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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Dreadful festivities

The literal meaning of 'Shadi' (marriage) is happiness. Since Nikaah is considered the moment of utmost happiness so this ceremony is called 'Shadi'. Several times you must have had the opportunity to participate in such ceremonies of your close ones; you must have witnessed a number of marriage processions; also, possibly, you yourself have had been at the helm in organizing these functions. Is your heart at peace with all that takes place at such instances? The first stage i.e., engagement ceremony throws open the door of extravagance when sweets, gifts and other materialistic entities from the groom's side are acknowledged by the bride's family with much more than what is received. At every opportunity and each stage right from the onset of engagement until and even after Nikaah, the show of trouncing one another in lavish spending is witnessed with great interest and pleasure. An unending episode of functions gets established once the engagement is over. The fulfillment of every single custom coupled with particular observance, and the accomplishment of each function with full extravagance is considered necessary or else social disgrace and infamy of whole dynasty is thought inevitable.

On such functions, is it permissible to expend on fairy lights? Do you support the unrestricted wastage of money on glittering costumes? Do you consider the stupendous spending on kingly feasts, fair? Is it right for both hosts and guests to remain awake for nights together? Is there some sort of per-

missibility with regard to almost indispensable unpleasantness between the in-laws? Does the act of instigating sleepless nights to neighbours caused by the noise and uproar of singers, have admissibility? Don't you see any harm in the fact that noble men, women, boys, girls etc., join such immoral entertainers? Is there any justification for the custom of donning un-Islamic, ignoble, uneasy and extravagant dresses that shackle one and all, particularly the bride and the groom, on such occasions? Do the argumentations, which often turn unpleasant, on the occasion of fixing the Mahr, demonstrate even a minute amiability? Also, in the majority of the cases, the amount of Mahr that is fixed is beyond the financial capacity of the individual – do you see any permissibility in it? Does this, and the endless customs, practices, traditions etc., which you perceive, carry any sanction from Allah or from His Messenger (SAW)? Are any of these according to the decrees of Shariah? Does your moral code support any of these actions? Leaving aside the Shariah or moral constraints, can you put forward any proof based on simple logic? Is any worldly or religious profit extracted from them?

Not to make a deliberate mentioning about the shameless and anti-Shariah customs of music and dancing - acts totally and unambiguously forbidden, which take place on these occasions without any notion of impermissibility now; but, what is your take about the practices which have gone global and have permeated into every Muslim

Cont'd on page 31

Question Answer

Question:

Is it permissible to use a telephone recording device to protect others against wrongdoing and mischief.

Answer:

This is a kind of spying and it is not permissible for anyone to spy on anyone else, because we have no right to judge anybody except by what is apparent. If we start spying on people we will have a lot of headaches because of this spying and we will be upset by what we hear and see.

Allah says "And spy not" [al-Hujuraat 49:12] after saying (interpretation of the meaning), "O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion; indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not" [al-Hujuraat 49:12].

But if the head of a household sees indications of these evil telephone calls, then there is nothing wrong with setting up a recording device without their knowledge, but once he realizes that there is something going on, he should not keep quiet and continue listening, rather he should rebuke them straightaway, because if he communities to listen he may hear something that will upset him even more. For example, if he comes across a bad telephone conversation, he must rebuke the one who is doing it straight away, and not delay it until the next time; he must put a stop to it at the first instance.

But with regard to mere suspicion based on waswaas (insinuating whispers of

the Shaytaan), it is not permitted to set up this kind of device, but one is sure that the matter is serious and that it is actually happening, then it is OK to set up a recorder so as to find out what is going on and stop the happenings.

Question

On the day of judgment one of the first things counted will be prayers, as they have to be complete. Salah and fasting are compulsory. I understand there is a part in the Masjid of Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam where if you happen to pray, it is equivalent to praying for some months. I also just recently learnt that fasting on the first ten days of the month of Hajj is like fasting for a year. People tend to miss prayers etc. when they are still young when it is compulsory. Acquiring knowledge is very important as it is the tool we can use to help secure akhirah. And I believe Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam left us with paths to help. My question is that can these types of special Salats and fasts count as replacements for the ones we have missed in the past or are they simply invalid with or without our knowledge? It is said that if our prayers are incomplete, Allah out of His Mercy accepts voluntary Salats to complete the missing or invalid compulsory ones. Can the same be said for fasting?

Answer

Allah through His infinite mercy and

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love has created mankind in the best of forms and arranged for his needs throughout the various stages of life. The blessings of Allah are enjoyed by His creation at all times. The one who acknowledges the bounties of Allah and submits himself to Allah's commands has indeed succeeded.

Allah has ordained upon the believing men and women certain commands such as Salah. Hence, the performance of five times daily Salah on time is an obligation on every Muslim commencing from the time of puberty, the failing of which is a great sin and open ingratitude. However, in a situation where one prayer or many prayers were not performed in their respective times, it is compulsory to compensate by performing them later, regardless of whether the prayers were missed intentionally or unintentionally. [1]

In the books of Ahadith, there are narrations that indicate Salah in certain places is more virtuous than in others. Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam has stated:

"Salah in my Masjid (Masjid An-Nabawi) is better than one thousand Salats performed anywhere else except Masjid Al-Haram"
(Sahih Al-Bukhari)

With regards to the meaning of such Ahadith wherein the multiplication of rewards for each Salah is mentioned, the scholars agree that this is in relation to the rewards of Salah and not the obligation of

Salah. In other words, if an individual has to make up missed prayers, the performance of only one Salah in Masjid An-Nabawi will not suffice.

Furthermore, it is also mentioned in narrations that Nawafil (optional prayers) make up for the deficiencies in Faraidh (obligatory prayers). It is stated in a narration:

"The deficiencies of the Fardh (mandatory) prayers are completed through optional prayers" (Sunan At-Tirmidhi)

With regards to the meanings of this Hadith, the scholars have various opinions. A famous opinion is that the Nawafil will compensate for the quality of the Faraidh and not the missed Faraidh themselves. However, there is another opinion that the Nawafil will suffice for the missed Faraidh. Nevertheless, even if we consider the Nawafil to be sufficient for the missed Faraidh, we don't know how many Nawafil will compensate for one Fardh. Possibly it will take seven hundred Nawafil to equal one Fardh. Therefore the scholars have not permitted negligence in making up the missed Faraidh, relying solely on Nawafil. However, we should be particular in performing Nawafil as Allah's mercy knows no bounds.

The same law applies in regards to other commandments such as fasting etc.

Excessive Talk

Ibn Umar (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Do not indulge in excessive talk except when remembering Allah. Excessive talking without the Remembrance of Allah hardens the heart; and those who are the farthest from Allah are those whose hearts are hard." [At-Tirmidhi]

Commentary: The hardening of the heart is a condition where one neither learns any lesson from Allah's Signs nor does one accept anyone's good advice and religious preaching. If one indulges in idle talk rather than the remembrance of Allah, his heart becomes hardened, which is a sign of being far from Allah's Mercy. One should therefore occupy himself with the remembrance of Allah.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Tafsis Division, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

Surah Al-Imran - Verse 77-78

Punishment to Greedy

*The following was revealed with regard to the Jews when they distorted the descriptions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and Allah's covenant with them in the Torah, and regarding one that swears an oath to a falsehood when bearing witness or when selling merchandise: **Surely those who take** (i.e., exchange) **a small price**¹ (of this world) **by** (breaking) **the covenant of Allah** (with them that they believe in the Prophet and return faithfully what has been entrusted to them) **and their oaths** (i.e., their invoking Allah's name in mendacity), **for them there is no share in the Hereafter,**² **and Allah will neither speak to them** (out of wrath against them) **nor will He look towards them** (with mercy) **on the Day of Judgement, nor shall He purify them** (from moral filth and spiritual impurity). **For them there is a painful punishment**³ (i.e., a severe pain which will spread to their hearts). (3:77)*

1. This explains the general Islamic theory of morality which is applicable to the fulfillment of pledges and to other moral considerations. We deal in the first place with Allah, and we are, therefore, keen to please Him and to avoid His anger. Hence our moral incentive is not our self-interest. Nor is it the tradition of the community, nor its particular circumstance. A community may go astray and it may have false standards. It is important, therefore, to have a constant standard which is applicable to both the community and the individual. In addition, this standard must derive its strength from a higher source which is universally valued as taking priority over what people may decide for themselves or what their changing circumstances may require of them. In other words, values and standards must be derived from Allah. We must try to determine what moral practices and values are acceptable to Him and implement these in the hope that we earn His pleasure and remain righteous. It is in this way that Islam nurtures man's aspiration to a more sublime horizon. *(In the Shade of the Qur'an)*

All our duties to our fellow creatures are referred to the service and faith we owe to

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Allah. But in the matter of truth an appeal is made to our self-respect as responsible beings: is it becoming that we should be false to our own word, to ourselves? And then we are reminded that the utmost we can gain by falsifying Allah's word or being untrue to ourselves is but a miserable price. We get at best something very paltry as the price for selling our very souls. (Yusuf Ali)

2. Ibn Kathir (ra) writes: Several hadiths have come down to us in connection with this verse. We shall quote a couple here.

It is reported in Musnad of Ahmad (ra) by Sayyidna Abu Dharr (RA) that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Three there are to whom Allah will not speak, will not look at and will not purify them. Instead for them will be a painful chastisement: 'the one who let hang his trousers, he who sells his goods with false oaths and he who reminds of his favours'".

Again, according to another hadith reported by Abu Huraira (RA) and preserved by Imam Ahmad and Tirmidhi, who has termed it a sahih report, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "There are three to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Judgement, nor look at them, nor purify them. Rather for them will be a painful chastisement: The man who refused to give a drink to a traveler from the extra water that he had, the man who falsely swore for his merchandise and the man who gave allegiance to a ruler and then broke the allegiance at convenience."

Sayyidna Said bin Musayyib (RA) has said that false oath is a major sin. And Sayyidna Ibn Mas'ud (RA) says, "During the life of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) we used to consider false oath an unforgivable sin. (Ibn Jarir – q.f. Ishraq al-Ma'ani)

3. 'Afflictive torment' - It should be noticed that although drinking, gambling, usury, and mistreating the parents have been declared major sins, the commitment of none of them promises the punishment as severe as those promised to those who do not keep the trusts. This is because untrustworthiness and faith do not combine together in a single individual. Allah ordered the believers to wage war against the leaders of the unbelievers on grounds that they are dishonest.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said: "There are three signs of a hypocrite (and according to the report in Muslim, even if he prayed and fasted): When he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks it and when he is trusted he does not keep it". And Ahmad, Bazzar and Tabrani in his Awsat have reported Sayyidna Anas (RA) as saying that it rarely happened that the prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave a sermon in which he did not say: "There is no faith in him who cannot be trusted, and there is no religion of him who does not keep his promises". (Manar - q.f. Ishraq al-Ma'ani)

Deceit of the People of the Book

Among them (the people of scripture) there is indeed a group who twist their tongues while (reading) the Book,¹ (altering it by reciting it not according to the way in which it was revealed, but according to the way in which they have distorted it, as in the case of descriptions of the Prophet and other similar matters), so that you might deem it (such distortion) to be from the Book (that Allah revealed), while it is not from the Book². They say, 'It is from Allah', while it is not from Allah; and they tell lies³ against Allah (by ascribing to Him certain words or their purport), knowingly (that they are liars). (3:78)

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1. A book which is changed and filled with forged additions and credited with omissions cannot be considered a real divine book. The Gospels now prevalent in the world do not tally with each other. (Uthmani)

2. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has warned against distorting the revealed message in the following words: "Whoever says something in interpreting the Qur'an based on his own opinion should find his place in the Fire." (Tirmizi) - DUI.

Qur'an is a trust given to us by Allah - the words and well as the meaning of which we are supposed to safeguard and avoid assigning such a word with Allah that is not in it or is in contrast to its motives. (Dars-e-Qur'an)

3. When religious men are corrupt they allow themselves to be used as a tool for the falsification of facts. In this manner, they take advantage of their guise as men of religion. The example employed by the Qur'an in relation to the people of earlier revelations is well known to us today. They impose, on the verses and statements of their own revelations, arbitrary interpretations and conclusions, claiming that these represent the precise meaning intended and that, as such, they constitute Allah's message. In actual fact, however, their conclusions are in sharp conflict with the very essence of Divine faith. They are able to achieve this contortion because majority of people cannot differentiate between the true essence of faith and the true meaning of these statements on the one hand, and the fabricated conclusions they arbitrarily impose on these same statements on the other. (In the Shade of the Qur'an)

Prepared Bounties

Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "I know of the last of the inhabitants of the Hell to be taken out from there and the last one to enter Jannah. He is a man who will come out of the Fire, crawling on all fours. Allah, the Rubb of glory and honour will say to him: 'Go and enter Jannah.' He will go to it and think that it is full up. He will then come back and say: 'O my Rubb, it is full up.' Allah will say to him: 'Go and enter Jannah.' He will again go to it and think that it is full up. So he will turn back. Allah will again say: 'Go and enter Jannah. For you have what is equal to ten times the world.' He will say: 'Are You making fun of me while You are the King?' At this I (i.e., the narrator) saw the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) laugh till his premolars were visible and he said, "Such man will be the last dweller of Jannah in its lowest rank." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: The general habit of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was just to smile. But while telling about the gifts and honours about an ordinary person in Jannah, he could not help laughing in a manner that his molars became visible. The person on the lowest pedestal in Jannah will be given ten times better things and gifts that could be had on this earth. May Allah admit us into Jannah in His Mercy. Amin.

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Ablution

Chapter 54 : Should one rinse his mouth after drinking the milk.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari (RA) makes an interrogative remark whether one should rinse his mouth with water after consuming milk or not.

Hadith No. 206

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

Allah's Apostle drank milk, rinsed his mouth and said, "It has fat."

Comments

In this Hadith it is mentioned that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took milk and then rinsed his mouth with water and also stated the reason for that as well i.e., the milk contains fats which stick to the mouth. To clean it one should rinse his mouth properly.

There is a Hadith in Abu Dawood on the authority of Anas bin Maalik that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) took milk and did not rinse his mouth after that. There is no contradiction between these two Ahaadith. If the milk has high fat content then it is better to rinse one's mouth and if otherwise, then

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there is no need to do so.

Chapter 55 : Wudu after sleep. And that who did not consider it necessary to repeat Wudu after dozing or after nodding in slumber.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is quite clear that Imam Bukhari (RA) believes that deep sleep breaks Wudu whereas light sleep does not.

Hadith No. 207

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

Allah's Apostle said, "If anyone of you feels drowsy while praying he should go to bed (sleep) till his slumber is over because in praying while drowsy one does not know whether one is asking for forgiveness or for a bad thing for oneself."

Hadith No. 208

Narrated Anas (RA)

The Prophet said, "If anyone of you feels drowsy while praying, he should sleep till he understands what he is saying (reciting)."

Comments

Sleep in itself does not break Wudu.

During deep sleep with a support, the gut sphincters get loosened and there is every chance that the flatus will come out during such a sleep and that is why deep sleep with a support is said to break Wudu. Since there is no such chance of loosening of sphincters in light sleep without a support, so such a sleep does not break Wudu. There is a Hadith in Tirmidhi that says:

"Indeed, Wudu does not become mandatory except on that person who sleeps in lying down position, because lying down position opens up the sphincter".

Purpose of Salaah is to remember Allah

Allah tells Hadhrat Musa (AS) as quoted in the Qur'an:

"Establish Salaah to remember Me".

So, the main purpose of Salaah is to remember Allah. This purpose cannot be achieved if one is feeling drowsy. That is why Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised such a person to go to sleep and then after getting fresh, offer Salaah.

Chapter 56 : To perform Wudu without getting Hadath (faeces etc).

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Some people believe that the Wudu is a must for every Salaah and some people say that it is not permissible to repeat Wudu when one is already with Wudu. Imam Bukhari (RA) while agreeing with the opinion of the majority says that it is not a must to perform Wudu before every Salaah and one can repeat his Wudu if he is already with Wudu.

Hadith No. 209

Narrated 'Amr bin 'Amir (RA)

Anas said, "The Prophet used to perform ablution for every prayer." I asked Anas, "What you used to do?" Anas replied, "We used to pray with the same ablution until we break it with Hadath."

Hadith No. 210

Narrated Suwaid bin Nu'man (RA)

"In the year of the conquest of Khaibar I went with Allah's Apostle till we reached As-Sahba' where Allah's Apostle led the 'Asr prayer and asked for the food. Nothing but Sawiq was brought and we ate it and drank (water). The Prophet got up for the (Maghrib) Prayer, rinsed his mouth with water and then led the prayer without repeating the ablution".

Comments

Some people like Shia are of the opinion that Wudu is must before every Salaah for a Muqem (residents) and there is relaxation only during travelling.

Ibn Umar and Abu Musa say that is a must for every Salaah whether one is a Muqem (resident) or Musafir (traveller).

Here Imam Bukhari (RA) has quoted two Ahaadith, one of these supporting Wudu before every Salaah and other one saying that fresh Wudu is not a must before every Salaah as Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not perform Wudu before Magrib Salaah. When Hadhrat Anas (RA) was asked what they (Sahaaba) used to do, he said that they used to offer multiple Salaah until they broke it with Hadath.

Chapter 57 : One of the grave sins is not to protect oneself (clothes and body) from one's urine.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari wants to say that passing of urine not only breaks Wudu but the urine itself is Najas (ritually impure).

Hadith No. 211

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

"Once the Prophet, while passing through one of the grave-yards of Madina or Makkah heard the voices of two persons who were being tortured in their graves. The Prophet

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said, "These two persons are being tortured not for a major sin (to avoid)." The Prophet then added, "Yes! (they are being tortured for a major sin). Indeed, one of them never saved himself from being soiled with his urine while the other used to go about with calumnies (to make enmity between friends). The Prophet then asked for a green leaf of a date-palm tree, broke it into two pieces and put one on each grave. On being asked why he had done so, he replied, "I hope that their torture might be lessened, till these get dried."

Comments

This incident took place in Madina and as per Dhar-i-Qutni, this land belonged to a woman from Ansaar namely Umm-Mubashir. Both these graves were of Muslims as reported in Ibn Majah and both were of recent origin. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) heard the crying of two persons from these graves who were being punished in there for apparently minor sins. The sin of one of these was that he was not saving his body and clothes from urine droplets and the other used to be involved in calumnies.

Definition of a grave sin

Allaama Sayuti (RA) says that a grave sin is that sin for which chastisement or curse

has been mentioned in the Qur'an. Allaama Ibn Nayeem has mentioned in Bahr-ur-Raqaiq, vol. 1, that the first thing which will be accounted for on the day of Qiyaamah is Salaah. The way ablution precedes Salaah, similarly the grave period precedes the day of Qiyaamah; the first thing which one has to account for in the grave is about Tahaarah (purity and cleanliness) and avoidance of urine droplets from falling on one's body or clothes, similarly, the first thing which one has to account for on the day of Qiyaamah is about Salaah.

The putting of branches of a green tree on each grave by Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked for two small branches of a green tree and put them on each grave and said that their punishment will be relaxed as long as these branches remain green. Rasulallah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to know about the ordeal of these two persons through Wahy. To derive the conclusion of permissibility of showering flowers on the graves is ridiculous; it is a non-Muslim custom and has no place in Islam.

Prohibition of Deriding one's Lineage

Abu Hurairah (RA) said: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Two matters are signs of disbelief on the part of those who indulge in them: Defaming and speaking evil of a person's lineage, and wailing over the dead." [Muslim].

Commentary: Both the sins mentioned in this Hadith are such that if a Muslim thinks them lawful and still commits them he will become a Kafir. To defame someone's lineage means to disgrace or humiliate somebody by saying to him or to her: "Your father belongs to such and such profession" or "Your mother is such and such / so-and-so" or "You are a weaver, blacksmith, launderer, cobbler, etc."

Mourning and wailing means expressing qualities of a deceased person through weeping, crying and lamenting loudly. Imam An-Nawawi said that such qualities are attributes and acts of the disbelievers and practices of the pre-Islamic period, or Jahiliyyah.

Think Twice Before You Speak Once

Speaking exists long before writing. Actually speaking is the second oldest thing after thinking. So mankind has been thinking for a very long time. Thoughts were there long before the speech was discovered and for a very long time man had been thinking with a complete silence until the speech came.

Speaking is a means of expressing our ideas, thoughts. It is the most widely used type of communication. But sometimes it may also lead to disasters and destructions since there is a saying: "Words cut more than swords." which is a very good saying because sometimes one can hurt another so much using words. A person can even murder some other with words; in this case the murder weapon is a word. Because the sword can be used in destruction; but words can both lead to the destruction and also heal the deepest wounds. So, it is very important how we use words. If we hurt someone with a sword the pain is physical and it diminishes in long run but if we hurt a person with words the pain is always intact there. An arrow cannot come back once it left. Likewise, we cannot take back the words we have spoken. We give so much trouble to ourselves with our existing knowledge and

informational background that this knowledge and informational background is not enough to solve these problems and eliminate that trouble we have got ourselves in. Most of the time, we cause all these troubles with our own tongue and words.

"Omar ibn al-Khattab (r.a) came upon Abu Bakr as-Siddiq pulling his tongue Omar (r.a) said to him, "Stop, may Allah forgive you!" Abu Bakr replied, "This has brought me to dangerous places.(while doing this he was pulling his tongue.)" (Malik)

Our Prophet (s.a.w) says: "Do you know the thing which most commonly brings people into Paradise? It is fear of Allah and good character. Do you know what most commonly brings people into Hell? It is the two hollow things: the mouth and the private parts." (Narrated by Abu Hurairah, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.)

You can change other's minds with words by persuading them in the kindest ways which is more important and much more successful than constraining other's will by force. But with your words also one should be so careful in order not to hurt any feelings or make false accusations about innocent people.

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It is narrated on the authority of Jabir that he heard the (Holy Prophet) say: "A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue the Muslim's are safe." (Muslim)

'Abdullah b. Amr b. al-As is reported to have said: "Verily a person asked the Messenger of Allah (may Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) who amongst the Muslims was better. Upon this (the Holy Prophet) remarked: From whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe." (Muslim)

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: The Prophet said: "A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue or his hands." (Bukhari)

Our tongue is a blessing from Allah (s.w.t). If you observe the animals and human babies who are unable to speak, we realize the importance of this great tool of communication. We should be thankful to Allah for this ni'mah. The gratitude we should show for this exceptional blessing includes using it for the sake of Allah, in obedience to Allah, for seeking Knowledge, for reciting the Qur'an and to enjoin good and forbidding evil. This also includes some limitations. Limiting the tongue is to restrain from telling lies, slandering, abusing others by your tongue, backbiting and using foul language.

Allah says: Successful indeed are the believers. Who are humble (in khushu) in their prayers. And who shun vain conversation. (23:1-3)

An effective way to attain khushu in prayers is to talk less. Allah (s.w.t) mentions about vain conversation, vain talk here is because the more conversations and talks in our lives get empty the more we get empty. And vain conversations hardens our hearth and we lose the desire to worship, unless we refrain our tongue from sinful talks, it gets more impossible to reach the khushu –fear of Allah- and each word coming out of our

mouth is recorded in the very second we utter it.

Allah says in the Quran: "He utters no word but there is with him an observer ready." (50:18)

This is why Our Prophet gives the glad tidings that whoever is careful using their tongue in their lives they guarantee the Paradise.

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd: The Prophet said, "Whoever guarantees me (the chastity of) what is between his legs (i.e. his private parts), and what is between his jaws (i.e., his tongue), I guarantee him Paradise." (Bukhari, Book 8, Volume 82, Hadith 799)

One should either speak a useful and good word or be silent which is better for him than speaking evil words. Our Prophet says: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should speak what is good or keep silent." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Muslim)

Moreover there is a very good saying of Imam Shafi: "If you wish to speak then it is upon you to think before you speak. If you think there is good in it then speak and if not then do not speak."

It is among the best characteristics of a Muslim to speak only the words of goodness and reconciliation. As our prophet says it is much better to remain silent if one cannot speak the word of truth and goodness. Whoever does not keep a check on his tongue will regret it since it is only us who is responsible of our actions and face the consequences of what we have done.

Finally, as the hadith says "Guard your tongue." The reward of this guarding our tongue is huge both in this world and in the hereafter.

"With the dua to guard our tongues and think twice before we speak once." Amin.

Courtesy: thepenmagazine

What is this 'Muslim Rage'?

Rosemary Pennington

I seldom write for the blog, preferring to showcase others in this space. But I felt, given that I study the news industry and have been in the news industry, I had to write this week.

I've been seeing the headlines for days – you probably have too – headlines touting the things you must know about 'Muslim rage' or how 'Muslim rage' is sweeping across the 'Muslim world' or what some of the causes of 'Muslim rage' are.

Then there is, of course, the incendiary Newsweek cover featuring a piece from Ayaan Hirsi Ali on how she, in fact, survived 'Muslim rage.' This is the same person who claimed Islam needs to be 'defeated' and that, once it is, Muslims can move onto something 'peaceful.' As ThinkProgress pointed out, Hirsi Ali even expressed some sympathy for one of Norwegian mass-shooter Anders Breivik's justifications for his killing spree, claiming to understand why he might have needed to resort to violence.

I see these things – the headlines and news stories and photos and bylines – and my frustration rises. I mean, really? We're going to settle on these tired old head-

lines and these tired old narratives? Again?

It's lazy and reductionist and simplistic and sensational.

And, frankly, it's not good journalism, although I suppose it gets people talking. But journalism should be better than that.

Journalism is, ideally, about the diffusion of information; about ensuring an electorate is educated; about making sure people are informed about the world they live in. And, too, it's about giving voice to people who generally aren't allowed to speak.

I know. I know. I said this is ideally what journalism is. What it should be. What it should strive for.

It's easy, I know, to lay what's been sweeping through the Middle East at the feet of religion. It makes the story so much tidier and easier to digest. So much easier to write and to communicate.

But it's just not the truth; or, at least, it's not the whole truth.

There's a whole history of colonialism – first by Europeans then by Americans backing dictators to consider. As so many other people have pointed out, there's also the fact that those same dictators that were

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propped up, often as part of Cold War strategy, fanned the flames of anti-Americanism in order to keep their people from turning on them.

These are just two of the many threads that have helped create this current moment. It seems like news media are slowly beginning to pick up those threads but, just as I feel like I can breath and my frustration begins to die down, I see another story about 'Muslim rage' or another piece written by a non-Muslim about just what it is Muslims must do or a story about Pamela Geller being allowed to post anti-Islam ads depicting Muslims as savages in New York subways and I feel my hackles rise again.

Are we ever going to be better than this? Better than this continual tug and pull between dichotomies?

I've seen a lot, too, in my reading on what's happened the last several weeks on the idea of freedom of speech and expression. Writers asking what the limits are; others saying one should not capitulate to the violent and we should have the right to say whatever it is we want.

I have only one thing to add; a reminder, really. In the United States the freedom of speech and expression that is guaranteed to all Americans is freedom from government intrusion into speech. We can say and write and paint what we want and, unless we are purposefully inciting to violence, the government will leave us alone.

Nowhere is there a right to stereotype. Nowhere is there a right to caricature. Nowhere is there a right to reduce diverse groups of individuals to little more than the crayon drawings of a five-year-old.

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, 'The right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins.'

I'm incredibly anti-censorship and incredibly pro-freedom of expression. I will argue the legality of saying awful things

about people until I'm blue in the face because I believe in the law.

But because it is legal does not mean it's ethical.

Just because journalists can write headlines about 'Muslim rage' that perpetuate centuries old Orientalist and Islamophobic discourses, does not mean that, ethically, they should.

What is ethical and what is legal is not always the same thing when it comes to news media. It's a lesson we should have learned during the Civil Rights Movement.

If there's any delightful thing to come out of the Newsweek mess it's what happened on Twitter. The magazine asked people to discuss the inflammatory cover using the hashtag #MuslimRage. (Hashtags allow readers to follow conversations on Twitter and other social media.)

Muslim Tweepers 'hijacked' (a term one person used purposefully) the hashtag – tweeting jokes about the 'long line to get a camel,' how 'beef bacon tastes like a broken promise' and how one Tweeter 'might have #MuslimRage, but [her] niqab is hiding it.'

Instead of engaging with the magazine on its terms and validating Newsweek's ideas about 'Muslim rage,' the Twitter users chose instead to use humor to show just how ridiculous the whole thing was.

And, really, continues to be.

Jokes aside, the propagation of such narratives does little except reduce diverse groups (yes, groups, plural) to caricature and stereotype.

And what those schoolyard bullies told you was wrong, words can, and will, hurt you. Words accumulated over centuries. Words used to circumscribe people and diminish who they are and who they are allowed to be – those words hurt. They create environments where people are to be feared because of the clothes they wear, because of their accents, because of the name they use to describe Allah.

Technology

The Latest Babysitter

Sister Zaikyya

Assalamu Alaikum my dear readers. I read an article this morning that saddened my heart. Unfortunately it's become very common all around us and in the best of homes. The article I read this morning was titled 'Toddlers Becoming so Addicted to iPads They Require Therapy'. It is disheartening to read headlines such as these, because they reflect the lack of concern for our children in our effort to 'get away' from them. What I'm referring to, is how parents are allowing their precious little ones, to be babysat by electronic devices for long periods of time.

Yes, I know that as exhausted parents, there are times that we just wanna break away from the nagging, whining and the need for constant attention from our kids, and you know what, that's okay! It's actually healthy for moms to take a break and unwind now and then. However, it should not be at the expense of your kids being 'plugged' into your TV, tablet, phone, laptop, game console or handheld device all the time. If you leave your kids with someone, it means that the people you trust to watch your children, should not be keeping their minds oc-

cupied in a virtual world either. Children need more active participation and imaginative play.

You see, what actually happens when you think you are getting a 'break' from your kids when they are in this artificial world for long periods of time, is their lack of attentiveness, irritability and eye strain. Just do a Google search to see the long-term effects of 'screen time' for kids, and you will be shocked by the studies and their results. The temporary satisfaction you get when your children quietly play on these devices, will come back to haunt you, because the negative symptoms may only be seen later in their life. At first glance, all the apps and such seem so wonderfully entertaining and educational, that you convince yourself that you are doing the right thing, because your kids can now say their ABC's faster or learn to spell a word backwards. I'm not denying that electronic devices can be educational, but that depends on the length of time a child uses it, and the programs that they are being exposed to.

I also know about the pressure that parents feel when their kids beg them to use

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their tablet, cell phone, laptop or to buy them the latest handheld device or game console. We want to please our children, and we think that we are showing them love when we give-in to their demands for these devices. Instead, show your love to your children by researching about the harmful effects of using these devices over long periods of time and then setting a limit on their screen time, and avoiding it almost completely with the very young of age, BECAUSE you love them!

If you find it just too hard to live with your kids, unless they are often plugged into some device, then maybe you should take a look at your life and your relationship with your kids. Maybe it is time to formulate closer bonds with them, to declutter your life a bit, to let go of some lesser commitments, or to relieve the unimportant things that cause you strain and stress and make you so super busy. Your kids need your interaction, and most of all, they need to learn to play and keep themselves busy without electronic devices all the time. They need to read books, play outside, use their imagination, build things, help others and do chores to name a few. I am not saying that I never allow my kids to use electronic devices, because I do, but I do it very responsibly by:

- Setting a strict limit on the time and the place that they use electronic devices.
- Being very selective about the programs they use on electronic devices and the benefits it has for their minds.
- Only allowing them to use electronic devices after they have completed more important tasks such as their chores and reading books.
- Using it mostly during difficult days such as when there is sickness, important paperwork or phone calls and there is no other form of help from family or friends.
- Most importantly, by not allowing my kids to start using electronic devices from a very young age, in order to allow their minds to develop in a healthy way.

Let's do what is best for our kids and not what is convenient for us as parents. Remember our children are our Amaana (trust) and we will be answerable to Allah for how we bring them up. Let your children be kids and learn to really play, and in turn this will help them to grow-up into healthy, confident and intelligent adults, Inshallah!

Courtesy: Muslimommy

Science & Faith

by Allamah Iqbal

Once Science said to Faith:

"My eye can see all that is in this world;

The Entire world is within my net.

I am only concerned with material things,

What have I to do with spiritual matters?

I can strike a thousand melodies,
And openly proclaim all the secrets that I learn."

Faith said:

"With your magic even the waves in the sea are set ablaze,

You can pollute the atmosphere with foul, poisonous gases.

When you associated with me, you were light,

When you broke off from me, your light became fire.

You were of Divine origin,

But you have been caught in the clutches of Shaytan.

Come, make this wasteland a garden once again.

Borrow from me a little of my ecstasy,

And in the world set up a paradise.

From the day of creation we have been associates,

We are the low and high tunes of the same melody."

The Purpose of Life

Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

"What is the purpose of LIFE?"

"My life?"

"Your Life?"

People everywhere are asking the questions; "What is the purpose of life?" and "Why are we here?" You might be amazed to learn, that Islam is providing clear and concise answers for these questions.

Most of those who reflect or think about life in any detail will consider and ponder these questions. There are as many different answers to these questions as there are people asking the questions. Some would hold that the purpose of life was to acquire wealth. Yet suppose they were to acquire millions of dollars, what then would they claim is their purpose after doing so?

If the purpose of life is to become wealthy, there would be no purpose after becoming wealthy.

The fact is that when people approach their purpose here in this life from the aspect of only gaining wealth, after collecting the money they have dreamed of their lives loose purpose and then they live in restless tension suffering from a feeling of worthlessness.

How could wealth then be considered as the aim of life?

Could the acquisition of wealth guarantee happiness? Of course not. When we hear of millionaires or members of their families committing suicide, how could we consider the purpose of life would be to gain great wealth?

A child of 5 years would obviously prefer a new toy to a deposit slip for a million dollars.

A teenager does not consider millions of dollars in the bank a substitute for movies, videos, pizza and hanging out with his friends.

A person in their 80s or 90s would never consider holding on to their wealth in place of spending it to hold on to or regain their health.

This proves that money is not the main purpose at all the stages of one's life.

Wealth can do little or nothing to bring happiness to one who is a disbeliever in Almighty Allah, because regardless of what he or she would gain in this life they would always live in fear of what will happen to them in the end. They would wonder what would become of them and how they would end up.

Wealth and its accumulation as a purpose would be doomed to a temporary success at best and in the end it would only spell out self destruction.

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So, what is the use of wealth to a person without belief? He would always fear his end and would always be skeptical of everything. He may gain a great material wealth but he would only lose himself in the end.

Worship of the One True Almighty Allah of the Universe [Allah in Arabic] as a primary goal or aim in life provides a believer with everything he needs to succeed in both this life and the Next Life.

The word for total surrender, submission, obedience, purity of heart and peace in the Arabic language is "Islam". Those who try to perform these actions are called "Muslims".

To a Muslim the whole purpose of life is "ibadah" or worship to the One True Almighty Allah on Terms and under His Conditions.

The term "worship" to a Muslim includes any and all acts of obedience to Almighty Allah.

So his purpose of life is a standing purpose; Worshipping Allah by accepting Allah's Will over his own.

This act of ibadah [worshipping, thanking and extolling the Greatness Almighty Allah on His Terms and Conditions] is for the Muslim, throughout his whole life regardless of the stage. Whether he is a child, adolescent, adult or aged person, he is seeking after the Will of the Almighty in all these stages.

His life here on earth although short, is full of purpose and is totally meaningful within the complete framework of total submission [Islam].

Similarly, in the Next Life as well, his faith, intentions, attitudes and good deeds will all be weighed into his account as favorable putting him in high esteem with his Creator and Sustainer.

Because Islam teaches that this life is only a test or trial for the individual to show him his true nature it is only natural that he

would accept death as not so much an ending to everything but more as a beginning of the final and lasting life in the Hereafter.

Before entering into either of the final lodging places i.e.; Heaven or Hell, there must needs be a Day of Judgment or showing of one's true self to make them aware of their own nature and thereby understand what they have sent on ahead during the life here on the earth.

Every person will be rewarded [or punished] according to their attitude, appreciation and efforts during this stay on earth. None will be asked about the actions and beliefs of others, nor will anyone be asked regarding that which he was unaware of or incapable of doing.

As the life here is considered as an examination for the individual, the death stage is considered as a resting period after the test. It could be easy for those who were faithful and dedicated or it could be grueling and horrible for the wicked.

Reward and punishment will be in direct proportion to each person and it is only Allah, alone who will be the Final Judge over us all.

So in the teachings of the True Surrender, Submission, Obedience, In Sincerity and Peace to the Almighty One God [Islam], the line of life and its purpose is logical, clear and simple:

The first life is a test

The life in the grave is a resting or waiting place before the Day of Judgment

The Day of Judgment brings about the clear understanding of what will now happen to the individual based on his own desires and actions

The Permanent or Afterlife will either be spend in luxurious splendor or miserable punishment .

Following this clear understanding of life, the Muslim's purpose is clear.

First of all, he has no doubt in his

mind that:

- he is only created by Allah he is going to spend a period of time in this material world [called "Ad Dunyah" in Arabic]
- he knows he will die
- he knows he will spend time in the grave, either pleasant or difficult depending on his own choice of attitude and actions he knows he will be resurrected for the Day of Judgment
- he knows he will be judged according to the most fair of standards by Allah the Almighty, the All Knowing he realizes his attitude and actions are going to come under very close scrutiny
- he knows that this short life compared to the Eternal Life was in fact, only for a test

This life is very meaningful and purposeful to the Believing Muslim, as he realizes that it will determine his outcome and permanent position in the Next Life.

The Muslim's permanent purpose is to Surrender, Submit, Obey, in Purity and Peace to Allah the Almighty, carrying out His Orders and staying in some form of worship to Him as much as possible everyday.

This includes the orders of Allah in His Book, the Holy Quran and His final Messenger and Prophet Muhammad, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam as follows:

Believing and declaring that "There is no god throughout all the Creation of Allah that is worthy of worship, all worship is due only to Allah, alone and He has no partners or helpers nor does He share His Lordship with any of His creations. And Muhammad, the son of Abdullah ibn Abdul Mutallib (1450 years ago) is the last and final messenger and servant of Almighty Allah, and is the culmination in a long line of prophets sent to mankind throughout man's history, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Jesus Christ, may Almighty Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon them all."

- Establishing the regular five times ritualistic prayer [salat] in the stated times (in the mosques for the men when possible)
- Paying the charity tax [Zakat = about 2.5% of one's holdings - not his income, annually]
- Fasting the month of Ramadhan [lunar calendar]
- Pilgrimage to the House of Allah in Mecca at least once in the life of the person, provided he has the ability and the way is safe

For a disbeliever the purpose of this life is to collect and amass great wealth, money, power and position. Over indulging in eating, drinking, drugs, sex and gambling are a high priority to them. But all of this will not avail them anything good in the grave, on the Day of Judgment or in the Next Life. Eventually he will be faced with the question:

Now what?

What's Next?

Where am I going?

What will happen to me?

He will come to know. For sure he will come to know. But then what will the knowledge avail him?

Look how Islam solves the mystery of the puzzle of life. It provides the answers to the questions and concerns of the human beings on all levels and in every aspect. It is really quite simple.

The purpose of life as understood by the Believing Muslim can be simply stated in only two (2) words: Obey Allah.

Our only purpose and salvation lie in these two words.

We must come to know our Creator, Sustainer and Ultimate Judge. We must learn to believe in Him, thank Him, praise Him, honor Him and worship Him, alone without any partners from His Creation. We must learn about His Messengers and Prophets, peace be upon them, and the message with which they were all sent. We must learn the

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Women of Paradise - I

We often hear speakers in Friday prayer or in admonitions talking about Paradise and all of us find our hearts, minds and thoughts tuned on to that 'frequency'. However, majority of the speakers talk about Paradise as if it were a house for men only. Reality is not like that. Paradise is for the believing men and women. The only price for it is sound belief in Allah, love of Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), and obedience to Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

In what follows are the glad tidings given by the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), to some of the women among his companions.

Narrated Aisha (RA): I did not feel jealous of any of the wives of the Prophet as much as I did of Khadijah (RA) (although) she died before he married me, for I often heard him mentioning her, and Allah had told him to give her the good tidings that she would have a palace of Qasab (i.e. pipes of precious stones and pearls in Paradise), and whenever he slaughtered a sheep, he would send her women-friends a good share of it. [Bukhari]

Anas (RA) reports that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), said: 'The best women of mankind are four: Mariam daughter of 'Imran, Assiya wife of

Pharaoh, Khadijah daughter of Khuwailid, and Fatima the daughter of the Messenger of Allah.' [Bukhari and Muslim]

Narrated Abu Hurayrah (RA): Jibril (Gabriel) came to the Prophet (S) and said, 'O Allah's Apostle! This is Khadijah coming to you with a dish having meat soup (or some food or drink). When she reaches you, greet her on behalf of her Lord (i.e. Allah) and on my behalf, and give her the glad tidings of having a Qasab (palace in Paradise) wherein there will be neither any noise nor any fatigue (trouble).' [Bukhari]

Narrated 'Ata bin Abi Rabah (ra): Ibn 'Abbas (RA) said to me, 'Shall I show you a woman of the people of Paradise?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'This black woman came to the Prophet (S) and said, 'I get attacks of epilepsy and my body becomes uncovered; please invoke Allah for me.' The Prophet said (to her), 'If you wish, be patient and you will have (enter) Paradise; and if you wish, I will invoke Allah to cure you.' She said, 'I will remain patient,' and added, 'but I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me that I may not become uncovered.' So he invoked Allah for her.' [Bukhari]

The aforementioned ahadith clearly state the stature of some of the women given the glad tidings of Jannah (Paradise). What

can the women of today do in order to achieve that pinnacle of success, Paradise?

To do so one MUST learn how these women lived, how they behaved, how they spoke, how they dressed, how they walked, etc. We will try to learn from the black woman mentioned in the last Hadith, insha'Allah. The black woman is not even known by her name, or her exact whereabouts, rather she is known by her deeds, her faith, her modesty, her chastity, and for her being an inmate of Paradise. And, in the end, that is what matters most. When Abdullah Ibn Abbas (RA) said 'this black woman', he did not mean to point at her race or to belittle her in any way. Indeed, he but meant to teach the people around him a great principle of Islam which is mentioned in the verse, [in the meaning of]:

'O people! We have created you from a man and a woman and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know each other, verily the most honorable among you in the sight of Allah are the most pious.' [49:13]

The same principle is mentioned in the Hadith: 'Allah does not look at your pictures (shapes) and bodies but He looks at your hearts (and your deeds).' [Muslim]

She (the black woman) was physically sick, yet she sought cure in the Du'a of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). She knew that the one who cures, ash-Shafi, is Allah, and Allah would answer the Du'a of His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). We conclude from this that Du'a heals all diseases be they of the body or of the heart. When commenting on this Hadith, al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar (ra) said: 'It is inferred from this Hadith that the cure of diseases through Du'a and supplication to Allah (wa al-iltija' ila Allah) is the most successful way of healing, but this cannot be fulfilled unless two conditions are satisfied: pure intention and sincere trust in the effectiveness of the Du'a, and righteousness and reliance on Al-

lah.

The fact that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: 'If you wish, be patient and you will have (enter) Paradise' is a proof for the virtue and reward of patience during sickness. In another Hadith, he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), says: 'Whenever a hardship affects the Muslim, he will be forgiven for it even when he is picked by a spike.' [Muslim]

And in another Hadith, also narrated by Muslim, Ummu as-Sa'ib cursed fever, to which the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) told her: 'Do not curse fever, for it takes away the sins like the blaze [fire] takes away the impurities of iron.' The black woman preferred the suffering of this world to get the eternal reward of Paradise! She suffered from sickness, yet her pain and discomfort did not force her to forego pleasing Allah! And no matter who one is, if one is in the path of Allah, one will encounter difficulties, because Paradise is rounded by hardships. If things are easy and life is rosy, then one must check oneself; are we following the true Islam? Especially in present day environment it may be difficult for a young woman to wear the dress of modesty, the Hijab (even though it is mandatory), not to talk to men and keep away from them (which is also mandatory), except if necessary.

All these may be difficult to achieve for some in the beginning, but when one overcomes herself for the sake of Allah, then all the other obstacles become baseless. So, how to overcome oneself? By knowing Allah by His names and attributes; by loving and obeying Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam); and then the help of Allah will come, insha'Allah. She (the black woman) preferred being patient, but could not tolerate that her honor, her modesty and her chastity be damaged or even touched, nor that any part of her body be uncovered, though she had no control over it. Indeed she was a real slave and servant of Allah; she was

a faithful, a believer, a Muslimah, a righteous and pious woman, a truthful woman, and she was loyal to Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Not only having these awe-inspiring qualities, she was also a wise and a great woman, as her memorable words rang ...: '... but I become uncovered, so please invoke Allah for me that I may not become uncovered.'

If words are to be written in gold, these words should be written in gold ... Remember this simple equation:

Iman + Suffering + Patience = Paradise

It can also be inferred that the righteous Muslim woman inherently loves to be covered, loves modesty and chastity and hates revealing her body and her beauty. The black woman could sustain being so sick but could not bear to be uncovered in front of people.

The issue, one must understand, is not of black or white or Arab or non-Arab, rich or poor, noble [with lineage] or not, it is rather of a creed so deeply rooted in the hearts of Muslims like blood flows in the arteries and veins of people. They are those who are totally committed to Islam. Fourteen hundred years of history showed that Muslim women could sustain hunger, poverty, sickness but could never sustain disobeying Allah. The wife would tell her husband when leaving for work: 'Fear Allah in us, for we can sustain hunger and thirst but we cannot sustain Hell fire [i.e. do not acquire unlawful earning].'

Dear sisters, ask yourself what made Khadijah (RA) be greeted by Allah and by Jibril (AS). Ask yourself what made Khadijah (RA) be rewarded a Palace in Jannah as no one can imagine. Reading the biography of Khadijah and others like her in greatness, one would wish to be at their service; to carry their shoes, wash their clothes, to serve them in any possible way and get Du'a from them. It is sad that we just don't know the great

personalities of this Ummah. If only we strive to study the lives of the righteous that preceded us, we would find in them immense guidance for our existence, and if we know them and follow them we could be in the forefront of mankind ...

It is said, 'Iman (faith) is not by hope, it is rather what occurs in the heart and is proved by the deeds [maa waqa'a fil qalbi wa saddaqahul-'amal].' We leave you to think about this and pray to Allah to make us all among the dwellers of Paradise and to bestow upon us the faith and the patience that lead us to Paradise. And to bless the present Muslim Ummah with many women like the black woman, who help us focus on the straight path ...

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that is the bitter cold, and its breath in the summer is the extreme heat."

Among the virtues of winter is that it reminds one of the extreme cold of Hell and pushes one to seek refuge from it and to do such noble actions that will ensure one is protected from Jahannam (Hell)!

May Allah - Most High, enable us all to make best use of the approaching winter. Ameen.

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So, a true believer can face his difficulties with a positive state of mind hoping for rewards from Allah and such an attitude can provide true relief and happiness. Besides, if Allah lifts this calamity from the believer and saves him from the torment, then that can double the reward and happiness. Allah says in the Quran: "... and give glad tidings to As-Sabirun (the patient)."

Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return."

Our Environmental Responsibility

Zaid Shakir

Muslims have many scriptural imperatives that demand we work for the preservation and health of our environment. As we enter an era where the prospect of environmental catastrophe is perhaps greater than the prospect of disaster from any other source, it is especially important that we make environmental protection one of our most pressing priorities.

In a talk I gave at the London School of Economics on Islam and the environment, I said that when one considers the dismal record of the Muslim nation-states in dealing with environmental issues, and the virtual lack of any significant grassroots environmental organizations in those countries, one may find it strange that a Muslim should speak about this topic.

This sentiment is only reinforced by the fact that the various Islamic movements, which have become the main opponents of the regimes governing those states, lack even the semblance of an environmental agenda. However, the informed Muslim can easily speak on Islam and the environment for a number of reasons. First of all, Islam is described in the Qur'an as the religion of na-

ture. Allah declares: "Therefore, orient yourself, with all due sincerity and uprightness towards the natural religion; this is consistent with the nature He (Allah) has created in humankind. Never will there be any change in that nature, this is the straight way. However, most of humanity realizes it not." (30:30)

Having created us, and then through the institution of religion oriented us towards Him, our Creator then situated us in a delicate, intricate system where our success, and indeed the perpetuation of that system, rests in maintaining a balance between all things. He says in the Qur'an:

"The Merciful. He has taught the Qur'an. He has created the human being. He has taught him elocution. The sun and moon flow along in their established orbits. The stars and trees recline themselves humbly in prostration. He has raised aloft the firmament of the sky and established the balance. Therefore, cheat not in maintaining the balance. Establish just measure and do not fall short in maintaining the balance." (54:1-9)

In this group of verses, Allah enumerates some of His Blessings to humanity. He starts by mentioning the Majestic Qur'an. As

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Muslims, we believe that the Qur'an contains the enduring message of Allah to humanity. Its guidance defines the worldview of the conscientious believer. Allah reminds us: "Remember the blessing of Allah upon you, and the Scripture and Wisdom that He has revealed unto you, by way of admonition. Be mindful of Allah, and be assured that He knows all things." (2:231)

He then mentions His creation of the human being. This creation is mentioned after His teaching the Qur'an. In other words, Allah has facilitated our success before our actual creation. From this we should understand that Allah desires that we succeed in this life. This is consistent with His saying: "Allah has made faith beloved to you, and adorned it in your hearts. And He has caused you to hate disbelief, corruption, and sin." (49:7)

He then mentions His teaching humanity clear speech, elocution. He has given us the ability to express our thoughts, emotions, feelings and sentiments. Imam al-Baydawi says in his commentary on this verse that this is the greatest encouragement for man to express his gratitude to Allah for His blessings. An individual may lack the means to express his appreciation for a favor with a gift or some other material possession. However, he never lacks the means to express his thanks verbally. It is as if Allah is saying to humanity, "I've created you, guided you, and facilitated the means for you to thank me."

After this He enumerates some of His blessings, all are to be found in the world of nature. He mentions the "sun and moon flowing along in their established orbits." The predictability of their orbits increase their benefit to humanity as signs for guidance, markers of time, and regulators of the tides and winds.

"The stars and trees bow in prostration..." The stars prostrate by willingly accepting the Divine Decree governing their

arrangement into constellations. These constellations are an adornment for the sky, and a source of guidance for humanity. The trees do so by accepting the determination that they deliver their fruit consistently and uniformly in an appointed season. This regularity makes possible the harvests, which provide repeated benefit to humanity. The trees also absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help to replenish our supply of oxygen. All of these processes are based on laws established by Allah.

"We have raised aloft the firmament of the sky and established the balance..." Allah has crowned the benefits He has bestowed upon us by raising over us the miraculous canopy of the sky, which protects us, the animals, the plants, and helps to preserve the stored up repositories of water found in glaciers and the polar ice caps. He then declares that He has "established the balance." The balance mentioned here is a symbol of the justice that must characterize all of our transactions. Those transactions must be based on a system of equitable reciprocity and they involve our interactions with everything on earth. Everything in this creation gives and takes fairly: the plants, animals, seas, winds and the Earth.

Humans also give and take. However, we often take more than we give. We thereby oppress our fellow humans, the land, the sea, the plants, and beasts. Our Creator, most knowledgeable of this propensity, advises us: "Therefore, cheat not in maintaining the balance." In other words, do not take more than you give! For if you cheat in this great transaction, you are denying my blessings, and if you deny my blessings, I will withdraw them from you. In this regard, Allah proclaims: "If you give thanks [for My blessings], I shall increase you in them, and if you refuse [to thank Me], you should know that my punishment is quite severe." (7:167)

What we are witnessing in our world

is the failure of humanity to maintain the balance, and that failure has led to unfathomable consequences for the land, the sea, and all of the creatures therein. The Qur'an gives us an insightful description of this condition when it declares: "Corruption has appeared on the land and in the sea because of what the hands of humans have wrought. This is in order that we give them a taste of the consequences of their destructiveness in order that they will return to the path of right guidance." (30:41) Qur'anic exegetes have described this corruption as the drying up of the rains, the disappearance of the harvest of the sea, and other ecologically relevant meanings.

One could well look at these and similar Islamic teachings and ask if they had a practical manifestation in Islamic societies. The answer is yes. The protection of natural habitat, the well-being of animals, and related responsibilities were often overseen by appointed officials, members of the world's first environmental protection agencies. For example, Imam Taj al-Din al-Subki, in his instruction manual to the appointed officials in the Islamic polity, *Mu'id al-Ni'am wa Mubid al-Niqam*, advises the official overseeing the stuccoing of the city walls: "The person entrusted with stuccoing the walls must first ascertain that no animals are living in them. Otherwise, he might inadvertently cause the death of animals that he has no right to kill, small birds and the like. Were he to do so, he would betray Allah by killing those animals."

He advises the official entrusted with the oversight of the animals: "Among the rights owed to these beasts is that you are sincere in serving them. You must exercise the trust you have concerning them fully. They have no tongues with which to complain to you [concerning abuses], they can only complain to Allah." Officials charged with overseeing the protection of the forests and trees were also admonished to carefully

guard the rights of these living creatures.

In the past, Muslims were among the leaders in utilizing earth, wind, sun, water and shade to develop ecologically friendly systems of air conditioning, refrigeration, heating, energy generation, farming and construction. These systems considered well the damage of human activity to the ecosystem. The resulting positive attitudes towards the environment were not unique among pre-modern people.

This careful attitude towards the environment is countered contemporarily by one of avarice, greed and neglect facilitated by a global economic climate that allows gross corporate ecological irresponsibility. This shift has led to unimaginable abuse of the Earth's resources and people. At the heart of this abuse is an economic system that is predicated on unlimited growth, while encouraging unimaginable waste. Our planet's finite resource base and limited absorption capacity cannot long endure such a scheme. Unless we change, perhaps the only question left for us to answer will be, "Will we meet our doom by exhausting our available resources or suffocating in our waste?"

In conclusion, the current economic arrangement fails on three counts. First of all, as Herman Daley and others point out, it fails to meet the basic needs of the planet's entire population. Secondly, it fails to maintain an acceptable level of biodiversity. Thirdly, it does not ensure a sustainable level of resources for future generations. These failures have their own ecological consequences, global warming being only the most alarming.

Muslims have an important part to play in addressing the growing ecological crisis. As we know, the overarching objectives of Islamic Law (*Maqasid ash-Shari'ah*) determine that religion has been instituted to preserve six things: religion itself, life, intellect, wealth, lineage and honor. If the environment that sustains our life and is the primary source of

our wealth, is destroyed, then religion is effectively voided as there would be no life, lineage, or wealth left for it to safeguard. Even if we were to limp along, barely surviving in a toxic, ecologically ravaged wasteland, we would have lost our honor, with our wealth and lives likely to follow in short order.

How can we change? First of all, as Muslims, we must realize that our religious teachings provide us with a valuable source of meaningful ecological consciousness. Our rich history provides us with many brilliant models, which can serve as the basis for significant strategies in developing alternative energy sources, organizing holistic communities, as well as significant direction in other vital areas.

Secondly, we should know that it isn't necessary for us to "reinvent the wheel." There are many non-Muslim groups that are active in addressing a large variety of environmental issues. We can both learn from their experiences and join with them to augment their strength.

If we act now, we can help to avert many looming disasters, such as global warming and the associated climate changes, which are already beginning to wreak havoc on our world. If we fail to act, we are only hastening our collective doom.

Imam Zaid Shakir is amongst the most respected and influential Islamic scholars in the West. As an American Muslim who came of age during the civil rights struggles, he has brought both sensitivity about race and poverty issues and scholarly discipline to his faith-based work.

The Cold Within

*Six humans trapped by circumstances,
in bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood,
or so the story told.*

*Their dying fire in need of logs,
the first man held his back,
for, of the faces around the fire,
he noticed one man black.*

*The next man looking across the way,
saw one not of his church,
and couldn't bring himself
to give the fire his stick of birch.*

*The third one sat in tattered clothes
he gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his log be put to use,
to warm the idle rich?*

*The rich man just sat back
and thought of the wealth he had in store,
and how to keep what he had earned
from the lazy, shiftless poor.*

*The black man's face bespoke revenge
as the fire passed from his sight,
for all he saw in his stick of wood,
was a chance to spite the white.*

*The last man of this forlorn group
did naught except for gain,
giving only to those who gave,
was how he played the game.*

*Their logs held tight in death's still hand,
was proof of human sin.*

*They didn't die from the cold without,
they died from the cold within.*

Kashif Khan

Dealing with Grief : III

J. Hashmi

Another reason why Allah sends down trials and afflictions to people is so that they may be tested. The Quran declares:

“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be put to the test?” (Quran 29:2)

This concept can be clearly understood if we take the analogy of marriage. A man might love and be loyal to his wife during good times, but when things become difficult, he might abandon her. For example, if she is young and beautiful, he will adore her; but if she gets cancer and thereby loses her physical beauty, the same man might abandon her. This shows that in reality he did not really love her. Similarly, a man should love Allah and obey Him in not only good times, but also trying times. Hypocrites might call to Allah’s Way when the weather is good, but as soon as the storm brews, they abandon their faith in Allah.

For example, during the time of Prophet Muhammad (S), there were many hypocrites who converted to Islam when it was beneficial for them to do so. In doing so, they were able to secure powerful positions in the Islamic government. But as soon as

the going got rough, they began showing disbelief, even after they had claimed to believe; when a powerful enemy threatened to destroy the fledgling Islamic city-state, the hypocrites abandoned their faith. The enemies of Islam persecuted the early Muslims, torturing them, boycotting them, and even killing them. This really differentiated the true believers from the false ones; the true believers would stay true to Allah, even in the time of great adversity. Therefore, Allah tests the people, to differentiate the true believers from the hypocrites. Allah says:

“Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, ‘We believe’, and that they will not be put to the test? And certainly We tested those before them, so that Allah will differentiate those who are true from those who are false.” (Quran 29:2-3)

This idea is repeated in numerous verses in the Quran, such as:

“Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you are now, until He shall separate the wicked from the good.” (Quran 3:179)

Allah’s Messenger (S) promised his followers that by becoming Muslim, they would attain success. When the powerful

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enemy almost overwhelmed the Muslim defenders, the hypocrites began to question the promise of the Messenger of Allah (S); they even began to question the All-Powerful nature of Allah. The Quran says:

“Behold! They (the enemy soldiers) came on you from above you and from below you, and behold, the eyes (of the hypocrites) grew terrified and the hearts rose up to the throats, and you began to think unbefitting thoughts concerning Allah...And behold! The hypocrites and those in whose hearts is a disease began to say: ‘Allah and His Messenger promised us (victory) only to deceive.’” (Quran 33:10-12)

The calamity made the hypocrites expose their disbelief, whereas it only made the true believers even more absolute in their faith. The Quran says of them:

“When the believers saw the Confederate forces...it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience.” (Quran 33:22)

Therefore, Allah puts people to the test, to differentiate between the true from the false. Indeed, how can the worth of an object be ascertained unless it is put to the test? An automobile maker will test its cars to see how fast they can go and to see what type of crash they can withstand. Likewise, Allah puts His creations to the test, to see how faithful they will be, and to see if they will remain so when He causes them to crash. Will they fold up like a beat up lemon? Or will they be like the high-end car that can withstand much? Allah says:

“And We shall certainly test you, until We know those of you who strive their utmost (for Allah) and who are the steadfast; and We shall test your reported mettle.” (Quran 47:31)

Adversity and afflictions are actually a heavenly mercy, because they give the believers a chance to earn good deeds, by being patient and loyal to Allah. By passing the test that Allah puts them through, these believers

open up the way for entrance into Paradise (i.e. Heaven). Allah says:

“Or do you expect to enter Paradise without facing such trials as did those before you?” (Quran 2:214)

And so people are tested with various trials and afflictions; poverty, hunger, fear, etc. are all various forms of Allah’s test. Even the loss of loved ones is one such trial. When the ungrateful one loses a loved one, he becomes bitter against Allah, challenging Allah as to why He caused his loved one to die. But the grateful believer will remain patient and submit his will totally to Allah, and in this way, Allah differentiates the true from the false. Allah says:

“We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger, and the loss of wealth and lives and the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere, who say—when afflicted with calamity—“To Allah We belong, and to Him we shall return!” They are on those whom descend blessings from their Lord, and Mercy. Such are the rightly guided.” (Quran 2:155-157)

It is not necessary that calamity is the only way Allah tests us. Allah’s testing may also be in the form of blessings, wealth, health, children, family, and the like. What the people do with such blessings is indeed a great test. Many celebrities and rich people are given great wealth, fame, and material goods, but they are not grateful to Allah for that, and instead live their lives in sin and wickedness. Allah says:

“And know that your (worldly) possessions and your children are but a test, and that it is with Allah with Whom lies your highest reward.” (Quran 8:28)

Therefore, we see that Allah tests the people through both adversity as well as blessing; but regardless of the type of test, the believers are those who remain grateful to Allah. The Quran declares:

“You shall certainly be tried and tested in your

possessions and in your lives; and you shall certainly hear much that will grieve you...But if you patiently persevere and be pious, then surely this will be of great resolution.” (Quran 3:186)

In conclusion, when calamity befalls a believer, he should know that in it is much good, even if it is not apparent at first.

Through affliction are sins expiated and souls purified; through trials are the steadfast tried by Allah, and only the resolute will be successful. It is upon these that Allah will bestow goodness in due time, either in this life or the life after death. Allah says:

“And none shall be granted such goodness, except those who are steadfast.” (Quran 41:35)

Method of Reformation

Hafiz Ibnu Katheer (RA) has reported on the authority of Ibnu Abi Haatim (RA) that a strong and powerful person from Syria used to frequent the gathering of Hadhrat Umar (RA). When he did not come for some time, Umar (RA) enquired about him. Those around replied: “O Ameer-ul-Mu’mineen! He is addicted to wine.” Umar (RA) summoned his scribe and ordered him to write (the following letter):

From Umar bin Khattab to so and so. Peace be upon you. Before you do I praise Allah whom there is none worthy of worship besides Him, the One who forgives sins and accepts repentance, Who is severe in punishment, the All Mighty. There is none worthy of worship besides Him. To Him is the place of return.

Thereafter, Umar (RA) instructed those in his presence to collectively make du`aa for him that his heart accepts this message and that Allah Ta`ala accepts his repentance.

When the letter of Umar (RA) reached him he read it many times over and pondered its contents. He then declared that in this I have been warned of punishment and at the same time promised of being forgiven. Thereafter he wept and quit drinking. He made such taubah that he never returned to drinking. When Umar (RA) was informed of this he said to the people: “In such situations you all should adopt the same procedure. You should be concerned to reform him when he is involved in any vice. Make him hopeful of the mercy of Allah Ta`ala and make du`aa to Allah Ta`ala for the acceptance of his taubah. Do not assist Shaitaan against him (by ridiculing and enraging him, thereby causing him to go further away from Deen).” (Tafseer Ibn Katheer)

The Debauchery of American Womanhood

Henry Makow

On my wall, I have a picture of a Muslim woman shrouded in a burka.

Beside it is a picture of an American beauty contestant, wearing nothing but a bikini.

One woman is totally hidden from the public; the other is totally exposed. These two extremes say a great deal about the clash of so-called "civilizations."

The role of woman is at the heart of any culture. Apart from stealing Arab oil, the impending war in the Middle East is about stripping Arabs of their religion and culture, exchanging the burka for a bikini.

I am not an expert on the condition of Muslim women and I love feminine beauty too much to advocate the burka here. But I am defending some of the values that the burka represents for me.

For me, the burka represents a woman's consecration to her husband and family. Only they see her.

It affirms the privacy, exclusivity and importance of the domestic sphere.

The Muslim woman's focus is her home, the "nest" where her children are born and reared. She is the "home" maker, the

taproot that sustains the spiritual life of the family, nurturing and training her children, providing refuge and support to her husband.

In contrast, the bikini'd American beauty queen struts practically naked in front of millions on TV. A feminist, she belongs to herself. In practice, paradoxically, she is public property. She belongs to no one and everyone. She shops her body to the highest bidder. She is auctioning herself all of the time.

In America, the cultural measure of a woman's value is her sex appeal. (As this asset depreciates quickly, she is neurotically obsessed with appearance and plagued by weight problems.)

As an adolescent, her role model is Britney Spears, a singer whose act approximates a strip tease. From Britney, she learns that she will be loved only if she gives sex. Thus, she learns to "hook up" rather than to demand patient courtship and true love. As a result, dozens of males know her before her husband does. She loses her innocence, which is a part of her charm. She becomes hardened and calculating. Unable to love, she is unfit to receive her husband's seed.

The feminine personality is founded on the emotional relationship between mother and baby. It is based on nurturing and self-sacrifice. Masculine nature is founded on the relationship between hunter and prey. It is based on aggression and reason.

Feminism teaches woman that feminine nature has resulted in "oppression" and that she should convert to male behavior instead. The result: a confused and aggressive woman with a large chip on her shoulder, unfit to become a wife or mother.

This, of course, is the goal of the social engineers at the NWO: undermine sexual identity and destroy the family, create social and personal dysfunction, and reduce population. In the "brave new world," women are not supposed to be "nest" makers, or progenitors of the race. They are meant to be neutered autonomous creatures that indulge in sex for physical pleasure, not for love or procreation.

At one of his press conferences, Donald Rumsfeld said that Iranian women and youth were restive under the rule of the Mullahs. He implied that the US would soon liberate them. To Britney Spears? To low-rise "see-my-thong" pants? To the mutual masturbation that passes for sexuality in America?

Parenthood is the pinnacle of human development. It is the stage when we finally graduate from self-indulgence and become Allah's surrogates: creating and nurturing new life. The New World Order does not want us to reach this level of maturity. Pornography is the substitute for marriage. We are to remain stunted: single, sex-starved and self-obsessed.

We are not meant to have a permanent "private" life. We are to remain lonely and isolated, dependent on consumer products for our identity, in a state of perpetual courtship.

This is especially destructive for woman. Her sexual attraction is a function of her fertility. As fertility declines, so does her sex appeal. If a woman devotes her prime years to becoming "independent," she is not likely to find a permanent mate.

Her long-term personal fulfillment and happiness lies in making marriage and family her first priority.

Feminism is another cruel New World Order hoax that has debauched American women and despoiled Western civilization. It has ruined millions of lives and represents a lethal threat to Islam.

I am not advocating the burka but rather some of the values that it represents, specifically a woman's consecration to her future husband and family, and the modesty and dignity this entails...[2]

Henry Makow, is the inventor of the board game Scruples, and the author of A Long Way to go for a Date. He received his Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Toronto.



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household, and the fulfillment of which is considered to be based on nobility? What fatwa does your conscience give for it? How does your intellect guide you with regard to it? Don't you know that countless families have perished by taking interest based loan for occasions of such marriage ceremonies? Aren't you aware of the fact that the seeds of indecency and immorality get planted into the hearts of thousands of youth primarily in these marriage parties? You have seen it and keep on witnessing scores of examples pertaining to worldly as well as religious devastation such marriages do. Isn't it then obligatory upon you to put a halt, as per your capacity and power, to this ever approaching flood? If not the fear of Allah, aren't worldly considerations enough to stimulate you to launch Jihad against these evil customs?

Qur'an on Homosexuality

Setting the Record Straight

Khalid Baig

In the post colonial world the “civilizing mission” continues and the crusade for civilizing the backward Muslims into embracing the sexual mores of the civilizers is going full speed ahead. Since openly declaring that the Qur’an and Islam are plain wrong does not get you much mileage with the target audience, their challenge is how to perform a perfect inversion of Qur’anic teachings and simultaneously assure everyone that this inversion is in harmony with one’s belief in the Qur’an. Consider homosexuality. The Qur’an condemns it in no uncertain terms and calls those who committed it as musri-foon (going beyond limits) (7:81), Qaumun Aadoon (transgressing bounds) (26:166), Qaumul Mufsideen (mischievous people) (29:30), and Zalimeen (evildoers) (29:31). In other words they were extremists to the nth degree. The civilizers’ dilemma: How to declare those who want to legitimize this practice in the Muslim society as moderates and those who question this extremism as ex-

tremists and hardliners?

It is an impossible task but that has not kept the daring from trying. No wonder the new champions cannot agree on what their argument is. One of them, Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle says “The Koran does not condemn homosexuality.” Another pundit, Arash Naraghi, an Iranian academic in the US, says that the Qur’an does condemn homosexuality but it is okay anyway because reason says so. “Verses decrying homosexuality...stem from common beliefs at the time of writing, and should be re-examined,” he declares. The Economist, which is searching for “theological latitude,” quotes both of them with satisfaction and without the smallest hint that they are mutually contradictory, as means of making “progress”. (The Economist, Feb 4th 2012 <http://www.economist.com/printedition/2012-02-04>).

The story of the people of Prophet Lut (Lot) (AS) is mentioned in more than ten surahs in the Qur’an. This is a story of crime,

defiance, and punishment: Unprecedented crime, extremism in insisting on that crime, and exemplary punishment. Anyone who reads this narrative with an open mind can have not the slightest confusion about Islam's attitude about homosexuality. People do have a right to accept or refuse to accept Islamic teachings, values, and commandments. But no one has a right to lie about them. Unfortunately there are many who are willing to do just that these days. This account is, therefore, offered to set the record straight.

The first thing the Qur'an mentions is that homosexual practice was invented by the people to whom Prophet Lut (AS) was sent as a messenger. He is very emphatic about this: "And [remember] Lut, when he said unto his people: 'Do you commit abominations such as none in all the world has ever done before you?'" (Al-A'raf 7:80) The Qur'anic word is *al-fahisha*, which means lewdness, shameful act, indecency. Fornication and adultery (*zina*) are also mentioned as examples of *fahisha* in the Qur'an. (Isra 17:32). But here the definite article *al* is added to show the even more serious nature of this act. Homosexual act is not *fahisha* but *al-fahisha*. It is not just a shameful act but the shameful act, the lewdness, the abomination.

Secondly in telling that no one before them committed this act, the Qur'an uses the word *min* in addition to *ahadin*. Without this, it would still mean that no one did it before you. But with *min* emphasis is added. In other words, no one whosoever ever did this act among all the creatures. This is an outright rejection of the claim that this tendency is an inborn and ingrained part of nature for which no person should be held accountable. Prophet Lut (AS) accuses them of having made this choice. And the Sodomites do not say that they are helpless because it is a call of nature. Rather they say, "You know very well what we want." (Hud, 11:79). And that the Prophet would be added

to the list of people who have been expelled from their city for objecting to their practices if he does not cease and desist from criticizing their way of life. (Al-Shu'ra 26:167). They are the inventors of this perversion and fully committed to use of violence to defend it.

This Qur'anic account regarding the genesis of this perversion is attested to not only by the Bible and the Talmud but also by the terms used to describe this act in languages around the world. It is sodomy in English, sodomie and sodomiser (the doer) in French, sodomia and sodomizar in Spanish and sodomi in Norwegian. Sodomie in German and sodomia in Polish also refer to variant forms of sexual perversion. All pointing to the fact that it was invented in Sodom, which was the principle city of these people. In Arabic and languages influenced by it like Urdu the term used is *liwatat* or *aml qaum lut*, referring to the practice of the people of Prophet Lut (AS). Again it is pointing to the same date and place of invention.

The date is about four thousand years ago. For thousands of years before that no one ever felt the urge for this perversion. Obviously if it was in human nature then some people in earlier times should also have expressed this inclination. The place is the area now submerged under the Dead Sea. This was a very prosperous and rich fertile land. Then the punishment came in the form of a huge earthquake and rain of brimstones and fires that turned their world upside down. The area then became the lowest point on the face of the earth, being about 1300 feet below sea level. It was submerged under the ocean and turned into a desolate place where little life exists. Its harsh environment permits neither fish or other sea animals nor aquatic plants. It was as the Qur'an said: "And verily of that We have left a clear sign for people who have sense." (Ankabut 29:35).

Sodomites committed other crimes

as well like highway robbery and performing shameful acts in public as mentioned in one place in the Qur'an (Ankabut 29:29). But their biggest crime was homosexuality, which is mentioned repeatedly. And then there was defiance. When Prophet Lut (AS) warned them about divine retribution, they challenged him to bring it on. (Ankabut 29:29). Their fate was thus sealed by their own demand. That was before the angels arrived at the scene. Their invasion of the house of Prophet Lut (AS) for the explicit purpose of molesting the angels who appeared in the guise of beautiful young men was thus just the last nail in their coffin. It was not the primary reason for their punishment.

Some people have tried to distort the Qur'anic account by claiming that their crime was rape not homosexuality. Others have surmised that the problem was that they were targeting young children, otherwise it would be fine. The Qur'an does not leave the slightest possibility of such interpretation. It says: "Verily, with lust you approach men instead of women." (Al-A'raf 7:81). It is rijal (men) not atfal (children). It is for the act itself, without any mention of compulsion, that they are called as musrifoon (going beyond limits).

Also significant is the role of Prophet Lut's (AS) wife. While in the entire town only one house was saved, that of Prophet Lut (AS), even in that house there was an exception. It was the wife of the Prophet, who was killed with the rest of the people. Her fate is mentioned repeatedly so it does not remain just a footnote to the story. Why was she punished? Not for committing homosexual acts but for betraying her husband (Tahreem 66:10). She betrayed the cause of her husband by being an active sympathizer with the people and therefore shared their fate.

When the people invaded the house of Prophet Lut (AS), and he was at the point of despair, the people were blinded by the

angels (Qamar 54:35). We can see a figurative blindness in the people who try to make a case for approval of homosexuality in Islam. A most bizarre argument that has been forwarded by some of them is that the Qur'an mentions the presence of young boys as servants in Paradise. Interestingly it is the same people who argue that the modern homosexual affair is between consenting adults and that they also agree that sex with young boys is wrong. Yet that is what comes to their lustful minds when they read the accounts of the servants in the Qur'an. If they had maintained their sensibilities, they would have realized that this Qur'anic account actually gives exactly the opposite message. In Paradise women will not be in the public places. They will be in the private space, where they will not face the attention of anyone except their husbands ("houris, cloistered in cool pavilions" Rahman 55:72). Young boys will be in all the public places, because those who enter Paradise will not look at them with any sexual desires. They will have nothing to worry as those who could look at them with desire will not be in Paradise at all. They will be in the exact opposite of Paradise, whose small manifestation was given to the people of Prophet Lut (AS).

May Allah protect us all from the Fire and the acts that lead to it.

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Word of Allah as was directly revealed, preserved and memorized and passed down by memory throughout all the generations of Muslims to the present day.

Those who are in search of truth, having open minds and hearts will recognize this as a message in truth and sincerity. Open your heart and your mind now and ask the Almighty Allah of the Universe [Allah] to guide you now to His True Way. And then be ready to accept your true purpose in life.

Source: islamtomorrow

9 Hot Tips For Winter Souls

Umme Ammarah

It is said winter is a time when people suffer from so called winter blues. But it is interesting to see how many people welcome winter because they see it in a different light. Instead of being down and in active you can be pro active revive your energy in ibadah (worship), increase your good deeds, take care of your obligations and earn the pleasure of Allah all at the same time. Here are some tips to benefit from winter:

1. FASTING

Winter is the best season for the believer because Allah makes worship easy for him. This is because in winter, the believer can fast during the day with ease without suffering from hunger and thirst. The days are short and cold, and he therefore doesn't feel the hardship of fasting...

It is reported The Beloved Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Fasting in the winter is the easy prize"

'Umar bin al-Khattab (RA) said: "Winter is the prize of the worshippers."

2. QADHA (missed) FASTS

We all know that making up the days of missed fasting is fardh (compulsory) on every adult Muslim man and woman and not

doing so is a sin. So if we have missed a fast for a valid reason (travel, sickness etc) we need to "catch-up".

Thus, we should hasten to fast the number of days we missed and what better opportunity than this? How much easier could it get? The days are short and the weather is cool, so you don't really get thirsty or even feel hungry.

3. SALAAT

The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "Winter is the best season for the believer. Its nights are long for him to pray in, and its days are short for him to fast in." [Hadith-Majma' az-Zawa'id' (3/203)]

As for praying at night in the winter due to its long nights, one can have his share of sleep and then get up to pray afterwards and recite all that he usually recites of the Qur'an while he has enjoyed enough rest.

4. WARM WOOLIES

The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Whoever feeds a hungry believer will be fed by Allah on the Day of Judgement from the fruits of Paradise, and whoever quenches his thirst

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will have his thirst quenched from the Sealed Nectar, and whoever clothes him will be clothed from the green silk of Paradise.”

Try and involve our own family in these activities. Buy some blankets, gloves and warm hats and take your kids along to distribute it to the needy. There is so much good we can do if we just put ourselves forward.

5. HOT SOUPS

We can prepare some nutritious soups for our family and also hand out to the poor in and around our neighbourhood. I'm sure a hot cup of soup would definitely be appreciated on a cold winter day.

The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Worship the Most Compassionate, Feed people and spread salaam (greetings) and you will safely enter paradise.” (Hadith –Tirmidhil)

6. COZY FAMILY TIME

Allah says in the Noble Qur'aan :“Oh you who believe save yourselves and families from the fire.” (Quran 66:6) .So plan such activities that will bring us closer to Allah. Be innovative and have fun within the confinements of Shariah.

As it is cold, we can enjoy quality time indoors with our family which we often find difficult because we are so "busy"! Plan and do such activities that will bond the family and bring us closer to Allaah. Let the kids be involved in what you plan. Ask them for suggestions so they feel they are part of it. Sit around the warm fire/heater and read some stories of the Sahabah (RA) to the children and introduce them to the true heroes of the world or engage them in any such activities that will be beneficial.

Mums and dads... use these long nights to re-kindle that flame of love.

7. KNOWLEDGE AND WORSHIP

Allah says in verse of Quraan: “verily, in the Remembrance of Allah hearts find peace and satisfaction.” (Qur'aan 13:28)

Use this time indoors to learn duas (prayers) from the sunnah, in recitation of Qur'aan, make the Zikr of Allah etc..The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said; “everyday Allah showers kindness and charity on his slaves and no kindness is better than inspiration of His remembrance that Allah grants to his slaves. (Hadith -Tabarani)

Choose a good Islaamic book and increase your Islaamic knowledge. A Believers thirst for knowledge is never quenched. He continues to hear and learn until he enters Paradise Hadith-Tirmidhi. It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud (RA) said: “Welcome to winter! Blessings descend in it, its nights are long to pray in, and its days are short to fast in.” This is why Mu'adh (RA) wept on his deathbed and said: “I weep because I will miss the thirst I felt when I fasted, praying at night during the winter, and sitting knee to knee with the scholars during the gatherings of knowledge.”

8. PONDER OVER ALLAH'S GREATNESS & THANK HIM FOR HIS BLESSINGS

Actually, if you think about it, winter is a big blessing from among the innumerable, uncountable blessings of Allah. He is honoring us by the bounty of His Giving, His Gracious Blessing and His Great Favour, so that we may be able to pray at night, fast during the day and worship Him

9. REMEMBER REALITIES OF HELL

The Noble Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: “Hell complained to its Lord, saying: “Parts of me have consumed the other parts.” So, He allowed it two breaths of exhalation: one in winter and one in summer. As for its breath in winter,

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Attitude

During Times of Difficulties and Calamities

"...So, one may wonder how to distinguish whether a person is being simply tested by Allah or being punished for one's sins..."

As part of our Islamic faith, we believe that all matters are in the hands of Allah. However, for some of us our faith can get shaken during times of trials and hardships. It is during those times though that we should remind ourselves that a believer's position and rank is raised in front of Allah and that such a hardship may very well be a sign of Allah's love for the believer. This can help us in maintaining and even strengthening our faith.

Great Rewards Associated with Great Calamities

It was narrated from Anas ibn Malik (RA) that the Prophet (Sallallaahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Great reward comes with great trials. When Allah loves a people, He tests them, and whoever accepts it attains His pleasure, whereas whoever shows discontent with it incurs His wrath." (Tirmidhi).

In this hadith, we find that the Prophet

(Sallallaahu Alaihi Wasallam) has provided a message of relief for those who endure difficulties with patience. He also associated greatness of difficulties and calamities with higher rewards. So, enduring through lighter problems and challenges has a smaller reward than enduring greater difficulties and challenges. Given that this life has its share of challenges and difficulties for all, Allah has provided an opportunity of high rewards for those who endure these challenges with patience rather than with complaints and ingratitude. And for those who show displeasure and discontent with Allah's decree end up in a lose-lose situation because not only they have to live through their current suffering but also incur Allah's wrath for their displeasure and discontent with His decree.

We should also realize that our patience when facing difficulties raises our status in front of Allah, and may lead to the forgiveness of our sins. He says in the Quran: "...Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full, without reckoning" Quran (Surah Az-Zumar:10)"

The Prophet (Sallallaahu Alaihi Wa-

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sallam) said: "Nothing befalls a believer, a (prick of a) thorn or more than that, but Allah will raise him one degree in status thereby, or erase a bad deed." (Bukhaari and Muslim).

The Messenger (Sallallaahu Alaihi Wasallam) said in a well known hadith the following: "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him." (Muslim).

We should also realize that when Allah puts His steadfast believers through trials and tribulations, that is a sign of His love for them. It was narrated that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: "If Allah wills good for His slave, He hastens his punishment in this world, and if He wills bad for His slave, He withholds from him (the punishment for) his sin, until He requites him for it on the Day of Resurrection." (Tirmidhi)

Al-Hasan al-Basri (RA) said: "Do not resent the calamities that come and the disasters that occur, for perhaps in something that you dislike will be your salvation, and perhaps in something that you prefer will be your doom."

Al-Fadl ibn Sahl said: "There is a blessing in calamity that the wise man should not ignore, for it erases sins, gives one the opportunity to attain the reward for patience, dispels negligence, reminds one of blessings at the time of health, calls one to repent and encourages one to give charity."

Calamities and Problems – Trials or Punishment?

We also know that some who face difficulties are punished for their sins. So, one may wonder how to distinguish whether a

person is being simply tested by Allah or being punished for one's sins. In this context, scholars have said that "(as Allah knows a person beforehand), the sign of calamity by way of punishment shows as signs of impatience and ingratitude in a person when a calamity befalls, and the sign of calamity by way of expiation and erasing of sins shows as contentment, acceptance, and patience in accepting the will of Allah until relief comes."

Furthermore, if the one who is affected shows displeasure and panic, then it cannot be thought that his calamity is an honor from Allah to raise him in status, because Allah, may He be glorified, knew that he would not be patient and accept it with contentment. So in this case it is most likely that it is a requital and punishment.

Also, if the Muslim is a devoted worshipper, obedient and righteous, and there is nothing between him and Allah but true 'uboodiyyah (servitude), gratitude, praise, repentance and submission to Him, may He be glorified, then it is most likely that this calamity is a kind of honor and raising in status, and people are the witnesses of Allah on earth. If they know him to be righteous, then they may give him the glad tidings of raised status before Allah if he is patient in bearing the calamity.

Regarding difficulties, in the following verse Allah compares the situation of the one who is steadfast in his faith and facing difficulties with those who are evil doers and are in a similar situation: "... if you are suffering (hardships) then surely, they (too) are suffering (hardships) as you are suffering, but you have a hope from Allah (for the reward) that for which they hope not; and Allah is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise" Quran (Surah An-Nisa:104).

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Praiseworthy Morals

Rajaa and Zuhd

Rajaa

Allah says:

"Do not despair of the Rahmat of Allah..."

Rasulullah (saws) said:

"If even the kaafir realises the extent of Allah's Rahmat (mercy), he (too) will not loose hope of Jannat."

Nature of Rajaa

Raja is the state of the heart's tranquillity which develops as a result of one's yearning for the desirable objects of fadhil (Divine Grace), Maghfirat (forgiveness), Ni'mat (Bounty) and Jannat, while devising ways and means for their attainment. Thus one who remains in expectation of Rahmat and Jannat, but does not adopt the means of their acquisition, viz., amal salih (righteous deeds), taubah (repentance), etc., will not attain the goal of Rajs. He remains on the contrary in deception. He is like the one who inspite of not sowing the seeds, expects to reap the crop. He dwells in empty desire.

The manner of acquiring Raja is to reflect about the vastness of Allah's Rahmat and His Munificence.

Zuhd

Allah states:

"...So that you do not grieve over what you

Maulana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)

have lost nor become proud over what you have."

Rasulullah (saws) said:

"The first virtue of this Ummat is yaqeen (firm faith) and zuhd, and the first corruption of this Ummat is bukhl (niggardliness) and amal (distant and remote hopes)."

Nature of Zuhd

Zuhd is to refrain from an object of desire in the pursuit of a nobler objective, e.g. refraining from the desire of the world and pursuing the desire of the Akhirat. This is Zuhd. The basis of Zuhd is the Nur and Ilm which Allah inspires into the heart of man. As a result, his breast expands and he realises with clarity that the world with all its belongings is more contemptible than the wing of a fly and that only Akhirat is noble and everlasting. When this Nur is acquired, the worthlessness of the world fully dawns upon man. The effect of Zuhd is the attainment of contentment upon the obtainal of the bare necessities of life. Thus the Zahid (the one who has Zuhd) is satisfied with the bare necessities in the same way as the traveller is satisfied with the necessities which he takes along on his sojourn.

Zuhd is not abstention from pleasures. Reduction of pleasures is sufficient for

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the attribute of Zuhd. In other words, one should not be engrossed in pleasures. Constantly hankering after luxuries is negatory of Zuhd. On the contrary, obtainal of luxuries without undue effort and arrangement is the ni'mat of Allah, for which shukr (gratefulness) has to be offered. Along with granting comfort to the nafs, effort too should be imposed on it.

In all truth, gold and silver and the world with all its possessions, in the sight of one whose gaze is focussed on Allah, are of no value. Rasulullah (saws) never preferred

the world for himself nor for those close to him. Whatever creation possesses is the material of the world. It is essential to sever one's hope from all things. He who is successful in this objective, will attain tranquillity, because both heart and body find rest and peace in Zuhd.

The manner in which to acquire Zuhd is to meditate on the defects, harms and ephemeral nature of the world, as well as to reflect on the benefits and the everlasting nature of the Akhirat.

The Justice of Sayyiduna Ali (RA)

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

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