter the actual  
fulfilment of such rights and duties put into  
motion. Alternatively, the pardon of those  
whose rights were usurped should be ob-  
tained.

When a sin has been committed,  
immediately perform two raka'ts Salaat with  
the intention of Taubah. One then has to of-  
fer repentance with both the tongue and  
heart. The taubah should be made fervently  
and vigorously. If one is unable to shed tears,  
then one's face should rake on the appear-  
ance of a concerned and crying person while  
making taubah.

For the purpose of making taubah,  
recall your sins and then offer repentance in  
profusion. However, do not meditate about  
the sins committed or do not make vigorous  
attempts in a bid to remember what sins had  
been committed, for this attitude will create  
a barrier between the repenter and Allah.  
This constitutes an obstacle in the path of  
love and progress. After having made a sin-  
cere taubah, if previous sins come to mind  
then renew the taubah. Do not be too much  
concerned about sins for which taubah has  
already been made.

While making taubah there should  
be a degree of moderation in mentioning the  
sins. There is no need to recite a whole list of  
sins while making taubah. Seek forgiveness  
for all sins in general. According to the Hadith  
Shareef one should say:

*"And, I repent of even such sins which You are  
more aware of."*

*"I repent of such sins which I am aware of and  
of such sins which I am unaware."*

Pondering about sins is in actual fact  
destruction of time and diversion from the  
remembrance of Allah. However, one should  
make special taubah for sins which one re-  
calls automatically. The real Goal is Allah and  
not the remembrance of sins neither the re-  
membrance of acts of obedience. The pur-  
pose of remembering sins is to offer repen-  
tance. Hence, once taubah has been made,  
one should not deliberately and consciously  
ponder over sins thereby making such re-  
membrance a definite purpose because this  
will engender the idea that Allah is displeased  
with one, and this is a dangerous idea.

#### **The method of acquiring Taubah**

Remember and reflect about the  
warnings sounded in the Qur'aan and Hadith  
in regard to sins. The pang of regret which  
enters the heart as a result of such reflection  
is in actual fact taubah.

#### ***Count your Blessings***

*Umar (RA) once passed by a person who together with being afflicted with the disease of lep-  
rosy was also blind, deaf and dumb. He (RA) asked those around him: "Can you perceive  
any bounty that this man may be enjoying?" They replied: "Being in this condition, what  
bounty could he enjoy?" Umar (RA) replied: "Is he not able to relieve himself with  
ease?" (Fazaail-e-A'maal)*

*Lesson: Subhanallah! What great bounties we have been blessed with! Yet, when one is af-  
fected with any difficulty, all the innumerable favours and bounties are forgotten and the heart  
and mind are consumed in the one negative. Thus, whenever one is in a problem, sit and pon-  
der over the number of things that are in order. Make shukr for it. This will help greatly to  
bring a degree of mental relief despite the difficulty one may be in.*

# Moderation and Recreation: The Perfect Solution

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*By Deana Nassar*

Taking time for yourself through recreation is not an indulgence but rather a necessity

Islam teaches a person everything including how to act and behave, how to sit and talk and how to care and share through moderation.

A Muslim is sure of himself both in this world and in the Hereafter. That is to say, Islam strikes a balance between the demands of the soul and the needs of the body and in observing this balance, one will be able to merge the demands of this life with the preparation for the Hereafter.

Blessed by Islam, we are presented a balanced formula of rights and duties, in which we are neither spoiled by too many rights nor strained by too many duties and obligations. After all, as previously mentioned, moderation is the key concept of Islamic morality.

## **Enjoying Recreation and Humor**

We, as humans are created requiring rest, recreation and humor. This is something completely natural. Taking time for yourself through recreation is not an indulgence but rather a necessity and a great way to deal with the many stresses and constant worries

life throws at us, no reason to remain the wrongly stereotyped serious Muslim 24/7.

After all, Muslims can have fun. Remember without this recreation and humor we cannot be productive in life. There are many instances in Islam where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), used humor to lighten the mood in many situations; he was known to always smile. In fact when he laughed it was said the whites of his teeth showed. Abdullah ibn al-Harith relays: "I have never seen a man who smiled as much as the Messenger of God."

There are also many stories relaying the Prophet and his humor. Recalling one incident is when the Prophet was with Ali ibn Abi Talib and they were eating 12 dates together. As they were about to finish, Ali saw some people approaching. He quickly moved the pile of 6 pits that he had to the Prophet's pile and jokingly told the passersby that the Prophet had kept all the dates to himself and didn't share! The Prophet in good spirits said right back, look at Ali, he eats the dates and he eats the pits as well! (because he didn't have any pits on his side).

The prophet did not limit his recreations and jokes with only his friends where his wife Aisha narrates the following about

her husband:

*"I swear by God that I saw the Messenger standing at the door of my room while the Abyssinians were engaged in spear play in the mosque, where he screened me with his cloak so I could watch them perform. He stood there for my sake until I decided that I had had enough." (Al-Bukhari)*

Addressing all aspects of our lives, Islam is complete and comprehensive; it covers all of our needs, including our need for diversions and for recreation. It also provides for us lawful means to fulfill this need.

The Companion Abu al-Darda' cites: "I seek recreation in something that is neither useful nor unlawful, and this makes me stronger on the truth." There are numerous stories where the Prophet's companions participated in many different forms of lawful entertainment and play. They engaged in sports like footraces, horse racing, wrestling, and archery. Moreover they spent time in telling jokes and in lighthearted conversation.

The scholars of Islam have attested to the importance of lawful recreation to the healthy development of a person's character.

Enjoying recreation and taking care of yourself by taking a break ensures you have the energy to return to whatever other roles you play, whether as a parent or a professional, or whatever your responsibilities in life generally are, in turn, making us better Muslims in our transition from this world to the Hereafter.

### **Living Moderate**

Since time is precious, we must always be acutely aware of how valuable the time is that we have been given in our brief lives on Earth. We are taught to place a premium on our time and to get as much out of it as we can, defining for us the various ways we can employ it, thus creating the balance outlined earlier. Prophet Muhammad said:

*"Do good deeds properly, sincerely and mod-*

*erately. Always adopt middle, moderate, regular course, whereby you will reach your target of paradise." (Al-Bukhari)*

Salman al-Farisi has been reported to saying to Abu Al-Darda':

*"Your own self has a right over you, your Lord has a right over you, your guest has a right over you, and your family has a right over you. So give everyone his due." When the Prophet heard about what Salman had said, he approved of it, saying: "Salman has spoken the truth. (Al-Bukhari)*

In one occasion, the Prophet once asked a companion: Is it true that you fast all day and stand in prayer all night? The companion replied that the report was indeed true.

The Prophet then said:

*"Do not do that! Observe the fast sometimes and also leave it at other times. Stand up for prayer at night and also sleep at night. Your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you and your wife has a right over you." (Al-Bukhari)*

This indicates the importance of moderation which is the true scale for Islam, and it is significant that converts/reverts understand this.

Muslims can and do have fun. They love to smile just as much as the next person and they enjoy recreational activities to the max. Islam stresses the consequence of striving to reap benefits for both this world and the next. The life of this world is the harvesting ground for the Hereafter. It is but a passing phase and the life to come is eternal.

A Muslim, therefore, should expend his efforts for the sake of the Hereafter and at the same time bring about benefits in this world. We can reach our full potential only after we have taken care of ourselves and take advantage of the right to take a break, use humor and engage in activities close to the heart.

**Cont'd on page 38**

## Muhammad (SAW) - The Ideal Prophet

# The Practicality in the Holy Prophet's Life

*Maulana Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (RA)*

You know Abu Sufyan alright. He was the leader of the Quraish in the battles of Badr, Uhud, and Trenches, to name but a few. How many Muslims were killed because of him and how many times had he tried to root out Islam and kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)? He was such an arch-enemy of Islam that when he came to see the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), just before the conquest of Makkah, along with Abbas (RA) all those who were present on the occasion recommended to kill him. But Abu Sufyan was confident in his heart of heart that Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would never take revenge. And, he was right, for Muhammad not only forgave him but also allowed him to proclaim that whoever would enter his house in Makkah would be safe against the assault of the invading army [Ibn Is'haq, *The Life of Muhammad*, p.548].

Hind, the wife of Abu Sufyan, had been present in the battle of Badr inciting the pagans of Makkah to fight to the last against the Muslims. In the battle of Uhud she had cut off the ears and noses of Muslim martyrs to

make anklets and collars. She had cut out the liver of the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) uncle Hamza (RA) and chewed it and so mutilated his dead body that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sickened to see it. After the capture of Makkah she came veiled in disguise to accept Islam, but was still insolent in her replies to the questions asked by the Apostle of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). She was, nevertheless, forgiven without being asked to explain her previous conduct. Astonished by the remarkable mercy of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), Hind exclaimed: "Muhammad, no tenet I hated aforesaid more than yours, but none is now dearer to me than your pavilion" [*Ibid*, p.553].

Wahshi had killed Hamza (RA) in the battle of Uhud. When Makkah was conquered, he fled to Ta'if, but when Ta'if also surrendered, he was in an impasse but someone said to him, "Good heavens, what is the matter? He does not kill anyone who enters his religion. You cannot get peace anywhere except in his company." He came back to seek forgiveness. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi

Wasallam) recalled the mutilated corpse of his uncle on seeing Wahshi, but forgave his crime. He simply said: "Hide your face from me and never let me see you again" [*Ibid*, p.316].

Ikramah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was the son of Abu Jahl, the worst enemy of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He hated Islam like his father and had fought against the Muslims on several occasions. After Makkah was occupied by Muslims, he reflected over his past crimes and thought it wise to leave for Yemen. His wife, Umm Hakim, embraced Islam and repaired to Yemen to console him and to bring him back to Makkah. As soon as the news of his arrival was received, the Apostle (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) got up so hurriedly that his shawl fell from his shoulders. He hailed 'Ikramah with the words: "Welcome to thee, O émigré rider!" Father of this man had been the leader of persecutors, and had caused the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) untold miseries. Was rubbish not thrown by Abu Jahl over the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and had he not conspired to kill him? Had he not led the infidels against Muslims at Badr and rejected every counsel of peace with the Muslims? But now, his son was received with open arms to tell the world that the enemy is loved in this wise! [*Ibid*, p.551]

There was another man, Habbar b. al-Aswad by name, who was responsible for the death of Muhammad's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) daughter, Zaynab (RA). He was one of those few heartless criminals who had been condemned after the conquest of Makkah. He wanted, at first, to go away to Iran, but on reconsideration went straight to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and confessed his guilt. "I wanted to leave for Iran," said he, "but looking back to your clemency I have

come to you, O Prophet of Allah. The reports you have received about me are all correct." Confession of Habbar so softened the heart of the merciful Apostle that he forgave him instantly, forgetting even the death of his own daughter!

Umayr b. Wahb was another leader of the Quraish of Makkah. Shortly after the battle of Badr he sharpened his sword and smeared it with poison, and went off to Madinah to seek his revenge from the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was seen entering the mosque and was taken prisoner. His guilt was proved, but the softhearted Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) allowed him to depart in freedom. Umayr had agreed to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on the promise of another chief, Safwan b. Umayya, who had undertaken to discharge his debts and to support his family. After Makkah had fallen to the Muslims, Safwan fled to Jidda to take a ship for Yemen. Umayr, however, told the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that Safwan was the chief of his people, who had run away to cast himself into the sea. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was so moved by the plight of his former enemy that he granted him immunity. On Umayr's request for a sign to prove it to Safwan, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave him his turban with which he had entered Makkah. Umayr overtook Safwan before he could embark the ship and begged him to return with him. Safwan was not agreeable, however. He said: "I go in fear of my life because of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)." But Umayr who was not very long ago after the blood of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied: "He is too clement and too honorable to kill you." At last Safwan returned and asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): "I have been told



that you have granted me immunity. Is it correct?" When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) replied in affirmative, Safwan asked for two months in which to make up his mind, and the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave him four months to decide. But four months was a pretty long time in the company of the merciful Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Safwan (RA) accepted Islam well before the time was up.

When the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) led an expedition to Khaibar, the stronghold of the Jews, and captured the city after a fierce battle, a Jewess brought a roasted lamb poisoned by her to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). After chewing a morsel of the meat the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to know of the poison and asked to produce the woman before him. She confessed what she had done, but the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) let her off although he suffered from the toxic effect of the food brought by her for the rest of his life [*Ibid*, p.516].

On yet another occasion, a disbeliever was apprehended on the charge of lying in wait to kill the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was in a flutter when he was produced before the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), because of fear, but the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) consoled him saying: "Don't fear. You could not have killed me, even if you wanted to do so."

A band of eighty warriors was rounded up just before the capture of Makkah. They wanted to bear down upon the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), but was let off by the merciful Apostle of Allah.

You would have surely heard of Ta'if. It was the city which had refused to grant asylum to the persecuted Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). It had decline even to listen

to him. Here it was that, encouraged by Abdu Yalil, its chief, the touts and slaves had insulted and shouted and pelted stones on the Apostle (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) until his shoes were filled with blood; and when he had sat down tired and brokenhearted to take some rest, the touts had compelled him to move along amidst their missiles. How could the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) forget the sufferings of Ta'if, for it was the worst of torments he had had to endure in his whole life. In 7 A.H/ 628C.E., the Muslim army had laid a siege of Ta'if but it had to retire after suffering a loss, since the walls of the city could neither be scaled nor gave way to the besiegers. The Muslims who did not want to raise the siege without reducing the city begged the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) to curse the people of Ta'if. But, when he raised up his hands in prayer, he was heard not cursing the people of Ta'if but invoking blessings for them. "O Allah, guide the people of Ta'if and make them accept Thy religion," was the prayer sent up by the merciful Apostle of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

In the battle of Uhud when the Muslims were put to flight and the enemy tried to get at the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), he was hit by a stone which smashed one of his teeth, his face was scarred, and his lip was injured. The Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) incisor was broken and blood began to run down his face. He wiped the blood saying the while: "How can a people prosper who have stained their Prophet's face with blood while he summoneth them to their Lord? O Allah, show them the right path for they know it not." This was the practical example of loving one's enemy. It demanded putting one's life at stake rather than preaching a high flown dictum to the peaceful crowd.

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