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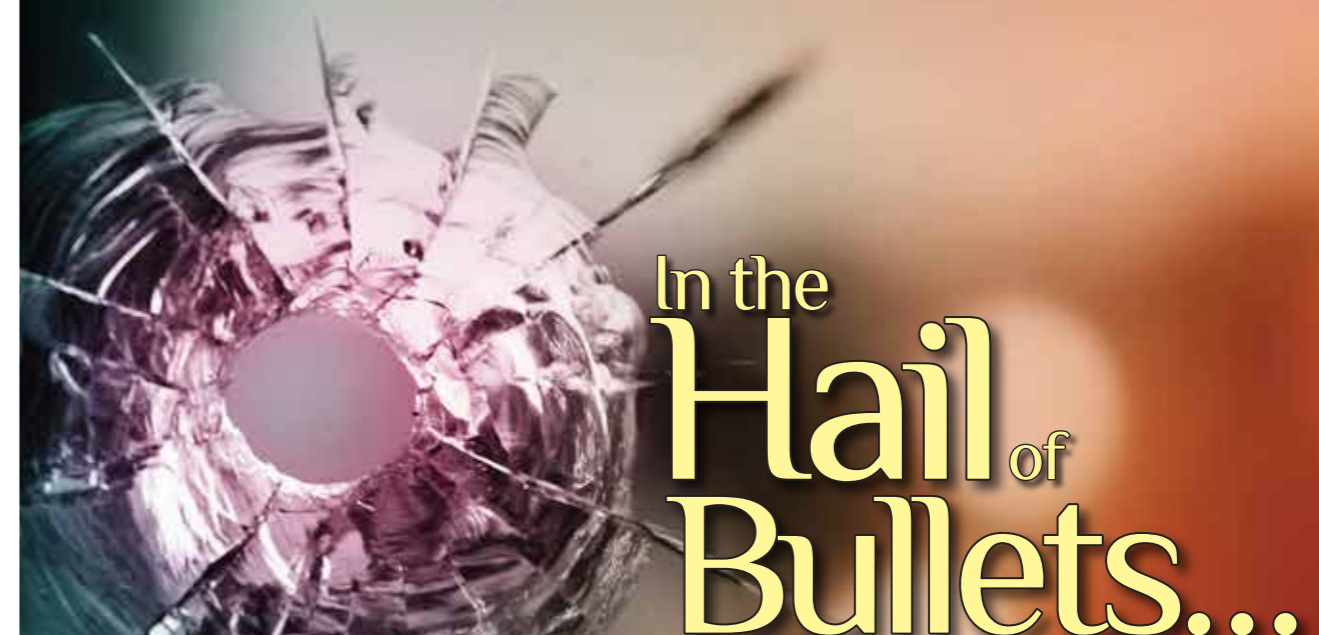
The Intellect

Re-awakening to the
ideals of a Blessed Life

Al Quran
Surah Nisa – Part 14

Al Hadith
Whoever has Felt the Fear
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Re-awakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life

The Intellect

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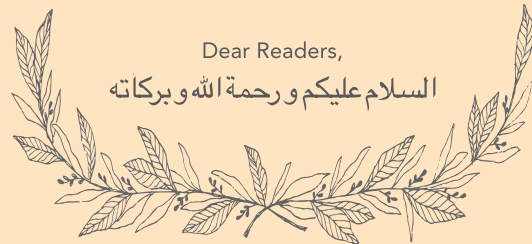


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Editorial



In January this year, the cotton seeds planted on the Moon by the Chinese Chang'e-4 Mission sprouted into buds, rendering the Moon to be a possible staging post, especially for flights to Mars. And in May-June this year, as like each year in Ramadan, Muslims on Earth replanted seeds of taqwa in their hearts, as a base and a staging post for the rest of the year, a special sowing attempt for the voyage into the Hereafter! All that remains is for the flowers and fruits to sprout forth *inshAllah*...

...We do hope all of you had a fulfilling, spirit-lifting Ramadan and an Eid full of joy!

At times, there come singular moments in a person's life, whereby a split second can mean the difference between life and debilitating injury or even fatality.

A much less severe moment of the sort manifested itself to me when I found myself staring into the angry red eyes of a mad bull! A ferocious snorting sound emanated from its nostrils as it pawed the ground, barely five feet away. Bending its head, its black sharp horns gleaming in the sunlight, it was readying to charge. There was no time to think or anywhere to escape. I distinctly remember reciting what I considered to be my last *Kalima*, and turned my back on the beast, in a defeated attempt to minimize the harm at impact.

When I think back about that final instant, (because the ending was not *Alhamdulillah* a totally unhappy one for me, otherwise you wouldn't be reading these lines now!), I realize that not many people turn out to be as fortunate in incidents of the kind or much more traumatic ones. Some people end up being incapacitated, be it psychologically or physically, while for others, that very moment actually turns out to be their last.

The well-known Islamic scholar, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, explained in an early interview that he owes his conversion to Islam to a near-death experience in the form of a horrendous car accident; Allah ﷻ blessed him with *hidaya* but there are definitely others who are enduringly scarred by a serious happening or incident in their lives; (case in point: a recent BBC report stated that some survivors of the Columbine school shooting in the US twenty years ago, *still* feel deeply traumatized by it).

For the most pious ones though, surviving a serious incident or a life attempt is like a special gift from the Creator ﷻ, where their miraculous survival becomes a mean of opening the eyes of others....

In March this year, we heard of the deeply disturbing attempt on the life of *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمته الله وبركاته. While it became an obvious example of how not a scratch can come upon one if

Allah ﷻ protects someone, it also carries a number of very important lessons for us.

Our *Cover Story* takes us through that atrocious yet instructive event, as experienced by the respected spouse of Mufti Taqi Sb رحمته الله وبركاته. We have heard about Hadhrat's experience through a number of interviews and articles that appeared in print as well as videos, so *The Intellect* publishes here the valuable insights of Hadhrat's *Ahliya*, for the benefit and learning of all of us, *inshAllah*.

One essential takeaway of this dreadful incident needs special mention here: the need for utilization of our time in the most effectual manner. It brings to one's mind the case of the old man seen crying in the market place. When asked why he was shedding tears he replied: *people here are lost in the Dunya; I asked my Lord ﷻ to favour them, and He says I am ready to forgive them but they are not ready to seek forgiveness.*

The next day, the same old man was seen weeping in a graveyard. When asked why he cried now, now that he was not amongst the wayward living, but the helpless dead, he said: *the people here are yearning to seek forgiveness, but now their Lord ﷻ is not ready to forgive them!*

In *Transformations*, a series which many of our readers look forward to, the story of a Syrian sister is featured, which elucidates how internalization of a single *a'ayah* of the Holy Qur'an can bring about a sea of internal change and that the minor or major struggles of daily life – no matter how overwhelming they may seem – are made easily traversable by recourse to that amazing compass in our lives that is *deen*. This point is fittingly epitomized by a saying attributed to Imam Al-Ghazali:

The way to paradise is an uphill climb whereas hell is downhill. Hence, there is a struggle to get to paradise and not to hell.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid

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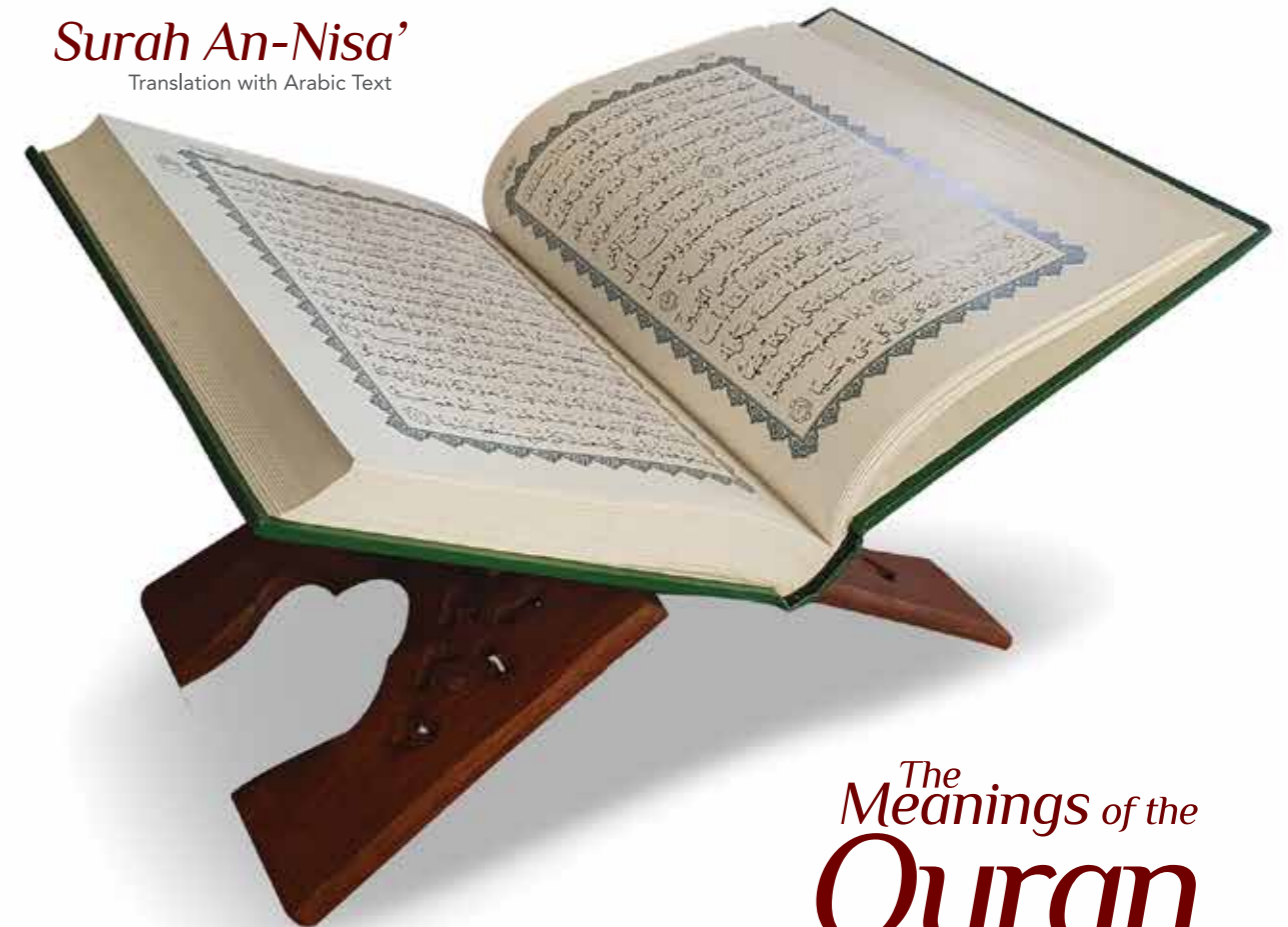
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Surah An-Nisa'
Translation with Arabic Text



*The
Meanings of the
Quran*

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٦﴾

O you who believe ,do believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the book He has revealed to His messenger and in the books He had revealed earlier. Whoever disbelieve in Allah and in His angels and His books and His messenger and the last day has indeed gone for stray.[136]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ آمَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيَهْدِيَهُمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٧﴾

surely, those who believed and then disbelieved, believed again and then disbelieved, then went on increasing in their disbelief – Allah is not to forgive them nor lead them on the path.[137]

بَشِيرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٨﴾

Give the hypocrites the 'good news' that for them there is painful punishment[138]

الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَيْسَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةُ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾

those who take the disbelievers for friends rather than believers. Are they seeking honor in their company? But, indeed, all honor belong to Allah,[139]

وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مِثْلُهُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾

and He has revealed to you in the book that when you hear the verses of Allah being disbelieved and ridiculed, you should not sit with them unless they enter into some other discourse. You, in that case, would be like them. Surely, Allah is to gather all hypocrites and disbelievers in jahannam.[140]

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحْوِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعْكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَوْمَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾

those who look for (a misfortune for) you, so, if there is a victory for you, they say, "Were we not with you?" but if there is gain for disbelievers, they say (to them), "Had we not overpowered you, still protected you from believers?" So, Allah will decide between you on the Doomsday. Allah shall never give the disbelievers a way against believers.[141]

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالًا يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾

Surely the hypocrites (try to) deceive Allah while He is the one who leaves them in deception. And when they stand for salah, they stand up lazily, only to show people, and do not remember Allah but a little, [142]

مُذَبِّبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾

wavering between (this and) that, neither here nor there. Whomsoever Allah lets go astray, you shall never find a way for him. [143]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَيْسَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾

O you who believe, do not take the disbelievers for friends instead of believers. Do not want to produce before Allah a clever evidence against yourself? [144]

إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾

Surely, the hypocrites are in the lowest level of fire, and you shall never find for them a helper [145]

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾

except those who repent and correct themselves and hold on to Allah and make their faith pure for Allah. So, those are with the believers, and Allah will give the believers a great reward. [146]

مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ بِعَدَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَآمَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

What would Allah get by punishing you, if you are grateful and believe? Allah is appreciating, all knowing. [147]

لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلِمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾

Allah does not like evil words to be said openly except from anyone wronged.60
Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [148]

إِنْ تَبَدُّوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخَفُّوهُ أَوْ تُعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

If you do a good act openly or do it in secret, or forgive an evil deed, then, Allah is All-forgiving, All-Powerful. [149]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾

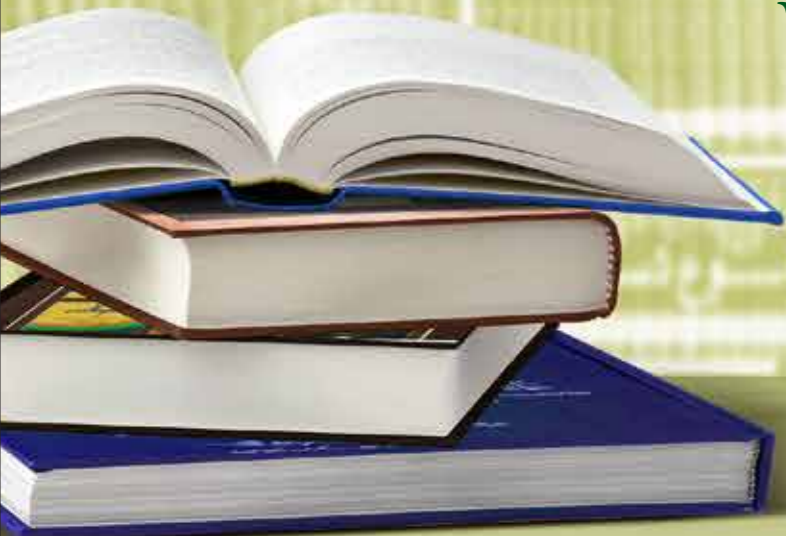
Surely those who disbelieved in Allah and His Messengers and wish to make divisions between Allah and His Messengers, and say, "we believe in some (messengers) and disbelieved in some others" and wish to take away in between that,___[150]___

those are the disbelievers in reality, and we have prepared a humiliating punishment for disbelievers.

Explanation

60) It means using bad words for others is not permissible in normal conditions, because it is included either in ghibah (backbiting) or in hurling abuses. Both are impermissible. But if a person has faced unjust attitude from another one, it allowed for him to complain about it before others.

Whoever Has Felt the Fear of Allah Will Be Salvaged From Hell



Anas رضي الله عنه narrates from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he said: "On the Day of Judgment Allah will command [the angels stationed at Hell] that whoever may have remembered Him at any time, or feared Him on any occasion, should be taken out of Hell" (Tirmidhi and Baihaqi).

Commentary: We have stressed in the Book of Faith that it is incontrovertible from the point of view of the Qur'an and Sunnah that anyone who dies in a state of apostasy or polytheism will live permanently in Hell and no act of his will be deemed worthy of securing his release from it. The above tradition, accordingly, denotes that whoever departs from the world in such a condition that he is not an apostate or a polytheist but has committed a great many sins and made no provision for the Hereafter except that he has remembered Allah at any time, or feared Him on any occasion, will be cast into Hell

on the Judgment Day to undergo the punishment for his misdeeds; but after some time, he will be taken out of it because of the Divine fear and remembrance of Allah. And Allah knows best.

Auspiciousness of Tears

It is related by Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The tears that fell from the eyes of a truthful believer, out of the fear of the Lord, and, then, roll down his face, however little they are, even if the size of the head of a fly [i.e. just one drop], shall prevent the Fire of Hell from [touching] his face" (Ibn-e-Maja).

Commentary: It shows that the face that gets wet, at any time, with tears shed in response to the fear of the Lord will remain protected from the Fire of Hell.

As we have explained earlier, when the glad

tidings of protection against the Fire of Hell are given in a tradition, as a result of performing a virtuous deed, it, generally means that it is the characteristics attribute of that deed, and Allah will keep him safe from the infernal Fire who will carry it out provided that he is not guilty of a mortal sin which calls for the punishment of Fire, or If he has ever committed a sin entailing damnation, he has offered sincere repentance for it and resolved not to do it again. It must not be taken for an attempt at explaining away a difficulty but even in our common parlance such a condition is supposed to be implied with a promise or assurance of that kind.

Standing of Hair on Ends

Sayyidina Abbas رضي الله عنه related to us from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: "When the hair of a bondsman stand on ends owing to the fear of Lord, his sins fall away like leaves from an old and sapless tree."

Commentary: Fear and anxiety are felt in the heart but the human nervous system is such that our emotions make themselves manifest through the body as well. Thus, when we are happy our face reacts to it, and, often, we laugh or smile, and when we are afflicted with sorrow our face also reflects it, and, sometimes, we weep. In the same way, the sensation of fear in the heart makes our hair stand on ends. Like the preceding tradition in which the glad tidings of protection from the Fire of Hell were given to the believers who wept out of the fear of the Lord, the above saying, as related by Sayyidina Abbas رضي الله عنه tells that when the hair of a Believer stand on ends owing to the fear of Allah his sins fall away like the leaves of a withered tree in the autumn.

A Parable

It is related by Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A person did great injustice to himself [i.e. he spent his days in folly and transgression]. When the hour of his death drew near [he was seized with the fear of Allah because of the life of negligence and

evil-doing he had led, so much so that, he instructed his sons to burn his corpse to ashes when he died and to scatter some of the ashes on land and immerse some of them in the river [so that no trace of him was found anywhere and he could not be raised up on the Day of Recompense]. He said. 'By Allah! I am such a sinner that if the Lord gets hold of me, He will punish me like no one in the world;. So when he died, his sons carried out his wish [i.e. burnt his corps and scattered his ashes]. Then, at the command of Allah, the remains of his dead body came together from land and water [and he was brought back to life], 'Why did you do that?' he was asked, "O my Lord, 'I had done it only out of Your fear. 'Allah, thereupon, pardoned him" (Bukhari and Muslim).

Commentary: The bondman, in this parable, was not aware of the Power and Glory of the Lord and his record, too, was not good but before his death he was so greatly overcome by the fear of Allah that he made his foolish will thinking that when his ashes had been thrown about in all directions there was no possibility of his being raised up again. Since, however, the basic cause of his folly was the fear of Allah, he was forgiven.

Different explanations are given for the words *لئن قدر الله عليه* but in our opinion the meaning given by us is correct 'if the Lord gets hold of me.'

This was an ignorant idea of the unfortunate man, and Allah forgave him that lapse too. And Allah knows best.



Hajj Prep: Educating Oneself before Embarking

By Mawlana Abu Asim Badrul Islam

With regard to educating oneself of the significance, virtues, laws and method of hajj, hajj-goers are generally of three categories:

(1) Those who are absolutely indifferent and do not have any sense of the importance of learning and understanding before setting off for hajj. This, sadly, is a very large percentage of all those who embark on this magical 'journey of a lifetime'. It does not occur to them in the least that there is a total of five days of hajj, and in the case of most non-locals travelling from other parts of the world, they will have to perform an 'umrah before the actual five days of hajj, and in those 5 days they have to perform special rites in special ways, during special – and sometimes strict – times, in special locations. This category simply goes for hajj, hoping to just follow the crowd and come back home as a 'hajji'.

(2) There are then those who are at the opposite extreme. They are overwhelmed by the complex

details of the five days of hajj, the often mind-boggling and confusing rites, deadlines, complex nomenclature, a labyrinth of strict laws – the 'dos' and the 'don'ts', the variety of possible scenarios and things that can go wrong etc. This category starts panicking and stressing over the whole prospect from long before the actual journey to hajj. They become victims of paranoia – something that Shaytan delights in.

(3) Finally, a third category. They are the ones who plan things well. They see their 'journey of a lifetime' as just that and they take it very seriously. They prepare well and do not leave things to chance, or till the last minute, or just hope for the best and intend to just follow the crowd. This category is excited at the prospect of being invited by Allah Most High to His house, and finally their lifetime's dream coming true. As the date of their departure draws nearer, their excitement increases. They start their preparation weeks and even months in advance. They

proactively look for hajj seminars, courses and workshops. They consult with their imams and scholars regarding their 'journey of a lifetime'. They seek guidance from their scholars who specialise in the fiqh of hajj and 'umrah. They ask them for authentic literature recommendations. They make notes. They leave no stone unturned in their preparation. By the time their date of departure arrives, they are well-prepared and are not panicking or stressing. Rather, their hearts are pounding with fervour and excitement. For this category, their hajj journey becomes truly 'magical'. They return home washed of their sins, spotless – just as they were on the

day in which their mother gave birth to them. They are spiritually uplifted. They return home and begin a new life after their 're-birth' of hajj.

Do not leave things to chance. Be of this third category of hajj-goers. Prepare before it is too late.

Courtesy: ilmgate.org



Repentance – The Right Way

by Maulana Abdus Sattar Sb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

How to seek Taubah?

Whoever wishes to seek Taubah must do so in this sequence: first of all seek Taubah from *Kufr* (infidelity) and *Shirk* (assigning partners to Allah ﷻ) without any delay. It is important to remember that at times one keeps delaying

Taubah and thinks 'I will seek forgiveness tomorrow, if not tomorrow then maybe the day after' and so on. This is in fact a trap set by Satan: 'no need to seek Taubah today; just enjoy yourself today and tomorrow can be dealt with when it comes'. My friends! You know that if a tree is planted today then taking it out the same day is much easier than trying to pull it out once its roots grow deep; a very cumbersome chore. Similarly, if you quickly seek repentance today, it will be easier than postponing it for tomorrow – wherein seeking Taubah will become difficult.

The Right Order in Seeking Taubah

Imam Ghazali رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has written:

"Taubah must be sequenced in such a way that first of all one must repent for *Kufr* (infidelity) & *Shirk* (assigning partners to Allah ﷻ), then, one must seek repentance for our traditional faith and traditional Islam. (Traditional Islam means that e.g. a woman is born into a Muslim family but she is unaware of the requisites of Islam: what does Islam demand from me? What are the commandments of Islam in relation to various matters and affairs? One must seek Taubah for this 'traditional' Islam and must accept Islam conscientiously and rationally). Thirdly, one has to ask for forgiveness in relation to *Kabeera Gunah* i.e. major sins and fourthly for *Sagheera Gunah* i.e. minor sins".

(Ahya-ul-Uloom, Vol.4, Pg.4&5)

Many a time we seek remission from major sins (*Kabair*) but not from minor ones (*Saghair*). Their

ramification though isn't different; even if, at times, it takes longer for the consequences of the latter to surface; e.g., if flames are simmering somewhere, it is important to snuff them out because they may cause harm. Similarly, the sparks of a sin must also be put out before it develops into a full-fledged blaze, otherwise, it too will build up into fire. Thus, insistence on committing a minor sin does not categorize it as 'minor' anymore; in fact, it then becomes a major sin. Hence, it is as important to seek Taubah for minor sins as it is for major ones, because their result is the same.

Seeking Taubah for Unapparent Sins

It is equally important to seek Taubah for one's apparent and unapparent sins. Allah ﷻ says:

"Leave (O mankind, all kinds of) sin, open and secret." (Al-Anam 6: 120)

Let both apparent and inner sins go. One must repent for one's malice, hatred, jealousy; for one's apparent sins and also for one's inner / unapparent ones. After Taubah is accepted, the grace of such a penance makes one feel as if one did not falter in the first place, as if one did not commit any sin at all.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

The one who seeks Taubah for his sins is like one who has committed no sin at all.

(Mishkat, Bab-ul-Istighfar wa Taubah, Pg. 206)

Our Rasul-e-Kareem ﷺ said:

On the Day of Judgment, a person would be brought into Allah's court. When Allah ﷻ recounts his sins to him, he would become very worried in that 'there remains no doubt in my impending doom'. (But since this person kept seeking Taubah in the world, due to this) Allah ﷻ will say to him: Go! I have changed all your sins into good deeds.

When Taubah is sought in its true form, then Allah ﷻ swaps sins with good deeds. Allah says:

"...so for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds..." (Al-Furqan 25: 70)

Satanic Doubts

My friends! It is a must that Taubah be sought with sincerity, because Satan puts numerous doubts into our hearts.

One such doubt is to say that Allah ﷻ is very forgiving, so no need to seek Taubah; He ﷻ is very forgiving so He will forgive us in any case.

Allah surely is very forgiving but He is also a great sustainer/provider of livelihood. So if we assume that we need to do nothing for seeking forgiveness, then, we should not strive to earn a livelihood as well – we should just sit at home and Allah, Himself, shall provide us direct sustenance at home. It isn't so!

Undoubtedly, Allah ﷻ is the best sustainer, but we too are supposed to make some effort; only then Allah ﷻ helps us through His trait of "Provider". Indisputably, Allah is very forgiving, but we need to seek Taubah, feel repentant, vow not to get involved in sins again and keep a distance from all kinds of sins.

The second doubt that Satan plants in our hearts is that many a times he makes a person hopeless in that 'you have committed too many sins, innumerable sins, how can these be forgiven?' As a cure for such a doubt, Allah ﷻ addressed our Holy Prophet ﷺ:

"Say: O Ibad (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah."

(Az-Zumr 39: 53)

Allah ﷻ seals the door of hopelessness through this verse. No matter how many sins have been committed, there is no need to become hopeless of Allah's mercy. Just try to seek Taubah from Allah ﷻ once, and you will see how quickly He forgives you.

Many a time Satan sows the seed of another kind of a doubt: If you seek Taubah now, you may commit sins again tomorrow, so there is no need to ask for Taubah at all! So, my friends! This is like an ill person refusing to get treatment because he fears he may fall sick again tomorrow! No one does so; or like a hungry one saying that I will get hungry again in the evening so there is no need to eat in the morning!

We shouldn't fall prey to such a doubt. Seek Taubah now, and if you happen to commit a sin tomorrow, then seek Taubah again, and if you sin yet again, then seek Taubah yet again. Allah ﷻ loves such a person who keeps seeking Taubah again and again. Our Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

Verily, Allah loves a person who (repeatedly) falls into the sedition of sins, then (repeatedly) seeks Taubah.

(Mishkaat, Bab-ul Istaghfar wa Taubah, Pg. 206)

So, Allah ﷻ dearly loves one who seeks Taubah repetitively. Allah ﷻ forgives such a person. Allah says:

"Truly, Allah loves those who (repeatedly) turn unto Him in repentance" (Al-Baqarah 2: 222)

Allah ﷻ here refers to those who are repentant time and again: slipped into sins, asked for forgiveness; faltered, asked for forgiveness again.

So all these are satanic doubts; at times he brings Allah's attribute of forgiveness to the fore to urge one to sin; at times he tries his hand at introducing hopelessness; at times he initiates a fear of the uselessness of a Taubah that is followed by sins. You must keep aside all these thoughts and doubts and seek Taubah before Allah ﷻ with repentance.

- To be continued, insha'Allah

Qurbāni

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Qurbāni is a demonstration of total submission to Allah and a proof of complete obedience to Allah's will and command. When a Muslim offers a qurbāni, this is exactly what he intends to prove. Thus, the qurbāni offered by a Muslim signifies that he is a slave of Allah at his best and that he would not hesitate even for a moment – once he receives an absolute command from his Creator – to surrender before it, to obey it willingly, even if it be at the price of his life and possessions. When a true and perfect Muslim receives a command from Allah, he does not make his obedience dependent upon the command's reasonability as perceived through his limited understanding. He knows that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise and that [human] reason cannot encompass the knowledge and wisdom underlying the divine command. He therefore submits to the divine command, even if he cannot grasp the reason or wisdom behind it.

This is exactly what Prophet Ibrahim ﷺ did. Apparently, there was no reason why a father should slaughter his innocent son. But when came the command from Allah, he never asked about the reason for that command, nor did he hesitate to follow it. Even his minor son when asked by his father about the dream he had seen never questioned the legitimacy of the command, nor did he [complain] about it, nor did he ask for one good reason as to why he was being slaughtered. The one and only response he made was:

"Father, do what you have been ordered to do. You shall find me, God willing, among the patient."
(Qur'an, 37:102)

The present-day qurbāni is offered in memory of this great model of submission set before us by the great father and the great son. So qurbāni must be offered in our time emulating the same ideal and attitude of submission.



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In the Hail of Bullets...

By Zawjah Farid

An account of the chilling firing incident as experienced by Ahlia Sheikh-ul-Islam, Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb

Friday, 22nd March, 2019
Jamia Dar-ul-Uloom, Korangi, Karachi.

Friday began as a normal day for us. I completed my post-Fajr *mamoolat* of recitation of the Holy Qur'an, Manzil, Dua-e-Anas, Yaseen Sharif and Monajat-e-Maqbool etc. After offering Ishraq and Chasht prayers, I offered Salat o Tasbeeh and recited Surah – e – Kahaf.

Hadhrat was supposed to be in Multan today. But his Wednesday flight was cancelled and the one on Thursday was at 11 p.m., whereby he wouldn't have made it to a speech scheduled in Multan. So he conducted it over the phone and thus remained in Karachi.

On Fridays, when Hadhrat is in Karachi, he leads prayers and delivers a sermon at the Bait-ul-Mukarram Mosque in Gulshan-e-Iqbal. After listening to the sermon in the car, I am dropped off at my daughter's house nearby. And so it was planned on Friday, 22nd March; at around noon, we started off for Gulshan-e-Iqbal. Habib, our driver of many years, was driving our black Honda Civic. On the seat next to him was Mr. Farooq, an escort/guard sent over by Sindh Police. On the passenger seat, Hadhrat sat behind the guard, our grandchildren Yamaan, 5, and Deena 8, sat next to him and I sat behind the driver's seat. As per routine, the *Safar du'as* were recited: *Subhan Allazi...*, *Bismillah-e-Tawwakaltu...*, *Bismillah-e-Majrrayha wa Mursaaha....*, *Dua-e-Anas bin Maalik* etc.

Another Dar ul Uloom car, with a driver and a Dar ul Uloom guard, was behind us.

Unknown to us at the time, our car was tailed from right outside the Dar-ul-Uloom gate. When we stopped at a petrol pump, two riders on a bike stopped as well. Surveying, waiting, speaking over their mobiles...

Both Hadhrat and I carry our Qur'ans with us while travelling, and I opened mine to recite my second *Juz* of the day. Yamaan had seated himself at the spot between the guard and the driver, but now complained that the air-conditioning was too cool for him, so he moved to the back seat. We had reached around the Nipa flyover by this time.

Suddenly, I heard some shots close-by. I wondered whether the guard's pistol had fired off?! When the shots didn't abate, the driver and guard cried out in unison that the firing was not actually in the background, but aimed directly at us! I looked out the window, and saw two unmasked men on a bike, one in a black suit,

carrying a small machinegun, and firing at our car. They had at least four other accomplices on two other bikes around us and we came under an appalling, unabated, fiery attack of bullets from all sides! It was as if we were under a shower of shots...from all directions... left, right, back, front. The front windscreen shattered, so did the rear windshield and the side windows; there were bullets whizzing past our knees, flying around our heads, embedded into our seat covers and crisscrossing right in front of our eyes. All in all sixteen bullets were later found in our horrendously damaged car, and with Allah's Will, not one of them had hit their intended target!

Once we realized what was happening, *Ayat-ul-Kursi* and *Durood Shareef* came instantly to our lips. Neither Hadhrat nor I panicked; in fact, amazingly, we both felt sure in our hearts that the bullets weren't meant for us. The kids didn't scream or cry either. They kept asking what they should recite and I told them to recite whatever they could remember. There was a moment when I felt at a loss as to what to pray and I beseeched Allah to put the right supplication into my heart. At that instant, Allah with His immense Grace, reminded me of the Ayaahs of Surah Yaseen: *Inna Jaalna Fi Aa'naqihim...wa Ja'alna min Bayn e Aydeehim Saddaon wa min Khalfihim Saddaon fa Aghshaeynahum, fa Hum La Yubsiroon...* ("Surely, we have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft. And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see...").

And it surely seemed as if they couldn't see!

With my lap and my feet covered in glass shrapnel from all windows and with bullet holes in the doors and the trunk, we wondered where all the bullets fired at the backseat were going?

Unfortunately, the police guard sitting at the front got hit by a bullet in the head. When his body leaned over, Hadhrat assumed he had fainted, (Habib thought otherwise though). At that very moment, Yamaan cried out in pain and we

panicked at the thought of him being shot, but to our great relief, when we raised his shirt with Allah's ﷻ name, it was just glass shrapnel that had gotten embedded in his shoulder from the bullet that had hit the guard.

Hadhrat kept shaking the policeman, to awaken him, but to no avail.

In the meanwhile, Habib got hit too. Two bullets hit him in the right hand/shoulder, while a third brushed his left hand.

Once the attackers noted that the guard had been injured, the back-seat passengers were not moving (we had ducked our heads) and the driver was bleeding profusely, they ventured off to chase our escort car, which had overtaken us in the midst of the heavy firing. Both people in the other car got hit as well. (The guard passed away instantly, while the driver passed away some two weeks later; *Inna Lillahae wa Inna Illaeyhae Rajeon*)

Habib kept driving our car, even though he was bleeding from his wounds. Feeling perhaps that their target is alive, they came back to our car and fired again. One bullet pierced Habib's chin, who then speeded up the car and came out of their range. Hadhrat kept asking him to let him drive but Habib adamantly refused. He prayed that Allah ﷻ keep us safe and told us that he too had recited Dua-e-Anas Bin Malik ﷻ in the morning.

The firing had been so intense and thunderous that a couple of our acquaintances who were passing by the same area at the time told us later that they were forced to divert their cars to other roads!

The horrendous attack did not make Hadhrat forget that he was supposed to lead the Friday prayers at Masjid Bait-ul-Mukarram. So he called our son-in-law at the mosque and told him to request the Imam of the Masjid to lead the prayers in his stead, so that the attendees are not troubled by his absence. He also told him about the attack and that they were trying to make it to Liaquat National Hospital.

As we drove on, we came across a police van, and Hadhrat asked them to provide us a driver to take

us to the hospital. They told us to carry on, on our own, and informed us bluntly that the guard at the front seat had passed away. Habib beseeched us not to waste time on requesting them and to dip our heads, as he felt that the attackers may return once they noticed that our car was still on the move. He pushed on the accelerator and drove on at top speed with his injured left hand (his right had been rendered useless due to bullet wounds). Had he stopped the car, we would've been simple prey.

We flew away on the road, in the hail of bullets, and under Allah's ﷻ Protective Shade, the assailants pursuing us, until finally, Habib noticed with immense relief that the attackers felt forced to end their pursuit and turned into different side lanes; their efforts defeated; their will shattered.

Hadhrat had called an acquaintance at the Liaquat National Hospital from the car and informed him about the attack. When we eventually reached the hospital gates, an entourage of emergency workers was awaiting us. Habib was helped out on to a wheelchair and the unfortunate guard was taken out on a stretcher. A doctor attending him confirmed the sad news of his having already passed away. *Inna Lillahae wa Inna Illaeyhae Rajeon*.

The children were helped out. Yamaan was injected a Tetanus shot and treated for shrapnel.

A lady doctor came towards my side of the car. She was amazed at the amount of glass in my lap and around my feet. She emptied out my shoes and remarked that I seemed very relaxed despite the extremely sorry state of our car and the fact that it was riddled with bullets. I told her that I felt very calm *Alhamdulillah* and that I had spent the last part of our drive in doing nothing but profusely thanking Allah ﷻ for saving us in the face of clear and certain death.

My hands were treated for shrapnel too.

Amazingly, *MashAllah*, Hadhrat, the intended target of this whole ordeal, did not suffer a single scratch! As an Urdu adage puts it aptly: *jissay Allah rakhay, ussay kon chakhay* (no one can harm one, if Allah ﷻ wills not).

Two Dreams

On the day of the attack, Maulana Ishaq Sb's wife related that a child was reciting the Holy Qur'an past noon, and she dozed off. She saw two cars in her dream, one black and the other lighter in colour, surrounded and sheltered by a flock of birds.

Syed Hussain Sb's child saw in his dream at Fajr that lots of stones are being hurled at Dar ul Uloom but that no one gets hurt. When he was chided on relating such a strange vision, he replied: *hum bach tu gayeh na!* (We were saved after all).

What have we learnt?

- Drifting in and out of our daily routines, our hours devoured by non-issues, the least we can do is to constantly keep our tongues busy in *ZikrAllah*.
- The *Barakah* of keeping Allah's ﷻ remembrance alive in our hearts results in a feeling of complete calm and peace, even in moments of extreme turmoil.
- Whoever saw the condition of our car after the attack, realized that in the world of *asbab* / means, there was a very low chance of our survival. It became patently manifest that not a dot of harm can come upon one when not destined; and that no entourage of guards, flashy vehicles and guns can save a person if one's time is up.
- Allah ﷻ can annihilate perfectly well-rehearsed plans and can make the most stubborn of adversaries turn on their heels.
- With Allah's ﷻ Grace, we kept reciting and supplicating to our Lord ﷻ before, after and right in the middle of the attack and He showed us the absolute power of His *Kalaam*. One shot at our car's tire and the game could've been over for us. But it seemed that the powerful words of Yaseen Shareef really blinded the assailants.
- It became apparent that not only did the designs of the perpetrators come to naught,

but in fact, it caused the opposite of what they intended: an unfortunate news at the eve of the country's Independence Day turned into a big story of survival in the face of immense odds, just by Allah's ﷻ Protective Shade. The assailants kept doing what they had come for and we kept doing what we had learnt to do: recourse towards our Lord ﷻ.

- After the attack, Hadhrat remarked that we have been gifted with a fresh lease of life by Allah ﷻ so we must put our time and efforts to best use and try not to waste even a second of this precious gift.
- The significance of Du'a-e-Anas Bin Maalik ﷻ became apparent. Whoever recites this supplication in the morning, no one is able to harm him.
- The power of du'a has manifested itself numerous times in our lives. But none more clearly than during this attack on 22nd March, and also in an earlier incident which we experienced in Islamabad:

Fire!

It was the night before Hadhrat was to deliver an important judgment (being a Judge of the Federal Shariah Court). We had travelled back to Islamabad after spending a few days in Karachi and had completed our recitations / *mamoolat* in the airplane because we were expected to arrive late.

Around 2 a.m., Hadhrat, who was wearing Teton clothes, felt heat around his feet and woke up with a start. He instantly awakened me and we watched in horror as the curtains were aflame (the fire having been introduced through the air-conditioner vent) and the smoke and fire was spreading rapidly, constricting our breathing. I grabbed the large bed sheet to wrap around and urged Hadhrat to rush along, though he wished to salvage the briefcase which contained the papers he had worked very hard on. On my insistence, he was forced to leave it behind in darkness, because we couldn't afford to waste even a second, and we rushed out without even our slippers, seeing the whole living area being

engulfed in flames.

We spent the night sitting out in the garden, seeing the fire engines at work and constantly reciting Sayyidina Abu Darda's d'ua* and Ayat-ul-Kursi. I also did *Hisaar* of our important belongings, including the papers.

(*Sayyidina Abu Darda was once informed that his house was on fire. He said: that's not possible. A second man came running to him with the same news. His reply was the same. So did a third person. A fourth man then came and told him that flames of the fire rose very high but when they reached your house, the fire abated. Abu Darda رضي الله عنه replied: I knew that my house couldn't be on fire because I had heard the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم say that whoever recites this du'a in the morning, no harm can come his way till the evening and I had recited it in the morning. So I was absolutely certain that it couldn't be my house).

The fire brigade concluded their work in the morning. Whoever took a look at the burnt debris could not believe that anyone inside this abode could've survived!

I decided to take a look inside while Hadhrat considered how he could make his presence at the Court with no shoes or official clothes to wear, nor of course the important papers.

I went in to survey the remains and to my utter surprise, below the charred remains of the table, I found Hadhrat's shoes, fully intact, but filled with water from the fire worker's hose. I emptied them out for drying. Next, I wiped off the thick layer of ash that had gathered on the attaché case, and inside it, found Hadhrat's clothes and *sherwani*, in a thoroughly spic and span condition. Finally, with apprehension, I approached the briefcase. All its wirings etc. had become twisted and burnt but when I raised its cover, the papers lay completely intact, so much so, that even the pen that had been used to write the judgment, was in perfect condition!

The power of heartfelt du'as became abundantly clear.

Daily Recitations/Readings that I find Immensely Beneficial

- Mornings: recitation of the Holy Qur'an, Manzil, Dua-e-Anas bin Maalik رضي الله عنه, Yaseen Shareef, a manzil of Munajaat-e-Maqbul.
- *Nawafil*: Ishraq, Chasht, Awabeen, Tahajjud, Saalat o Tasbeeh, Saalat o Haajat and Salaat o Shukar
- Evenings: Surah Alif-Laam-Meem As-Sajdah, Surah Waq'ia, Surah Mulk, Surah Muzammil, last Ruku of Surah Al-Baqarah and Surah Aal-e-Imran.
- Reading of books like Aasaan Tarjuma-e-Qur'an, Aswah e Rasul-e-Akram صلى الله عليه وسلم, books of Ahadeeth and writings of our righteous *aslaaf* etc.

We must also remember not to waste any time on fruitless pursuits and to avail every moment of our lives in things of benefit for the Hereafter e.g. during travelling, while waiting for an appointment, while out on our daily walk etc.

Finally, we must never underestimate the turning of fates through the unmatched power of the words taught to us by our Lord صلى الله عليه وسلم and our beloved Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

This account is being shared with the sole purpose of benefitting Muslim sisters and brothers in instilling the significance of recourse towards Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم in the face of all sorts of tribulations, big and small, and to underline the fact that not a dot of harm can come one's way, if Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم wills not.

May it become a source of benefit for others, Ameen.



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Education: Islamic Concepts and Modern Society

By Prof. Syed Ali Ashraf (Late)



How to Redirect Technology

This does not mean that there is no hope for modern society and that the only way to save it from self-destruction is the complete abandonment of science and technology. The problem is not of science and technology alone but of the people who control or who have allowed themselves to be controlled by technology. Man has become dedicated to material achievement, worldly success, efficiency and comfort, permitting uncontrolled technological innovations, heedless of their social and ecological ills. It is an attitude which must be changed from being one which is totally technological, to one which restrains science and

technology and redirects it as an instrument for moral benefit. The humanization of technology is possible only if man accepts the principle that he must worship his Creator and not his own achievements, that he must live in harmony with nature and learn to control his passions and live without conflict or war or being swayed by policies of self-aggrandisement and love of power. The tremendous power that technology has given man makes it more imperative for him to have a strict control over himself. This he can do if only he loves God and the Prophet more than himself, his family or his country because only then will he be guided by the code that transcends the code of selfishness of modern society. After the Second World War, educationists in America realized the

immensity of the above problems and prepared the formula that has resulted in the institution of general education. It is an attempt to educate the sensibility in such a manner that children's intellectual, emotional and imaginative faculties develop in a balanced manner and people become more and more aware of others. But this general education which Muslim countries have imported with hardly any modification suffers from serious drawbacks. If these drawbacks are not removed general education by itself will not be able to redirect technology. The first is the complete absence of a central guiding force driving man towards a destiny that is self-satisfying and hence the pursuit of a dry, intellectual, humanistic code. This pursuit does not create love for that guiding force, for the ideal which is both transcendent and immanent. Our ideal should be transcendent because we then do not think of our selfish desires but sacrifice ourselves for the greater good for the sake of a higher life promised by God and believed in by us. It should also be immanent because by following this code we develop our own personalities and reach a stage of consciousness which makes us enjoy the pleasure of being able to control ourselves and thereby have control over forces trying to dehumanize us and belittle us. We know that we can become the vicegerent of God on earth and have far more power than the power that technology grants us, but a power that makes us humble rather than arrogant, knowing that this is granted for the benefit of mankind and nature. It is the power of love and humility. 'Love conquereth all'. It creates in us an ecological conscience through which we regard ourselves as part of a larger whole.

The second drawback of this system of general education is a corollary of the above. Nowhere have educationists indicated the necessity of finding substitutes for the scientific concepts which created the technological mentality, which analyses a scary 'truth', as Bertrand Russell points out, which train the sensibility in such a manner that importance is given not to the means of knowing the world but to the means of knowing how to change the world, which talk of ethical neutrality and make children feel that there is not only no hierarchy of values, and there is also no absolute point of reference and hence nothing

permanent to fall back upon a moment of crisis, there is only a series of changing values.

It is because of this serious problem there is need for mankind to find the substitute in religion. As Islam does not equate religion with a church or a group of people, Muslim scholars all over the world can carry out their own research and present their findings to the world at large. Some religious thinkers in the West have also been thinking along these lines but they have not succeeded in formulating a common code because their society and the value system have disintegrated to such an extent that they cannot get their ideas implemented so easily. Muslim society has still retained its basic assumptions in spite of severe inroads on them; authorities have to accept the supremacy of the Qur'an and the Sunnah though they may not be following them strictly; and the people are still deeply involved with God and His Prophet and have deep reverence for all the Prophets, may the blessings of God be on them. If Muslim scholars can formulate religious substitutes for secularist concepts for all branches of knowledge and can implement a proper system of education, that itself will be an eye-opener for modern society in the West.

Islamic concept of education, therefore, as enunciated in the earlier section of this paper, needs to be interpreted and implemented in the context of modern life. In order to redirect technology and use it for the benefit of mankind and life at large, in order to save mankind from dehumanization and what is more, in order to reinvigorate the purpose and goal of life and to create in man cravings to grow up as a balanced personality and proceed with conviction, confidence and pleasure towards the vicegerency promised by God, let us reassert the hierarchy of values, let us reformulate the concepts of social and natural sciences and humanities, let us reorganize and rearrange the curriculum, let us produce textbooks written on the basis of concepts and let us train our teachers so that they are able to instill in children those values through their character and their methods of teaching. Only then will education become truly Islamic and can we hope for the betterment and safety and security of mankind.

The Void

By Bint Akram

"Listen, for me, Eid is an ordinary day," Zayd said languidly. Both the husband and wife were discussing Eid, which was just round the corner. "But how could this be?" the wife, Zara, argued. "When Allah and His messenger ﷺ have declared the day of Eid as a reward and happiness for those who fast, then how is it possible that one remains unable to taste that happiness?" She sounded confused. "I don't know but that's how it is with me. I don't feel anything at all," he said in a decisive tone. His wife looked at him sadly, contemplating why he was thinking this way despite having fasted the entire month of Ramadan; why couldn't he feel the blessings, which endlessly descended upon the servants of Allah during this month. Was fasting merely a ritual for him because he lived in a Muslim country? She kept on thinking and tried to find answers to those endless questions that flooded her mind...

The dilemma of people who were born before this world stepped into the new millennium is quite grave. Born a decade or two before the Twenty-First century began, we grew up in a totally different world – a lesser busy world. We are that confused generation, which is torn between its nostalgia for the past and the ever increasing demands of the fast paced world ruled by technology. Unfortunately, most of us have accepted defeat against this culture of speed. More unfortunate is the fact that most of us have done this mindlessly – without having fought the battle. Without realizing and understanding how the technological world was changing our entire sensibilities, we gave in to the changes that came our way.

Although a lot has now changed for us, humans, one of the most important things that technology and this culture of speed have taken away from us is our ability to contemplate and reflect. When Zayd complained that he was unable to 'feel' the happiness Eid brought, he was, in reality, complaining about how dead we have become spiritually. Our extremely busy life schedules have taken away from us the ability to spare time for pondering. Thinking and reflection over the matters of heart and soul are no longer a priority on our to-do lists. This changing of priorities or simply an absence of priorities in one's life has made it pretty haphazard. What was supposed to be on the top has been lost somewhere in the

middle, and we have zero realization of this.

We often hear people complaining about how human relationships have changed because of our unrestrained use of gadgets. It is a personal observation, with which many would agree, that even family members do not really 'talk' to each other when they are together. Social media has transformed men into islands, and experiencing the joy of being in real relationships has become a far-fetched idea. Now, come to think of it, if human relationships are suffering, what about our relationship with God? How many of us actually feel His presence regulating our lives? Our deteriorated spiritual states testify that we do not 'feel' (and hence not live) our *deen* anymore. A quotation by Ibn al Qayyim al Jawziya رحمته الله is very telling for anxiety-ridden people of this day and age. He said: *Truly in the heart there is a void that cannot be removed except with the company of Allah. And in it there is a sadness that cannot be removed except with the happiness of knowing Allah and being true to Him. And in it there is an emptiness that cannot be filled except with love for Him and by turning to Him and always remembering Him. And if a person were given all of the world and what is in it, it would not fill this emptiness.*

It is the company of Allah that we lack these days. Hence, the emptiness; the void in our hearts that remains there making us feel depressed. Our moments of silence lack the spirit of 'silence' – they are filled with the noise of social media and an endless flickering of images on our hand-held devices. It is frightening how this cacophony disrupts the calmness of one's soul. This inability to experience silence and solitude has turned us into a spiritually destitute people. Our lives, our heart and our souls remain unexamined simply because we are too busy to engage ourselves in such an examination.

We need to get out of our shells which are insulating us from the world of feelings, sentiments and spirituality. We need to find people around us who still retain their human touch – albeit they are few in number – and most importantly, who retain their connection with Allah. In this world where being online is the prime concern and connectivity, the key word, we need to get offline for some time and disconnect ourselves to regain and experience human-ness. We need to revive our spiritual connections to fill the voids in our hearts.

Concerning Counsel, Justice and Governance

From the Bostan of Shaykh Sa'adi رحمته الله



The story of Abdul Aziz and the Pearl

The story is told of Abdul Aziz that he had a pearl of great beauty and value set in a ring. Shortly after, a severe drought occurred, causing distress among the people. Moved by compassion, the king ordered the pearl to be sold and the money that it fetched to be given to the poor.

Someone chided him for doing this, saying, "Never again will such a stone come into thy hands."

Weeping, the king replied, "Ugly is an ornament upon the person of a king when the hearts of his people are distressed by want. Better for me is a stoneless ring than a sorrowing people."

Happy is he who sets the ease of others above his own. The virtuous desire not their own pleasure at the expense of others. When the king sleeps neglectfully upon his couch, I trow not that the beggar finds enviable repose.

A discourse concerning riches and poverty

Say not that no dignity excels that of sovereignty, for no kingdom is more free from care than that of the dervish.

They are the most lightly burdened who reach the destination first.

The poor man is afflicted by lack of bread; the king by the cares of his kingdom.

Though one may rule and other may serve, though the one be exalted to the height of Saturn and the other languish in prison, when death has claimed them it will not be possible to distinguish between the two.

The story of Darius and the herdsman

Darius, king of Persia, became separated from his retinue while hunting. A herdsman came running towards him, and the king assuming the man to be an enemy, adjusted his bow. Thereupon the herdsman cried, "I am no enemy. Seek not to kill me. I am he who tends the king's horses, and in this meadow am thus engaged."

Becoming again composed, the king smiled and said, "Heaven has befriended thee, otherwise would I have drawn the bowstring to my ear."

"It shows neither wise administration nor good judgment," replied the herdsman, "when the king knows not an enemy from a friend. Those who are greatest should know those who are least. Many times you have seen me in your presence, and asked of me concerning the horses and the grazing fields. Now that I come again before you, you take me for an enemy. More skilled am I, O king, for I can distinguish one horse out of a hundred thousand. Tend thou thy people as I, with sense and judgment tend my horses."

Ruin brings sorrow to that kingdom where the wisdom of the shepherd exceeds that of the king.

Let them in

By Emaan Zubair

Bound in chains they writhe
Striving as hard as they might,
To wrench loose of the cords,
Which hold on agonizingly tight

The fight is ever present
The pain is thinly veiled
But the walls of hideous prejudice,
Have as yet to yield

The struggle goes on and on
Their implorations pierce the ear
But the frigid hearts of those who listen,
Have as yet to care

The battle for justice rages,
Climax will very soon appear
But the swirling mists of discrimination
Have as yet to clear

What, indeed, was their crime
That rendered them deserving of brutality?
What was the grievous wrongdoing,
That earned them such disparity?

Were their sins truly so great,
That you constructed thick bars of hate
And flung them ruthlessly behind,
For your wicked appetite to sate?

Did difference of colour blind you so
Did diverse creed instil such spite?
Did foreign faiths conjure such hatred
That they were coldly banished from sight?

Did contempt engulf your senses such
That it stripped away humanity?
Made you seemingly fit to subjugate those men,
Grant you an attitude of profanity?

Was the strength of distaste so intense?
While you leered at caste and skin
That the truth failed to present itself
Beauty lies not outside, but within

The loathing clearly choked your insides so,
That good sense could not pull through
And the obvious blessing of diversity
Was completely lost on you
Despise clearly had such an iron grip,
That it ripped from you all sense
And pushed more obstacles in their path,
With indifference to their incense

It is time, or more, to let go of all
Let conscience come to the fore
Untie the many bonds of thoughtless oppression
Repent for wounds that you have bore

Come now! Let them loose of the restraints
That were so unjustly harnessed
Erase disdain contaminating you from inside
Of your foolishness, confess

Come now! Cut away those leashes
Formed by ill-found beliefs
Undo ropes which sliced deep your prisoners' flesh
Liberate them from torment and grief

Come now! Filter those tainted thoughts
Your ideals you must reset
Wrong will be discerned from right only
If you bring change in mindset

Come now! The worth of every fellow being
Has dire need to be realised
The bigoted views on which you fed
Have dire need to be revised

Come now! Illumination is just in reach
If to only this you become wise
That difference are never a curse
But bounties undisguised

That shame lies not in standing out,
But in aversion for those who dare to
That those who are of uncommon views
Should not be considered foes

That undeniable good springs from novelty
Once bias is tossed aside
That creativity owes its foundation
To unconventional men and minds

That what an individual is truly like
Cannot be judged by his birthplace
That whatever qualities he is holder of,
Cannot be judged by gender or race

That the man of wisdom does not take
Material aspects into account
But rather, searches in his comrades
If noble hearts are to be found

Come now! With open, welcoming arms
Embrace the world's variety
With acceptance and broad vision firm friends,
Let them into the society

They are waiting...

Let them In

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The Mother, the Daughter and the Teacher

By Zainab Wasay

The different groups of sisters' active response to the words of Allah ﷻ was commendable as they absorbed what they were taught like parched earth. After many classes, to further enhance their learning, we decided to listen to their practical experiences. We were delighted to see how the Aayaat of Allah ﷻ were like beacons of light for the women, from which they sought guidance in every situation they faced. The story of a Syrian mother and daughter touched me in particular. The following story is in the mother's words:

My eleven year old daughter studies in sixth grade. By Allah's ﷻ grace she has memorized half of the Quran. Though she would recite and memorize the Quran, however, before attending these classes nobody had taught her how to practice its teachings.

One day, during the beginning of the academic year, I noticed that she was unusually gloomy and down, as though she had a huge burden on her. I was very surprised to see her so. She was absolutely quiet and didn't want to talk about her studies at all, even though she had always been an excellent student. I decided not to ask her anything until she opened up herself.

I didn't have to wait very long. While I was busy with my work she came to me and said, "Ummi, my English teacher called me dumb today in front of the whole class."

I was absolutely horrified! This was the first time someone had used such a demeaning word for her. I always chose the best of words while addressing my children such as *habibati*, *bravo*, *mumtaz*... Her outstanding academic performance was also such that she had never had to hear such derogatory speech. I asked her worriedly, "Why did she say that to you?"

She answered as though moving a mountain off her back, "The teacher wrote the lesson on the board without explaining a single word. How could I understand what she had never explained?"

My normal and expected reaction to such a situation would have been to throw my *Abaya* on and rush to the school to complain about the teacher. But after attending these classes and promising myself that all my actions and responses would be in line with what our Creator ﷻ had revealed, I asked myself, "How can I solve this problem that my child is going through in the light of the Quran?" I then found myself reciting the great ayah:

﴿فان مع العسر يسرا ○ ان مع العسر يسرا﴾

"So verily, with difficulty, there is ease. Verily, with difficulty, there is ease." (Al-Inshirah: 5-6)

I was a bit surprised at remembering this ayah. I said to my daughter, "Be patient, O light of my

eye. For truly, patience is always followed by relief." After saying this I got back to what I was doing since I was very busy those days.

A few days later, while we were having breakfast, my daughter's laughter filled the air as she excitedly exclaimed, "My teacher gave me five bonus marks!"

I asked in astonishment, "Your English teacher?"

She replied with her face lit up with joy, "Yes, yes Ummi!" With that she wrapped herself around me and told me her story. I couldn't control my tears as they flowed down my cheeks. I kept asking myself in deep regret why I had spent so many years of my life without the light of the Quran which is the remedy for all pain and has the solution to all our problems. I then listened carefully to my daughter as she spoke:

"After you read the ayah 'ان مع العسر يسرا' to me I began to repeat it with the same faith and conviction as you had done, believing that Allah ﷻ would definitely remove my worries.

"When I went to school the next day all my friends were inciting me against our teacher. They told me to go and complain to the Principal and that they would bear witness in my favour. But I only kept reciting the ayah 'ان مع العسر يسرا'.

"My friends looked at me in bewilderment; my attitude had been completely different the day before. I said to them that we must put extra effort into our studies to make up for what we'd lost. While we were talking, some younger girls also joined in. We were surprised when they told us that this teacher actually did a wonderful job at teaching. It appeared that she was currently undergoing some trials.

"Upon hearing this I said to my friends, 'I'll write this ayah on the board before the teacher enters the class so that it strengthens her, if she really is facing difficult circumstances.'"

And that's exactly what Arwa did. Before the teacher came Arwa wrote the ayah on the board in large letters. As soon as the teacher saw the ayah her eyes welled with tears. Everyone was taken aback... her tears silently gave away that she really was going through some trials.

Wiping away her tears, she asked in a composed

voice: "Who wrote this?"

All the girls responded with one voice, "Arwa." The teacher was surprised that the girl who she had humiliated in front of all her classmates just the day before was the same one to feel her struggle today. Deeply touched, she said: "The Principal told me that all the classes have given positive reports about me except for your class. Maybe there really has been some shortcoming on my behalf in explaining the lessons to you. But I promise that I'll try to improve my teaching method because I now truly believe that you are the youth of a promising bright future."

Arwa said, "We were overjoyed by what she said and began studying with her with ever more effort and enthusiasm. The teacher began trying to forget her tough conditions with the hope that ease would follow her difficulty. Whenever we'd feel that her smile had faded we would write the ayah on the board again so that she never forget its message. She would keep herself occupied by doing her best at explaining our lessons to us as well as teaching us during free periods. She began doing this with all her classes and so she barely had time to think about anything. At last Allah ﷻ willed for her trial to be eased and her smile returned. All of this was by the blessing of Allah ﷻ and an ayah which you (mother) had reminded me of that became the light which guided my every action. Today the teacher took our test and gave me five bonus marks. All praise is due to Allah ﷻ!"

This story is the living experience of how a single ayah touched and moved a mother, her daughter and her daughter's teacher. Despite their different ages, backgrounds and circumstances, all three were inspired by the same ayah and attained outstanding success in making it a part of their lives. The speech of The Mighty Lord ﷻ was revealed on a human being so that he (salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam) could show us practically how to make it a part of our lives as these three did.

Considering what our people and lands are currently going through, let us too read this ayah,

﴿ان مع العسر يسرا﴾... ﴿ان مع العسر يسرا﴾... ﴿ان مع العسر يسرا﴾

On the Lookout for 'Muslim' Weddings

By Umm-e-Fatima

A Blessed Union

She ﷺ was 15. He ﷺ was 21.

Many notable families had sent their proposals for her but the Holy Prophet ﷺ kept quiet.

Sayyidina Ali ﷺ says I wanted to propose but the seeming incompatibility of the match weakened my resolve. I knew I owned nothing. Eventually, the Holy Prophet's ﷺ love and affection gave me the courage to ask for Sayyidah Fatima's ﷺ hand in marriage. The Prophet ﷺ got very happy and accepted immediately! He ﷺ then asked "Ali! Do you own anything?" I said "I have nothing except a horse and a shield". "A warrior's horse must remain with him. Go sell your shield" he ﷺ instructed. I went and sold it for around 400 Dirhams.

The Prophet ﷺ then called for Sayyidina Bilal ﷺ to get some perfume and asked Sayyidina Anas ﷺ to invite Sayyidina Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman, Talha, Zubair and a few Ansaar ﷺ. When they all came and sat down, the Prophet ﷺ recited the Nikah sermon and the Leader of all women in Paradise, Sayyidah Fatima ﷺ was married to Sayyidina Ali ﷺ! The Holy Prophet ﷺ announced the Nikah against 400 Misqal of silver and then prayed for the couple. Some dried dates were then distributed to conclude this simplest of ceremonies.

All that went with Sayyidah Fatima ﷺ was:

One pillow, a cup, a cot, Two Yemeni shawls a blanket, four mattresses, Two silver armbands one grinding mill, one pitcher, One leather bag for carrying water

(Uswah Rasul-e-Akram ﷺ – Dr. Muhammad Abdul Hai ﷺ)

Fast Forward to 2019...

Bright twinkling lights; yellow silk draped over hundreds of chairs placed in equiangular lines: a large space in the center left open as the 'dance' floor; music blaring from two very 'loud' speakers; red and white flowers snaking their way around hands of young girls: the only 'Purdah' being the one hanging down to hide the paint less blotches on the wall next to the reception area; Muslim men and women, boys and girls walking in – being 'openly' welcomed by other Muslim men and women, boys and girls. A rather large screen separates the dining area where dishes are being warmed up in huge cauldrons to satisfy the palates of hundreds of expected guests; scores of waiters are busy in mechanically pushing raw marinated meat into barbecue sticks and yet others are garnishing salads and thickening soups.

'Opulence' personified. Welcome to a Muslim wedding in 2019!

A Matter of Pride?

All this from the Ummah of a Prophet ﷺ:

- Who said: "The worst food is that of a wedding banquet to which only the rich are invited while the poor are not invited..." (Bukhari – Narrated by Abu Huraira ﷺ)
- Whose most extravagant wedding banquet (Valima) was one sheep! (Bukhari – Narrated by Anas ﷺ)
- Who asked us to refrain from eating of the food of those who compete amongst themselves (Abu Dawood)
- Who set an extraordinary example for the Ummah through the simple solemnizing of Sayyidah Fatima's ﷺ marriage so as to make it easy for the poorest amongst us to celebrate without fear of peers and the more affluent amongst us to refrain from over-spending.
- Who proclaimed *Haya* (modesty) to be a branch of *Eeman* (faith) and told us that eeman's rightful end is Paradise while, shamelessness ebbs from sinfulness and it will guide you towards Hell. (Narrated Abu Huraira ﷺ - Ahmed, Tirmidhi)

And of a Holy Book that ordains:

- "Tell the believing men to lower their gaze..." (An-Nur 24: 30) & "Tell the believing women to lower their gaze and not to show off adornment except only that which is apparent..." (An-Nur 24: 31)
- "And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (i.e. music, singing etc.).....for such there will be a humiliating torment (in the Hellfire)" (Luqman 31: 6)
- " 'And befool them gradually those whom you can among them with your voice (i.e. singing, music, and any other call for Allah's disobedience).....and make promises to them' but Satan promises them nothing but deceit" (Bani Israel/Isra 64: 17)

So then, judge for yourselves, should we huff and puff in arrogance and be proud of what we do? Should crude extravagance be our forte? Should we feel shy to own and follow our Prophet's ﷺ

glorious *Sunnah*?

Some Essential Dos & Don'ts

Hazrat Aisha ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that "the most blessed Nikah is one which has the least number of *Masarif*" (Mishkat, Ahmed)

In other words, a more extravagant Nikah is at the risk of remaining unblessed! If one lays down weak foundations, it will be foolish to expect the building on it to be a sturdy fortress. Similarly, if one begins a relationship in a manner unpleasing to Allah ﷻ, it will be audacious to expect it to remain blessed.

Extravagance, inherently, is a transgression with many a repercussions. For one, it makes the less fortunate amongst us feel crippled under the weight of competition (with some being forced to take loans to arrange a 'respectable' wedding). Secondly, it empties out our pockets and the money that could have been put to good use is instead wasted on the grandeur of one day. Just imagine, Rs. 25,000 worth make-up being rubbed, scrubbed and washed out in no time post the function; hundreds and thousands being squeezed out by wedding planners; millions squandered to put up the perfect firework display, a hundred thousand spent on a dress never to be worn again.....and the list goes on! I leave you to count and access the number of poor couples who could have gotten married with all this money.

Extravagance also reflects thanklessness to Allah ﷻ and is a hallmark of arrogance and haughtiness.

"Eat of what you want and drink of what you want (it is allowed), unless two things are involved: one prodigality and the other boastfulness /loftiness" said our Holy Prophet ﷺ. (Narrated Sayyidina Abdullah Bin Abbas ﷺ; Bukhari).

Most ceremonies are made opulent to impress others. Emphasis is laid on unimaginable details and sweat flows over "themes" and "colours", "shades" and "contours". All this effort to show others how perfectly we plan, how good we are with ideas and how unmatched we are in our

celebrations. All this showing-off quietly holds a mirror to our inner being. The forbiddance of this pretentiousness and artifice is embedded in Islamic teachings. So much so that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that whoever wears clothes of show and fame in this World, Allah ﷻ will adorn him with clothes of disgrace and infamy in the Hereafter. (Narrated Sayyidina Abdullah Bin Umar ﷺ; Ahmed, Abu Dawood). And this is the very reason that He ﷻ declared "simplicity" as a part of eeman (faith). (Narrated Sayyidina Abu Amama ﷺ; Abu Dawood).

The shamelessness and brazenness that is part and parcel of all our celebrations acts as a stepping stone for larger evil in the society. Girls hanging up their *Dupattas* to dance and frolic away; boys pushing each other to take a peek; parents unabashedly oblivious to whatever is happening right under their noses, lost in their own pomp and show – this is not at all how our Deen had told us to be! This simply should not be the description of "Muslims" – those who bow down and submit their will to the commandments of Allah ﷻ.

Sadly and unfortunately, this is what it has actually come to. We have neatly folded and packed up our *haya* and we force our eyes to blur up the line of division between *Mehram* and *Non-Mehram*, *Halal* and *Haram*, *Jaiz* (allowed) and *Najaiz* (disallowed) and *Sunnah* and *Biddah*. Once we let shamelessness enter our homes and our celebrations unabatedly, we must not then get shocked at the hike in separations, break-ups and divorces.

We must not forget that our Holy Prophet ﷺ reminded us that *haya* and faith are inseparable; when one is taken away, so is the other. (Narrated Sayyidina Abdullah Bin Umar ﷺ; Al-Bayhiqi). And that "Haya only brings in good". (Narrated Imran bin Hasain; Bukhari & Muslim).

Stemming out ridiculous, un-Islamic traditions is also an important end. Case-in-point: *joota chupai* - snatching and running away with the groom's shoe to extricate money by friends and cousins of the bride

Sayyidina Zaid Bin Talha ﷺ narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that "every Deen has a distinctive value and the distinctive value of Islam is Haya". (Muatta)

So clear your throats and gather your courage to say a big loud "NO" to music, intermingling with non-Mehrams, extravagance and showing off in all our celebrations. Plus, gear up to pull out the thorn of *Bidaah* and *Munkirat* and try to barricade hosting functions (e.g. *Mehndi*) that have nothing to do with Islam or its teachings, by miles.

Our Ulema opine that "*Shadi*" (the Urdu word for wedding) should be celebrated without its "h" i.e. should be made "*Sadi*" or "*simple*"! A simple wedding is not only easy on the pocket but is also in full concurrence with the teachings of our Holy Prophet ﷺ.

In conclusion, take a look at this account:

.....Neither meat was offered, nor rice cooked; neither cards were printed, nor chairs laid out; neither tents were decorated, nor lamps lighted.....

A leather mat / dining sheet was spread out and dates, dried yoghurt and butter were laid on it. The *Nikah*, the *Rukhsati*, the *Valima* all took place in the course of a travel during three days of stay (between Khyber and Medina).

This was the marriage of our Holy Prophet ﷺ with Sayyidha Saffiya ﷺ!
(Narrated Anas ﷺ – Bukhari)

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HasbiAllah!

By Umm-e-Hamza

Depression is an illness which has overtime manifested itself into our society and causes great disturbance not just for our *duniya* but also for our *deen*. In this day and age, every person has either experienced some sort of depression themselves or knows someone who has been a victim. The term depression itself is so often used that we have started expressing our mere sadness or frustration as depression. But is depression really what we make it out to be or is there more to it? What really is depression? Is being depressed and having depression two different things? How can a person save themselves from falling victim to this disorder?

Depression in most people's minds is a form of sadness. Sadness is what you feel when you lose a job, fail an exam, lose a loved one or simply when something doesn't go as planned. Overtime, if you are lucky, you overcome this sadness by something joyous or just slowly letting

go of the incident. But what if the feeling doesn't go away and with time you start losing yourself in the sadness. You start feeling hopeless and worthless and not having the energy or stamina to continue your day to day tasks. You start questioning your mere existence. Your sadness has thus developed into depression. The feeling is so strong that the person doesn't know why he or she is depressed in the first place. They can't control the way they feel; even when things are going good for them, they can't seem to find the joy in them. Their lives and livelihood is greatly disturbed by this strong negative mindset towards life. It's believed that depression is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain but Research suggests that depression doesn't just originate from having too much or too little of certain brain chemicals. Rather, there are many possible causes of depression, including faulty mood regulation by the brain, genetic vulnerability, stressful life events, medications,

and medical problems. It's believed that several of these forces interact to bring on depression.

Feeling sad with reason is normal for everybody. Every person in their lives will feel some kind of sadness and eventually overcome it and go about their normal routines with ease. Our beloved Prophet ﷺ was also known to be sad and worried and crying for hours into the night but He did not have depression. Why? Because he had full faith in Allah ﷻ. He would remember Allah ﷻ in joy and he would remember Allah ﷻ in grief and sorrow. The cure for depression may not lie in alternative medication but in relentless remembrance of Allah ﷻ and His abundant blessings.

Allah ﷻ says in Holy Quran:

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Those who Believed and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah: verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Surah Ar Ra'ad 13:28)

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

"Allah is the Protector of those who have faith He will lead them from the depths of darkness into light. As for those who disbelieve, their patrons are the devils: from the light, they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein (forever)." (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:257)

There was once a time in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ when he had not received any revelation for around six months. The Prophet ﷺ was in a very disturbed state of mind, feeling negativity and believing that Allah ﷻ had become displeased with him. Then Surah Ad Duha was revealed.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ

﴿٣﴾ وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾ فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

By the forenoon (after sun-rise); And by the night when it is still (dark); Your Lord (O Muhammad) has neither forsaken you nor hated you.

And indeed the Hereafter is better for you than the present (life of this world).

And verily, your Lord will give you (all good) so that you shall be well-pleased.

Did He not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and gave you a refuge?

And He found you unaware (of the Qur'an, its legal laws, and Prophethood, etc.) and guided you? And He found you poor, and made you rich (self-sufficient with self-contentment, etc.)?

Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression, and repulse not the beggar; and proclaim the Grace of your Lord (i.e. the Prophethood and all other Graces).

It was revealed to the Prophet ﷺ to relieve him of these negative feelings and to give him hope, positivity, and the assurance that Allah ﷻ will always be with him. Reciting it with firm faith and reflecting on the meaning of this Surah can help a person find peace, hope, and a renewed faith in Allah ﷻ when they go through similar states of depression, sadness, and hopelessness. Just like He helped the Prophet ﷺ while he was an orphan and poor, He is there for all His creations at all times. This Surah is a beautiful reminder to have faith in Allah ﷻ, that after every grief or sorrow there will come solace and joy. This time will pass, you just need to be patient and strong. Suhaib رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said *Wondrous is the affair of the believer, for there is good for him in every matter, and this is not the case with anyone but the believer. If he is happy, then he thanks Allah and thus there is good for him. If he is harmed, then he shows patience and thus there is good for him.* (Sahih Muslim)

Refraining oneself from sins and constantly seeking Allah's ﷻ forgiveness is also a way to clear our heart and soul from negativity. There are a lot of evil consequences of sinning. When a person commits evil deeds he becomes disheartened, and loses hope of being saved. There is a wall that develops between Allah ﷻ and the sinning person and he is fearful. It is known that when a person sins become strong, that his heart and soul becomes dark and hard. Abu Huraira ﷺ narrates the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Verily, when the servant commits a sin, a black mark appears upon his heart. If he abandons the sin, seeks forgiveness, and repents, then his heart will be polished. If he returns to the sin, the blackness will be increased until it overcomes his heart. It is the covering that Allah ﷻ has mentioned: No, rather a covering is over their hearts from what they have earned."

(Sunan al-Tirmidhi 3334)

Asking for Allah's ﷻ forgiveness and repenting constantly for all of your sins old, new, big and small is cleaning our hearts from all the filth of our sins.

It is reported by Abdullah bin Abbas ﷺ that Rasulullah ﷺ said: "The one who (regularly) says Istighfaar, that is, frequently repents to Allah Ta'aala for sins committed, Allah ﷻ will open a path from poverty and difficulties. All sorrow and hardship will be removed, and in its place prosperity and contentment granted. One will receive sustenance from unimagined and unexpected sources."

The best form of repentance is Saayidul Istigfaar, *اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ رَبِّي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِي وَأَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَأَنَا عَلَى عَهْدِكَ وَمَا أَسْتَطِيعُ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، أَبُوءُ لَكَ بِنِعْمَتِكَ عَلَيَّ، وَأَبُوءُ بِذَنْبِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ*
'O Allah, You're my Lord, none is suitable to be worshipped besides You, You created me and I'm Your servant and I abide to Your covenant and promise as finest I can, I take refuge in You from the evil of which I dedicated. I acknowledge Your favour upon me and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for verily none can forgive sin besides You.'

"If someones recites it during the day with firm

faith in it and dies on the same day before the evening, he will be from the people of paradise and if someone recites it at night with firm faith and dies before the morning, he will be of the people of Paradise."

(Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 8, Book 75, Number 318)

When one seeks forgiveness of Allah ﷻ, they will be relieved of the anxiety and depression that is caused by his sins. Forgiveness brings happiness, so ask forgiveness from not only Allah ﷻ but others whom you might have hurt intentionally or unintentionally.

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ said: "Quran is the best remedy for the illness of the soul" (Bukhari). Recitation and listening to the Words of Allah ﷻ is the best remedy. Don't let your mind roam idly because an empty mind is a devil's workshop.

Lastly, always be thankful for all the blessings Allah ﷻ has bestowed upon you. Allah ﷻ has granted us a beautiful life to live we need to be grateful for His blessings. If you have life's basic necessities, than you definitely have things to be grateful for. The fact that you have the belief in Allah ﷻ and His Messenger Muhammad ﷺ is a great blessing in itself. Be thankful that He is in control of our lives and He knows what is best for us and when it is best for us. Always keep in mind that everything is controlled by Allah ﷻ and make du'a that He keeps it that way and never leads you astray. Some dua's that are powerful for easing all sorts of grief and anxiety from our hearts and mind is *HasbiAllah...* and *Lahowla...*

حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ، عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ، وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ

Allah is sufficient for me. There is none worthy of worship but Him. I have placed my trust in Him, and He is the lord of the Majestic Throne.

Allah will Grant whoever recites this 7 times in the morning or evening. Allah will relieve him from his grief in this world and the Hereafter [Ibn as-Sunni 71, abu Dawud 4:321]

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

There is no power and no strength except with Allah

Sayyidina Abdullah bin Abbas ﷺ narrates that

RasulAllah ﷺ said, whoever has difficulty/stress in life should read *Laa howla wa la quwwata illa billahil Aaleeyyil Azeem* in abundance.

Sayyidina Abu Huraira ﷺ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, whoever reads *Laa howla wa la quwwata illa billahil Aaleeyyil Azeem*, it is a cure for ninety-nine diseases and the most minor disease is stress. Read it at least a hundred times daily.

These du'as are a few of many du'as you can recite to keep yourself busy in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ and help yourself in battling depression and its related illnesses. They are a constant reminder that Allah ﷻ is in Control

and to have full faith in whatever He decides for us. If He takes something or someone away from us then it is His will and we should be patient with what He has willed, for He will compensate for our patience with a greater reward in the hereafter. What He has written to happen will happen, what is meant for us we will attain, we have no control over anything. Be at peace with His decisions and pray that He guides us towards the right path, the path towards success, happiness and contentment in this world and the hereafter.

(C i t a t i o n :<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-causes-depression>, *Don't Be Sad* by Dr. Aid al-Qarni, International Islamic Publishing House, 2008)

Fundamental Rule for Journalism

Mufti Shafiullah ... described a fundamental Islamic rule that should govern all discussion regarding journalism: The written word is subject to the same laws that govern the spoken word. If something is a pious act, so is writing and publishing it. If it is *haram* in one case, it is so in the other as well. In fact the written word has a longer life and broader reach and so it stands to produce greater good or greater evil, and so bring proportionately greater reward or punishment.

Anyhow, in Islamic Shariah there are few exemptions for a journalist from the normal rules of conduct that apply to everybody else. For example, it is not that backbiting is prohibited for a common man, but is somehow permissible for a journalist. It is to be remembered that Shariah describes in detail the rules that should govern all discourse by a Muslim. The Qur'an, for example, forbids making fun of other people. "O ye who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It maybe that the latter are better than the former. Nor let some women laugh at other: it may be that the latter are better than the former. Nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other. Nor call each other by offensive nicknames." [Al-Hujarat 49:11.] This is a general requirement and it is not lifted just because the person doing it is a columnist and can display his skills in front of a much larger audience and with more polish.

Furthermore the right to privacy is a sacred human right that nobody (including the journalist) can violate. The laws of God apply to everybody whether be she a princess or a pauper, for the Qur'an tells us, "O ye who believe! Enter not the homes other than your own, until Ye have asked permission and saluted those in them: that is best for you, in order that ye may heed" [Al-Nur, 24:27]. Similarly making a false allegation is a sin for a common man as well as for the writer. The requirement to cover up the sins of others applies as strongly to the reporter as to any other Muslim. This is generally ignored today although it has been greatly emphasized in the Shariah. One hadith says, "If a person covers up the sin of his brother Allah will cover up his sins on the Day of Judgment. If a person goes after the sins of his brother and exposes them, Allah will expose his sins, even if he hides in his own home." This one hadith destroys the basis for the entire tabloid press.

(From Khalid Baig's 'The News Protocol - towards an Islamic Framework')

Just a Number

By Zawjah Zia

Some time back there was an ad that did its rounds. It showed people walking on streets, dealing in markets, conversing around coffee tables or busy in a workplace, etc. The weird thing about it was that while all these people had normal human bodies, upon the shoulders of each one of them, instead of a normal human head, was a several digit number, a specific digital code as one can say. The jingle in the background began like, 'You are a number....'

Though this was just an ad by some random bank or finance company, the bizarre sight of these 'number-headed' people walking around like zombies, kind of stuck with me. At a complete tangent to the intended message of the ad, I find myself wondering how utterly true a depiction this is of us today!

I ring up a local book store to place an order for some fresh reads, the customer-service person merely asks for my number, and he sees on his screen all the details of my membership status, my previous purchases, my last order and my preferences. Everything.

As my online identity largely becomes password protected and my financial foot-print shuffles between a few PINs and pass-codes, I actually become a shadow of my 'numbers'.

And as if that was not enough, my acceptability, my liaison and even my self-worth seems to be at

the mercy of the 'numbers' of comments, likes and follows that I am able to gather in a place called nowhere.

Sounds creepy yes, but true anyways!

But you see, these are not the 'numbers' that actually should worry us, because you know, these are just part and parcel of this 'digital age' or whatever it is called. Rather, what is truly worrisome is our dependence on numbers at places where numbers should have negligible or no place.

Take education! (I seriously have my doubts if I should be calling it that). Don't we have a generation or two literally pressed under the pressure of scores and numbers? The worth of a student today seems to be directly proportional to the percentage he can produce on his report card; completely oblivious of whether the books he read altered even a speck of his intellect or not. Worse, completely oblivious of the means he used to attain the percentage. And no, I am not merely talking about the cheating cases we witness and hear about every now and then in our country alone; the problem is deeper and wider.

Through the past decade and a half, plagiarism and ghost-writing have shocked (to say the least) many moral conservatives around the globe. Dave Tomar, a retired ghost writer from Philadelphia, USA, came clean with the dirt he

had been playing with all through his 'career'. He says he had completed scores of papers for students who were too lazy or simply unprepared for their work at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels. His confessional book named 'The Shadow Scholar: How I Made a Living Helping College Kids Cheat', is a dismaying read indeed; how he traded credit for cash, for people who were content upon trading learning for credit and grades!! Though an understatement by all means, still to quote him; "Even if I can rationalize what I was doing, I can't take any pride in it."

Or take politics! Oh the pride that we take in 'democracy' and oh the damage it is doing to us!! How I wish that the increase in a politician's vote-bank was directly proportional to the list of his capabilities. Sigh. Iqbal was indeed not overstating when he said....

جمہوریت اک طرز حکومت ہے کہ جس میں
بندوں کو گنا کرتے ہیں ، تو لا نہیں کرتے

Sigh again!

(Though it hurts bad but....) **Take Religion!!**

A while back we happened to meet a family in a gathering. The religious looking lady revealed during the conversation that all of them were really very tired as they had just returned from their regular bi-yearly Umrah! (She didn't even remember how many times she had visited the Ka'aba) I couldn't help feeling a tinge of envy about being able to visit the house of Allah ﷺ so frequently. Further into the chit chat, the lady brought in how the Saudis are serving the people visiting the Holy Mosques. Then as a side-note, she mentioned that her twenty-one year old son injured his foot right after their first Umrah this time. Due to some construction work that was going on, the management at the Haram was allowing only the *Muhrimeen* (people in ihram) to enter the ground floor Mataaf (the shortest tawaaf round). What a dilemma for her son was it! His heart so yearned for more tawaaf as he refused to take the wheelchair and insisted to

perform Naf'I Tawaaf. So, the lady said, that she was struck with an amazing idea!! She told her son to don a fake ihram and enter the ground floor Mataaf! Easy!

I hope I didn't gasp and gulp too loud as I swallowed back my shattered envy that I was drooling with moments ago! I struggled to find my voice as I mumbled something like 'but don't you think doing that would kill the purpose itself?' The lady in turn, blinked at me twice as if I was speaking in some alien language, then she giggled and I wanted to cry.

The heart breaks multiple times as we witness this simple and beautiful religion being engulfed by the sea of rituals, ceremonies, songs and sweets; all sans spirit!

رگوں میں وہ لہو باقی نہیں ہے
وہ دل ، وہ آرزو باقی نہیں ہے
نماز و روزہ و قربانی و حج
یہ سب باقی ہیں ، تو باقی نہیں ہے

With mosques thronging with *musallis*, with Qur'an *halaqas* happening as often as the coffee parties, if not more, with donning a *Burqah* and growing a beard seemingly becoming trendier and with religion being meticulously organized with Ramadan Journals, Ibadah charts and Whatsapp motivational madrassahs, the spirituality and the *Taqwa* should logically have been oozing out through our eyes and noses, no?

Contrastingly, our hearts seem to be lost in numbers alone. Driven by numbers. Running for numbers. Defined by numbers.

Prophet Sulaiman عليه السلام

By Moniba Abdul Jabbar Kholia

Prophet Sulaiman عليه السلام, much like his father, Dawood عليه السلام, was known for his strength, wisdom, judgment and devotion to Allah ﷻ. He, like his father, was the Messenger of Allah ﷻ, as well as the king of Israel. His mother's name was Saba. Prophet Sulaiman عليه السلام, like all the other Prophets, was gifted with a blessing that Allah ﷻ bestowed upon no one else but him عليه السلام. He was gifted with miracles which ordinary people could never even imagine having.

Allah ﷻ had given Sulaiman عليه السلام the power to learn and speak various languages including the language of animals. He could miraculously understand the language of birds and other

animals, and could also talk to them. Not only that, but he also had power over jinns who would work for him at his command. Life, in his times, was filled with bliss, and he efficiently ruled widely over not only his people but also over animals and jinns.

Once, Sulaiman عليه السلام overheard the ants informing one another about an approaching army that was on its way. He عليه السلام heard them saying that they must hide in their homes in order to stay safe. Sulaiman عليه السلام, feeling amused, thanked Allah ﷻ whole heartedly for His blessings. He would always thank and ask Allah ﷻ to grant him to do everything that pleased Allah ﷻ. He never displayed arrogance

or pride because he had such a vast kingdom and uncountable blessings from Allah ﷻ. He knew that all he had was given to him by Allah ﷻ and He could take it away if He wished to.

Sulaiman's عليه السلام story with the bird, Hud-Hud, and Queen Bilquees (the ruler of Yemen at that time) has profound lessons for Muslims. The Holy Qur'an commences the story of Sulaiman عليه السلام and Queen Bilquees with these verses:

"And (when) he (Nabi Sulaimaan) inspected the birds, he exclaimed: 'Why do I not see Hud-Hud or is he among the absentees? Either he brings to me a valid proof (explanation) or I shall most certainly give him a severe punishment or slaughter him. The Hud-Hud stayed away for just a short time. (Upon his return) he said: 'I have discovered what you have not discovered, and I come to you from (the land of) Saba with reliable information. Verily, I found a woman ruling over people. She has been given everything (of worldly wealth) and she has a wonderful throne. I have found her and her people prostrating to the sun besides Allah. Shaitaan has adorned for them their deeds and has prevented them from the Path of Allah, hence they do not derive guidance'" - (Surah Namal, verses 20 – 24).

Sulaiman عليه السلام and his army were on an expedition from Jerusalem to Yemen. At one point the soldiers got really thirsty and requested Sulaiman عليه السلام for some water. Unfortunately there was no sign of water anywhere around them. Sulaiman عليه السلام commanded some birds to come to him for inspection. He was actually looking for Hud-Hud (the woodpecker according to some sources or hoopoe according to others, (and Allah knows best). Why he wanted Hud-Hud was because the bird had the ability to locate water under the ground. He learned that Hud-Hud was missing. He questioned the king of birds, kulang (a heron) about Hud-Hud's absence. Kulang told him that he was unaware about his whereabouts and that the bird had departed without informing Kulang. Sulaiman عليه السلام therefore said that he would punish the bird if it didn't present a valid reason for its absence, and as a punishment, he'd cut its wings which would prevent the bird from

flying for a year.

After a short while Hud-Hud returned; the birds told Hud-Hud about how angry Sulaiman عليه السلام was. Hud-Hud made its way hastily and presented itself to Sulaiman عليه السلام. It supplicated in front of him and pecked on the ground as an act of obedience. Hud-Hud then enlightened Sulaiman عليه السلام with something of which Sulaiman عليه السلام was unaware. He said that he had discovered something very strange about the Queen and people in the city of Saba'. Sulaiman عليه السلام was then told that she and her people worshipped the sun instead of Allah ﷻ. Her name was Queen Bilquees and she ruled over a prosperous land and had a massive throne exquisitely ornamented with precious stones, diamonds and pearls. While Sulaiman عليه السلام pondered over what he had just heard, Hud-Hud began its search for water. Sulaiman عليه السلام then instructed the bird to take the letter he had written to Queen Bilquees, after his army had quenched their thirst.

Queen Bilquees had a huge army of 12,000 officers. No one could ever see her when she was inside her palace, and while she took her nap not a thing could reach her. She would leave her palace only on Fridays when she would go out to attend to the matters related to her people. She would sit on her magnificent throne in such a way that she could see her people but her people could not even catch a glimpse of her. One by one, people would seek permission and move ahead to put forward their requests or problems. They would then prostrate in front of her throne and stay in the same position till the Queen made her announcements. This was the only day of the week when anyone could reach her.

Hud-Hud departed with the letter on its journey to the city of Saba'. It reached when it was time for the Queen to have her midday nap. That was the time when it was impossible to reach the queen because when she had her nap all the doors of her palace would remain closed. As a result Hud-Hud had no luck finding any entrance that he could get through. After a while, it finally found a place it could use as an entrance so it

went through the opening, passed seven chambers and reached the Queen who was sound asleep. Hud-Hud simply left the letter close enough for her to notice when she rose from her slumber. When Bilquees woke from her sleep the unexpected letter left her astonished. The suspense was dispelled as she opened the letter which read: *"In the Name of Allah, The Most Kind, The Most Merciful. This letter is from Sulaimaan. Don't rebel against me and come to me in submission."* After reading the letter, queen Bilquees stepped out and asked the guards if they had let someone in when she was taking her nap. They assured her that no one had entered the palace when she was asleep and they also told her that all the doors of the palace were still locked.

Queen Bilquees then decided upon something to test Sulaiman's integrity, as she was under the impression that he probably wanted her wealth and lands. She sent large amounts of expensive gifts to Sulaiman. Upon receiving them, Sulaiman showed no interest in them and instructed Bilquees' army to take the gifts back. They, therefore, acted upon it and told Bilquees upon going back about the splendid palace and kingdom Sulaiman possessed. This was when the queen decided to declare her submission to him. Before she left for her journey she took some precautions as she understood very well that Sulaiman was not just any ordinary worldly king. She arranged for more men to guard the seventh chamber of her palace where her brilliant, exalted and solid gold throne was.

After having received the news of the Queen's departure, Sulaiman asked if anyone could bring him the throne of Bilquees? It was a nearly impossible task indeed as the throne was well guarded by the men who worked for Bilquees. Then a jin Ifrit volunteered to fulfill his masters orders. He said he'd bring the throne in a blinking of an eye! So he did what he claimed he would do. Within a second the marvelous throne stood before King Sulaiman and others. He got the throne altered and ordered his jinns to build a

palace using clear glass over a pool of water.

When Queen Bilquees arrived at the palace, she was welcomed ceremoniously. Sulaiman then asked her, pointing towards the altered throne if she recognized the throne before her eyes. Queen bilquees was convinced that her throne lay safely in her palace with her men guarding it. Very diplomatically she answered that it could have been hers as it looks alarmingly similar. After being invited in the graet hall Queen Bilquees looked at the shimmering glass floor and assuming that she would have to walk on water, she lifted her dress and put out her foot to enter the splendid hall. Having seen this, Sulaiman told her that she need not do this as it was only her perception that it was water she was going to step into. He told her that the palace was made up of glass.

Queen Bilquees almost instantly understood what lesson she was being taught here, as she was a clever woman. She realized that she was wrong all along about worshipping the sun as it was only one of Allah's creations. She realized that although Allah could not be seen, He was much greater than the sun. She immediately asked for forgiveness and accepted Islam.

This is how Sulaiman so easily made a queen see how she had been wrong about worshipping something that is not even worth a decimal in front of Allah.



Blessings of 'Ulm

Contributed by Zawzeb Khan

'Can Allah really do this? Are you sure?' The Aalim then recited the verse from Surah Yaa Seen: "When Allah intends to do anything, He says, 'Be!' and it becomes."

There were two men who loved each other for the sake of Allah. One was an *Aalim* and the other an *Aabid* (pious servant of Allah but not an Aalim). The *Shayateen* were always attacking them to separate them but never succeeded. Eventually, the *Shayateen* went and complained to their head crony, Iblees. Iblees informed his henchmen not to worry and that he would take care of the matter himself.

Iblees went to the Aabid disguised as an old man. He approached the Aabid and said, 'There is something that is troubling me. Can you help me?' The Aabid asked what the problem was.

Iblees threw his poisonous dart, 'Can Allah fit the entire Heavens and the Earth into an egg, without decreasing the Heavens and the Earth or increasing the egg?'

Now Iblees got the Aabid thinking: *can Allah really fit the entire Heavens and Earth into an egg without decreasing the Heavens and Earth or increasing the egg?* At this point Iblees left. He said to his *Shayateen*, 'This one I have destroyed because he now has doubts in the Power of Allah.'

Iblees then approached the Aalim. Again, using the same trick disguised as an old man wanting help in answering a question he had. But this time the Aalim replied, 'Yes. Allah can fit the entire Heavens and the Earth into an egg without decreasing the Heavens and the Earth or increasing the egg.'

Iblees attempted to seed doubts in the mind asking, 'Can Allah really do this? Are you sure?' The Aalim then recited the verse from Surah Yaa Seen: "When Allah intends to do anything, He says, 'Be!' and it becomes."

At this point, Iblees fled. He warned his *Shayateen*, 'do not approach this man. Instead of you changing him, he will change you!'



Parenting Married Children – a task in itself

By Binte Adam

Ramadan, 1434 AH

They say parenting toddlers is a challenge – the terrible twos, meal time blues, starting school, and what not. There was a time when even I was of the mindset that once the terrible twos pass, parenting would be relatively easier. Boy, how wrong I was!

I am sitting now, in my bedroom, reading my diaries of yesteryears, wondering about the solution to my present dilemma. Maybe you can help me out.

I got married into a joint family household. One can imagine the expectations attached to a daughter-in-law (and sister-in-law) in such setups. I won't go into the details because frankly, they are not relevant now. The point is, I had promised myself that when my two sons would grow up, I will be the best mother-in-law there is. I had also vowed that my daughter would be an ideal sister-in-law. And I think that's where the problem started.

Come the happy hour when my eldest son got married, and I soon realized it is easier said than done to be the ideal mother-in-law. Petty issues like (the couple's) waking hours and eating out suddenly seemed more humungous than when I was on the receiving end so many years ago. My daughter-in-law had her own way of doing things, which often clashed with my own. I kept on biting my lips, trying not to comment or object. It was hard to keep mum in front of my son as well. Oh, how I missed those days when I could order him to be at home at a certain time or snap when he

made too much of a mess in his room. Now, I simply diverted my attention elsewhere: I started attending the Qur'an classes, took up knitting, and also ascertained that I frequented the gym to do whatever little exercise I could.

Turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the happenings at home made the environment much more pleasant, and I was happy at that. I ignored strewn-about clothes, messy kitchen counters, and so on. Isn't that what I had always promised myself? I think promises are easier to utter, and very difficult to keep (Daughters-in-law, take note!).

Anyway, so back to my problem, it first started when Sidra, my daughter, came over with her three children to stay for the day. I must mention her three tiny tots, aged six, four and two, can wreak havoc in the house in just about fifteen minutes and get everyone's blood pressure raised. Yes, they are my adorable grandchildren, but there is a reason I have clearly told Sidra I will not babysit them all at once. Now, Sidra has this quirk, you may call. She comes for the day without informing us in advance. We have NO idea when she would arrive, for how long she would stay, and so on. We are always making wild guesses. But since she is the only daughter (and sister), my sons, spouse and myself simply let her have her way. But the entrance of Safia, my eldest daughter-in-law, totally changed the situation.

Again, I don't want to bash Safia. She is a darling – she really is. In spite of everything, she is a lovely person, and someone whom I want to stick

around (instead of letting her leave and form her own nuclear family). Anyway, in the early days of her marriage, Safia was too polite to say anything. She would welcome Sidra, hurriedly 'baby proof' as much of the house as she could, and then go into the kitchen to prepare the day's meals. Over time, however, I could sense Safia's irritation at Sidra's sudden appearances. I may mention here, without being unfair, that Sidra comes every three to four days at least and if she was my own sister-in-law, I would be as annoyed.

But I am not the sister-in-law now! I am the mother! How different it is when your own daughter is the one who comes and visits often, and you sense annoyance, regardless of how subtle, from your daughter-in-law. I have tried, believe me, I have attempted numerous times to muster up the courage and tell Sidra to call before coming, at least a day earlier, so we can make plans accordingly. But somehow, when it comes to her, all my good sense fails me.

Being someone who has been inclined towards the *deen*, I have also tried to talk to Safia and tell her the great rewards of hosting guests. Again, my courage fails me – or maybe it's the sense of having experienced emotions similar to Safia's when I was in her own position.

What to do?

Shawwal, 1434 AH

Tensions between Safia and Sidra grew to the point where they both had a shouting match. I looked on helplessly, all my parenting experience of so many years failing me completely.

"I will come whenever I want!" Sidra had yelled.

"Fine, but don't expect ME to cook for you or babysit your kids." Safia had retorted.

"I don't believe this! I come to my mother's and this is the treatment I get!" Sidra resorted to emotional blackmail.

Safia had stormed out and slammed her bedroom door. For the next few days, Safia would

disappear into her room whenever Sidra would come. That posed new problems. Sidra was not used to working in my house. She got even more annoyed that she had to cook meals for her kids or keep an eye on them. She got on my case, too.

"You are too lenient with Safia. You need to be stricter. Had I behaved like this in my in-laws' house, my husband and my mother-in-law would have skinned me alive," she exaggerated, dramatically.

How do you tell your daughter that a time comes in your life when your daughter-in-law is THE support to you – she is the one who eats with you, talks to you, goes out with you, and of course, after a while, empathizes with you! The daughter goes away and has a life of her own – the daughter-in-law, if she has sufficient *taqwa*, is the one who sticks around.

In any case, I realized if I was not going to say anything to Safia or Sidra, my last resort would be to simply delegate one portion of the house to Safia. And this was what I ultimately did. I told Sidra that she can come whenever she wants to, but she will have to handle her children and their meals. Safia relocated into her own portion upstairs. She and I maintained our cordial relationship, and after they had both calmed down, my son ensured they made up as well.

Does the story end here? No, it doesn't. Many mothers like me are facing this dilemma in their homes, and without the means to delegate portions to the daughter-in-law, they suffer in silence, not willing to spoil their relationship either with the daughter or the daughter-in-law. The result is friction between the brother/brother's wife and sister/sister's family. What is the way out? Do you have an answer? I would love to hear from you!



Women and the Masjid: Avoiding Extremes

By Khalid Baig

Does Islam require - or even permit - a coed masjid?

Without using the term - for obvious reasons - many people in the US are making suggestions that point in that direction. They begin by referring to real problems women face in some of the *masajid* where they are denied even minimal facilities to use the masjid, but then take a "leap of faith" and go to the extreme position that men and women must be in the same physical space without any barriers and that both must have an equal share in administering the masjid. They call it the Prophetic example, and refer to the practice of this *Ummah* over the centuries as a deviation from that Sunnah. They want to correct a historic wrong!

So let us take a careful and balanced look at the role of the masjid and that of our sisters in it according to Islamic teachings.

Does the Qur'an Require Masjid Attendance by Women?

The answer is no. Neither the Qur'an nor the Hadith make it a religious

obligation for women to pray in a masjid. It is permitted, with conditions, as we shall see below. But it is never required.

Some people have tried to use the ayah from Surah al-Ahzab to imply a requirement. The ayah says: "For the Muslim men and women,- for the believing men and women, for the devout men and women, for the truthful men and women, for the men and women who are patient and constant, for the men and women who humble themselves, for the men and women who give charity, for the men and women who fast, for the men and women who guard their chastity, and for the men and women who are exceedingly mindful of Allah—for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great rewards." [Al-Ahzab 33: 35]

What this very important ayah tells us is that women and men are equal in being servants of Allah ﷻ and being responsible for whatever obligations have been placed on them. Allah's ﷻ forgiveness and great rewards are open to both men and women as they become sincere believers and devout worshipers, and as they develop qualities of humbleness, chastity, charity, and *taqwa*. It does not say that their obligations are the same or they work in a coed world.

Some people use this alleged quote from the Qur'an: "They (collaborate) to promote all that is good and oppose all that is evil." [Al-Tawbah 9:71] to make their case. The word "collaborate" has been inserted to suggest that the Qur'an is praising men and women collaborating with each other in a coed campaign. If that is the idea, that is a blatant lie. For the word is not there and it is not implied. The Qur'an is simply asking men and women to command good and forbid evil in their own spheres. Here, for comparison, are three translations: YUSUFALI: they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil. PICKTHAL: they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. SHAKIR: they enjoin good and forbid evil.

None of them hints at the word "collaborate."

The Qur'an on Mixed Gatherings

To understand the Qur'an's view of mixed gatherings, we can turn to this verse: "O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: It may be that the (latter) are better than the (former)" [Al-Hujarat, 49:11]. Here men have been admonished against laughing at other men and women from laughing at other women. But there is no mention of cross gender possibilities. Why? Because in Islam there is no concept of a mixed gathering. So the question of men laughing at women or vice versa simply does not arise.

Ahadith on Women's Prayers

Given below are some of the ahadith that address the issue of women's prayers.

A) Um Salama, Radi-Allahu anha, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "The best masjid for women is the innermost part of their houses." [Ahmad 6/297, Tabrani in Al-Kabeer, Ibn Khuzaima, Mustadrak Hakim 1/209].

B) Um Humayd, the wife of Abu Humayd As-Sa'di, Radi-Allahu anhuma, narrates that she came to the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam and said: "O Messenger of Allah, I love to pray with you. He said, "I know that you love to pray

with me, but your prayer in your bayt [e.g. bedroom] is better than your prayer in your hujra [e.g. living room], and your prayer in your hujra is better than your prayer in your daar [e.g. courtyard], and your prayer in your daar is better than your prayer in your neighborhood masjid, and your prayer in your neighborhood masjid is better than your prayer in my masjid." The narrator says: "So she ordered and a masjid was constructed for her in the farthest and darkest corner of her house, and she continued to pray there until she died." [Ahmad 6/371, Ibn Khuzaima 3/95, Ibn Hibban 2214]

C) Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "No woman prays a prayer more beloved to Allah, than that in the darkest part of her home." [At-Tabrani in Al-Kabeer. Also Ibn Khuzaimah 3/96]

D) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "The woman is worth hiding ('awrat) and when she leaves her home, the Shaytaan raises his glance to her, and she is never closer to Allah than when she is in the innermost part of her home." [Tabrani in Al-Awsat. For similar ahadith see Tirmidhi, Abwaab-ur-Ridaa' 1173; Ibn Khuzaima 3/93; Ibn Hibban 5570]

E) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "Do not prevent your women from (entering) the mosques, but their houses are better for them." [Abu Dawud Kitab-us-Salat. Bab Ma Jaa'a fi Khuroojin-nisaa-i ilal Masjid]

F) Abdullah Ibn Umar, Radi-Allahu anhu, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, said: "Do not prevent your women from (entering) the mosques of Allah." [Sahih Muslim. Kitab-us-Salat, Babu Khuroojin Nisaa-i ilal masjid iza lam utarattab. #668]

Imam Nawawi's Commentary on the Hadith prohibiting/stopping Women from Masjid

This last hadith has been used as a justification for an unmitigated and unconditional right of women to fully participate in the main hall of a masjid. But

this is not how it has been understood by hadith scholars and Muslim jurists. In his commentary of Sahih Muslim, Imam Nawawi writes:

From this hadith and other ahadith like this it appears that women should not be prohibited from the masjid, but with conditions that the scholars have mentioned and which are deduced from ahadith and these are:

- 1) *She should not wear any perfume.*
- 3) *She should not be wearing jingling jewelry*
- 4) *She should not be wearing fancy clothes.*
- 5) *She should not mix with the men.*
- 6) *She should not be young, through whom fitna can erupt*
- 7) *The path to the masjid should be safe (i.e. there should be no fear of any problem on her way to and from the masjid).*

Stopping them from going to the masjid will be lightly discouraged (makruh tanzih) if she meets all the conditions listed here and has a husband or guardian. Stopping them will be haram when she meets all the conditions and does not have a husband or guardian.

Women in the Masjid in the Time of the Prophet (Sall-Allahu Alayhi wa sallam)

Certainly there are authentic reports that tell us that women did attend the prayers at the masjid during the time of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu Alayhi wa sallam. But they do not support the overall picture being painted by the coed masjid campaigners. Regarding women's prayers in the masjid, we get this account:

Aishah, Radi-Allahu anha, narrates that the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, used to pray Fajr at dusk and then the women would leave immediately without being recognized because of darkness and they would not recognize each other. [Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Azan Bab Sur'ati Insiraaf-inisaa'i min as-subh]

Another narration tells us:

Um Salamah, Radi-Allahu anha, reports that when the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, finished the prayer by saying salam, the women would stand up and leave while he was saying the salam. And he would stay in his place for a little while before standing up. [Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Azan Bab Salat-un-Nisa khalf-ar-Rijal]. Other narrations tell us that men also stayed with the Prophet, Salla-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, so the women could leave before men.

While both of these ahadith tell us that women were praying in the masjid, they also inform us that an overriding concern was that they should not be seen by men. The women left even as the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, was saying the salam. This act would be extremely rude if conducted by a man. Yet it was desirable for women, clearly pointing out that men and women are not the same. Further, all men stayed behind so the women could leave without encountering them. Needless to say, this is poles-apart from the mutual discussion, full participation, and collaboration being advocated.

Masjid Setting the Tone for the Islamic Society

There is something else worth reflecting upon here. Islam brought about a sea-change in the *Jahiliya* society, including its ethics, morality, and cultural practices. The pre-Islamic *Jahilya* society was a coed society, just like the modern *Jahiliya* society. Islam transformed it, introducing, among other things, the laws of *hijab* and segregation of men and women. Of course the masjid was the center of this cultural and moral revolution. It had to depict the new teachings in the purest way possible so they would be emulated everywhere. And it did. Women were fully covered, wore no perfume or jingling jewelry, stayed as far away from men as possible and left the masjid quickly after the *salat* so there would be no intermixing. Even on the way to and from the masjid, they would stay so far to the sides that they were practically scraping the walls of the buildings. (See Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Adab. Bab "Fi Mashayin nisaa-i ma'ar-rijaali fit-tareeq")

Blocking the Means

Another thing to keep in mind is the well-established Islamic juristic principle of

Sadd-udh-dharaai', or the principle of blocking the means to sin. In life often one thing leads to another. An act of sin is not an isolated event but is preceded by chains of other events, which facilitate it. Therefore, Islam does not just forbid the final act, but also the preceding acts that can lead to it. There are hundreds of laws in Islamic jurisprudence that are based on this important principle. Consider alcohol. All its problems arise from its consumption. But Islam banned not just consumption of alcohol, but also making it, storing it, selling it, offering it, and even eating at a table where it is being served. This is blocking the means. One only needs to look at the spectacular success that Islam had in prohibiting alcohol and keeping the lands of Islam dry compared to the miserable failure of other societies in achieving that goal to appreciate the wisdom of the Islamic teachings.

Islam's laws of hijab follow the same principle. Ultimately, it is the illicit extramarital relationships that are prohibited. But Islam does not limit itself to banning this final result. It also prohibits a number of other practices that could lead to this final sin. Again, the result speaks for itself. For centuries, Islam has provided an atmosphere of chastity and decency in its societies that remains unmatched by any other society. And this has been accomplished through the same laws of hijab and segregation of sexes that are under attack today.

Fuqaha on Women in the Masjid

We can gain further insight into this issue by looking at the positions of the schools of fiqh. This should dispel the myth that it is only some misguided Mullahs from the subcontinent that stand in the way of coed masjid.

Shafi'i Fiqh

Taken from *The Reliance of the Traveler*:

It is better for women to pray at home than at the mosque (A: whether they are young or old). It is offensive for an attractive or young woman to come to the mosque to pray (O: or for her husband to permit her), though not offensive for women who are not young or attractive when this is unlikely to cause temptation. (N: the author's

words here must be interpreted in the light of the following details: If a woman in going to a group prayer or elsewhere will definitely lead to temptation between the sexes, it is unlawful for her to go. If such temptation can be definitely prevented her going to attend group prayer remains sunnah, as is attested to by the ahadith that have reached us on the subject. If temptation is feared but not certain to occur, her going becomes offensive. Whether such temptation is likely to occur is something that differs with different times, places, and people. An old woman is not like a young one, nor a righteous society like one in which temptation between the sexes is the rule; nor is a special prayer place set aside for women in a mosque like a prayer place which they share with men. This is why A'isha (Allah be well pleased with her) said:

"Had the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, seen what women do now, he would have forbidden them from the mosque as the women of Bani-Israel were forbidden." (A hadith reported by Bukhari and Muslim)

Hanafi Fiqh

Translated from *Al-Lubaab*:

And it is offensive for young women to attend the congregation at all, because in that there is a fear of *fitna* (but there is no harm that old women attend Fajr, Maghrib, and Isha). And that is according to Imam Abu Hanifah. And according to them (Imam Abu Yusuf and Imam Muhammad) old women can go out in every salah, because there is no fear of *fitna* because they lack attractiveness. According to Jawharatun Nayyara, the offensiveness is in all salah because of the appearance of *fisq* in our time period. The bad people come more during Zuhr, Asr, and Jumuah prayers while they are sleeping at the time of Fajr and Isha and eating at the time of Maghrib.

The positions of the Maliki and Hambali schools are also similar.

Conclusion

As has been shown above, the case for a full and equal participation by men and women without barriers in the main hall of the masjid, therefore,

has no foundation in the *Shariah*.

However, women may have genuine needs for using the masjid and they have been permitted to do so. It is the responsibility of the administrators of a masjid to see to it that these needs are met by providing them with a safe, protected, and private space. Where women are denied entry in the masjid, or where they are required to enter the main hall, the situation should be corrected.

The central argument of the proponents of the coed masjid is that segregation is exclusion. But it is not. No one would take the demand seriously that medical and engineering students at a university must share the same classroom to prove that they are not unequal. Their needs are different, and so are their spaces.

The prohibition of free mixing of men and women and their equal, unrestrained participation in

public affairs is not something to be ashamed of. This has been meant to provide for chastity and purity of hearts and conduct and that has been its result. In contrast, houses of worship of other religions became horrible centers of corruption on this account precisely because their leaders chose to ignore this principle. And as we become lax in this area we are seeing similar unfortunate incidents in the masjid in the West as well.

While the advocates of the coed masjid claim that they are asserting the rights of women, they are in fact denying the right of a private space to both men and women. The masjid is the pivot for the Muslim community. It has to be the place that sets the standards for proper behavior. It is the responsibility of everyone to protect it from all corruption, including the one promoted in the name of reform.

An Extraordinary Wisdom behind Wudu and the Purity of Clothes

By Imam al-Ghazali رحمته الله

The clothes of a *musalli* (person performing *Salah*) can be likened to the outer peel of a fruit and the body the inner layer. The heart above all is like the kernel within, and needless to say, that the object of the fruit is the kernel. Now the arrangement of all these is such that the condition of one will affect the other. Hence, the peel has to be protected in order to preserve the kernel.

Similar is the case with *Salah*. The soul and the heart are sure to be influenced due to the outward condition of the body and clothes. Accordingly, one will experience a unique feeling of purity and cleanliness in the heart after having performed wudu that was not present before it.

Evidently, this is the effect of wudu. In conclusion, what seems to be a mere washing of arms and face isn't only a means of physical cleanliness, but a spiritual one as well. In fact, the act of wudu has been designed chiefly to do away with the impurities of the heart and thereby, building within, the capability to face and communicate with the Lord.

Build Character to Build Nations

By Dr Asad Zaman

The torture and burning of Bruno and other scientists, and the forced recantation of Galileo's heliocentric theory, created a conflict between the Church and science in Europe. This resulted in bitterness which persists to this day. Some years ago, a petition by a Jesuit college for affiliation was rejected by the California Institute of Technology because a faculty member proclaimed "remember Galileo!". Some scientists go out of their way to discredit religion. For instance, they argue that religion was invented to explain natural phenomenon like rain, lightning, etc. Now that science provides better explanations, religion is no longer needed.

Religion was not defeated by science in Europe because it could not compete in explaining natural phenomenon. Rather, this was a consequence of the moral bankruptcy of the upper echelon of the Catholic Church. The crisis caused by the openly flaunted moral corruption of a sequence of popes (which involved living extremely luxuriously, legitimising illegitimate progeny, selling pardons for sins to raise money for supporting lavish lifestyles, etc.) has been termed "the most momentous event in the history of Europe" in *The March of Folly* by Barbara Tuchman. She has documented how this directly led to the rise of the Protestants, who attempted to preserve their faith while breaking from the corrupt Catholic Church. The Protestants split into several different Christian sects and factions, which fought among themselves as well as with the Catholics. The intolerance of these sects for each other, and battles, carnage, oppression and injustice, all carried out in the name of Christianity, convinced Europeans that religion could not serve as a basis for ordering a society. Even religious leaders realised that social harmony required principles which could be agreed to by all members of the society, without invoking controversial and conflicting religious principles.

Religion was relegated to a peripheral status in Europe because it manifestly failed its primary mission of spiritual, social and moral development of human beings. Harvard professor

Julie Reuben in her book *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* has recorded efforts by universities in the US to put character development on a scientific basis in the early part of the twentieth century. For a variety of reasons detailed in the book, these efforts did not succeed, and were ultimately abandoned. The rise of individualism has weakened families so much that more than a third of all the children in the UK and US are born out of wedlock and raised in broken homes. The powerful media — fiction, movies, internet, etc. — has also abandoned morality. In an earlier generation, villains would always come to a bad end. Today, morally reprehensible characters like paid assassins, prostitutes, thieves and conmen are portrayed as heroes. Lack of moral guidance from families, teachers, and the media has led to a frightening situation. Children brought up in single mother homes are: Five times more likely to commit suicide, nine times more likely to drop out of high school, 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances, 14 times more likely to commit rape, 20 times more likely to end up in prison and 32 times more likely to run away from home.

All over the world, the characters of leading personalities in politics and elsewhere are often such that even their wives cannot trust them. This is a sad reflection of the vacuum in moral excellence created by the breakdown of the main institutions — family, school and the social milieu — meant to develop character. The spectacular rise of Islam 14 centuries ago can be directly attributed to the excellence in character developed by teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. These teachings led a group of uneducated and uncivilised nomads to the reins of world leadership and global dominance for a thousand years. It is the loss of character among Muslims today which is responsible for our current pathetic plight. The ancient formulae for development of character appear to have been lost. The world awaits those who rediscover them; as Iqbal has said: Learn once again the lessons of truth, justice and courage, You will be granted the leadership of the world.

Islamic Knowledge: Still Revolutionary after 1440 Years!

By Dr. Asad Zaman



Introduction

The most important kind of knowledge is that which teaches us how to achieve the potential for excellence which exists within each human being. This knowledge provides us with a deep and meaningful purpose for our lives. Having a grand purpose makes it possible to act meaningfully, in ways designed to achieve the purpose. If someone does not know what the purpose of life is, then his life would be wasted in doing meaningless activities which do not succeed in achieving the purpose. Western education is designed to teach you how to be useful in producing wealth for others, how to be a cog in the capitalist machine, but it is not designed to teach you to develop your unique potentials as an individual — these would make you unfit for use as an exchangeable part in a machine.

The first part of this article describes my educational experiences at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), while the second part describes the Islamic approach to knowledge.

Bait-and-Switch is a well known dirty trick for generating sales of inferior goods. You advertise that you are selling a high-quality product, which is in very high demand, at an amazingly low price (but quantities are limited, so hurry). When the customers arrive, you say that “sorry, we have run out, BUT we have something just as good as what you wanted, at an even better price”. You have an inferior good, an old model which is obsolete and not supported, but you take it up as being the next best thing, and the customer often ends up buying this defective product.

My MIT experience: My arrival at MIT at the tender age of 16 was an exciting experience. In the dormitory halls, we met the brightest students from all over the world, and discussed all kinds of topics. We were all eager to learn, and would use our new found liberty from home rules to stay up all night, discussing everything under the sun. One of these nights, we addressed the mother of all questions, the meaning of life. Once a meaning/purpose of life is clear, then all our actions could be focused on achieving this purpose. On the other hand, if we have no clarity on meaning, then we would just act at random on whims, and lead meaningless lives. At the end of a long night’s discussion, we were all agreed that this was a question of central importance, and also, that none of us had a clue as to the answer. Since we were in one of the great institutions of learning, we decided that we should ask one of our teachers. Casting around for a suitable choice, we agreed to go to our history teacher — he was the only one who ever talked about the bigger issues of life. All other teachers dealt with purely technical matters and subjects having no relation to our living experience. So, with great expectations, a group of three students went to meet him, to ask him about the meaning of life. He gave us an answer which satisfied us at the time; it was only much later that I realized that it was a classic bait-and-switch.

The Tactical Answer: our history professor told us that we have learned that in order to be able to answer the big questions, we must first learn to answer the small questions that you are being taught. This seemed very sensible to us at the time. We can’t learn to run before learning to walk. It was, however a DEADLY half-truth. Half-truths are much more deadly than blatant lies, because they are much easier to believe. It is certainly true that we need knowledge and experience to learn the deeper truths of life. However, what our professor did NOT tell us was that they did not have ANY answers to the big questions anywhere in the entire curriculum for any of the degrees that anyone could get. The good that we were all looking for was not in their shops, but if he had told us the truth, we might

have lost interest in our studies. So we continued to study, in the hope that all this knowledge would eventually lead us to wisdom about life itself. It was only much later that I came to the realization that our professor had deceived us: by learning mathematics, chemistry, physics, economics, and history, we CANNOT learn how to live a good life, how to find meaning and purpose, discover the potential capabilities within us and nurture and enhance them. These are the valuable treasures which the message of the Quran contains, which cannot be found in the books of the West.

The Islamic Concept of Knowledge is radically different from the Western concept of knowledge. Whereas the West teaches us about the outside world, Islam deals with the inside world of human experience — which is what our lives are all about. One of important books in the Islamic Heritage is by Imam Al-Nawawi called *Ādāb al-ālim waĀl-Mutaāllim wa Ādāb al-Muftī waĀl-Muftā* (The Etiquettes of the Scholar and the Learner, and the Muftī and the Questioner). I was honored to be asked to write a foreword to this classic of Islamic literature. The first few paragraphs of the foreword are given below and touches upon this very important issue — understanding the difference between what Islam calls knowledge, and what the West calls knowledge; this is of central importance for Muslims today.

Excerpt from the Foreword:

All praise and glory belongs to Allāh *ta’ālā* alone, Creator of the Heavens and Earth and all in between, and much more that we do not know anything about.

When, in search of guidance, our Prophet Muhammad—ﷺ—retired to the cave of Hirā; Allāh *ta’ālā* sent him the Angel Jibrā’īl with the words of the first *Wahy*, “Read, in the name of thy Lord who created.” Here Allāh

is introducing Himself to the best of the best among His Creations. And how did He choose to introduce Himself? His qualities and characteristics are such that the oceans turned to

ink would not suffice to describe them. Among all of these infinite qualities, Allāh ﷻ chose to introduce Himself as the Creator of Man, the One who gave Man knowledge of that which he did not know. The *Wahy* itself begins with the command to “Read”, and shows the extreme importance of knowledge, and of the transmission of knowledge by the means of writing and by the heart to heart transmission which took place between the Angel Jibrā’īl ﷺ and our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

What was the impact of this knowledge which was given to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and imparted by him to his followers, the Companions ﷺ?

This knowledge brought them out from the darkness of *Jāhiliyyah* into the *Nūr of Imān*. There was a dramatic transformation, an internal revolution, within the lives of the Companions ﷺ. From the savagery of the *Jāhiliyyah* they changed to those who were praised by Allāh ﷻ because they fed others while being themselves hungry. This internal revolution was accompanied by an external revolution. The Muslims spread over the world with a burning message from God, which charged them to become the best of the communities, and to spread good, and to prohibit evil. This was the first time in the history of mankind that swords were used to free mankind from oppression, on behalf of the masses, and not for conquest, looting and luxury. The dramatic transformation created by the teachings of Islām in the lives of the Muslims changed the tides of history. (For a powerful description of this, see the book, *Mā Dhā Khasir al-Ālam bi Inḥiṭāt al-Muslimīn* by Syed Abu-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Nadwī).

Not only did oppression, darkness, and injustice of all kinds dominate the pre-Islamic world, but these were considered natural and socially acceptable. The radical message of Islām brought concepts which were unknown to the world at the time. The revolutionary effect of the teachings of Islām was foreshadowed in a prophecy which is still contained in the Bible: “I still have much to tell you, but you cannot yet bear to hear it. However, when the Spirit of Truth (Prophet ﷺ)

comes, He will guide you into all truth.”

Among the many truths which the world could not bear to hear, central to Islam, is the equality of all human beings before God, of the responsibility of the strong to protect the weak, and of the rightful share of the poor in the excess wealth of the rich.

Our Prophet ﷺ, who was sent as a Mercy towards all the Worlds, was the founder of a civilization built around the core values of concern, compassion and service for all of the creation of God. “All creatures are (like) a family of God, and He loves the most those who are kindest to His family.” The Islamic civilization was based on the ideals of generosity, cooperation, goodwill towards all human beings, kindness towards animals, and care for the environment as a gift of God to humankind. In contrast with dominant ideas about religion at the time, excellence in conduct was declared to be the highest form of worship: “He who cares for widows and the poor is like those who fight in the way of Allāh or those who spend their days fasting and their nights praying.” The motivation for good deeds was not to be fame, glory, popularity or wealth, but an internalized love of Allāh: “*And they feed, for the love of Allāh, the poor, the orphan, and the captive ...*” The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was comforted in the Holy Qur’ān and told “*not to kill himself with sorrow*” because of his concern and compassion for all mankind. This excellence in conduct is to be emulated by all Muslims: “The believer loves and is loved by others.”

The dramatic achievements of the Islamic civilization over more than a thousand years cannot be encapsulated in several libraries, let alone a brief foreword. Unique features of this civilization remain un-replicated and are ideals sorely and urgently needed by the world today. As just one example, brotherhood and equality are vigorously asserted in both Ḥadīth and Qur’ān; for example, in the last Sermon, our Prophet ﷺ declared that: *All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab*

has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white except by piety and good action.

The transmission of these radical ideas from the advanced civilization of Andalus, Islamic Spain, to the primitive Europe of the time transformed their Dark Ages into the European Enlightenment. Among many recent writings, the books, *The Enlightenment Qur’ān, Is Science Western in Origin? and The Theft of History*, document both the transmission and the concealment of the Islamic origins, of the revolutionary body of knowledge from the Muslims to Europe. The slogans of Rousseau “Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality”, which inspired the French Revolution and ushered in the modern

age, are directly borrowed from the teachings of Islam, and are strongly in conflict with the previous history of Europe based on aristocracy. Because these Islamic teachings are powerfully aligned with human nature (*fitrah*), they have carved out a place in Western thought. Recent resurgence and rising popularity of racism, the “Black Lives Matter” movement in USA, and anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe, show that these ideas have not yet been fully assimilated.

Today, after a long and complex historical process which cannot be detailed here, darkness has again fallen upon the world, and the spirit of the pre-Islamic *Jāhiliyyah* dominates.

Knowledge without Action

Sayyidi wa sanadi Mufti Mohammed Taqi Usmani (Allah preserve & protect him) said, “Knowledge on its own does not benefit. My father Mufti Muḥammad Shafī’ [Allah have mercy on him, d. 1396/1976] would say, ‘if knowledge was the criterion for a person’s virtue, then Satan was the most knowledgeable, however, his knowledge did not benefit him, because he disobeyed Allah.’

Therefore, knowledge alone is not in itself the primary objective. The primary objective is the obedience of Allah and his Messengers (i.e. acting as the knowledge states).

(From 'Seven Days in Bukhara and Samarqand')

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

Translated by Bint Zahid

This was a brief introduction to my eight siblings. I am the youngest of them, and as I have previously mentioned, I was born on 5th Shawwal, 1362 AH. Around three months before this, Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had passed away. Thus, all my siblings had the honour of seeing him, or at least the blessed gazes of Hazrat had fallen on them. I missed out on this good fortune. Furthermore, the names of all our siblings were also chosen by Hazrat رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Even though there is no question of my name being picked directly by Hazrat, but whenever Hazrat was requested by my father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ to suggest names, he would recommend a list of several rhyming names. Out of several other names, one was 'Muhammad Taqi' which had not been given to any of my brothers. It seems my respected father selected my name from this very list which Hazrat had once provided.

And since, after the demise of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah, my respected father used to take advice from his beloved teacher and spiritual mentor, Hazrat Miyan Sahab (i.e. Hazrat Maulana Sayyad Asghar Husain Sahab Deobandi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) – a saintly man who was blessed with *Kashaf* (unveiling of hidden knowledge) and *Karamaat* (supernatural divine acts) –, it is probable that his advice was also involved in the selection of my name.

All three of my elder brothers used to study in Dar ul Uloom, Deoband. I had not even formally started *Qai'dah Baghdadi* at that time; hence, there was no question of me studying in Darul Uloom Deoband. However, I would sometimes accompany my three elder brothers to the Dar ul Uloom, so a faint map of the Dar ul Uloom of that time is still engraved on my mind.

The Wonderful Childhood

Behind our house (i.e., on the western side) was our paternal grandfather, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaseen's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ house in which our paternal grandmother رحمۃ اللہ علیہ (who was a disciple of Hazrat Gangohi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) used to live. Between our and her house was a tunnel-like passage which we used to call *Neem Dari* (literally: half-door). Then there were various houses belonging to our extended family, from where a narrow alley led to a relatively wider area which we referred to as Chowk (piazza), and which was famous as a playground for us, children. For us, it was nothing less than a big stadium in which all the children of the locality used to play those games, which did not require any money to be spent on, nor any training from a coach. Our elder brother would also play such games at this Chowk after Asar. As for me, my world was that of a three to four year old innocent child, which existed between home and this Chowk, where more than playing, I would entertain myself by watching others play.

As I have mentioned before, three nieces and a nephew of mine were older than me, so there was no need to look for friends outside family. I had a friendly relationship with them. For our age, games like *aankh macholi* (Blindman's buff) were the kind of games we would play in those days, and for these the space in the house was sufficient. There was no need to use the "Chowk" for such games. Games like *Gilli Danda* (Tip-cat) were beyond our capabilities. Besides, I could never attain much expertise at any game.

Amongst the nine of us, I was the youngest, and perhaps due to this, I was doted upon by all. I

don't know if it was due to this love and endearment or whether there was any reality to it, but everyone from my parents to siblings used to mention my intelligence from this small age. And I still remember the incidents which used to be quoted as evidence for this. You might find some of these interesting:

May Allah ﷻ shower his mercy and pleasure upon my respected father Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafee' Sahab. Despite the fact that he was the top Mufti of an institute like Dar ul Uloom, Deoband, and was famous throughout the country for the level of knowledge and excellence which Allah ﷻ had bestowed him with, and his devoted students considered it to be a great honour for themselves to remain in his service, he was naturally so humble and simple that he would go to the market all by himself to buy household goods. Sometimes when he would buy something for the house he would make sure to carry it himself. In those days I had grown old enough to accompany him to the bazaar. Whenever I went along with him, he would let me buy something for myself. Chocolates and candies had not yet arrived, so what were our favourite goodies? Roasted grams, popcorn, puffed rice, frozen cream (a local, traditional form of ice cream) and some traditional sweets! After some time, with advancement, a candy, which resembled chocolate, became available for one *paisa* (one-hundredth of a Rupee). It looked like a slice of orange and we would call it, *sangtaray ki mithaai* (Orange sweet). Now I notice that in those days children's desires revolved around things which were healthy, and contained natural benefits, and were available everywhere at very cheap prices. The unhealthy and expensive things which have been invented today were unheard of.

Anyway, whenever our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would take us along somewhere he would buy us one of the above-mentioned things. As a result, we would be recompensed for our effort of going and coming back; hence, the trip to the bazaar was a bonus. But he would always buy us things at his discretion. Children, at that time were not habitual of asking or demanding for things. Thus, once our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was getting

potatoes for home, and I was also with him. That day, by chance, our respected father forgot to buy me something from the market. I kept on thinking that I should have got something, but when I did not get anything, and our respected father was about to turn into an alley where there weren't any shops from where we could have bought something for me, I realised that today I was not getting anything. As I have mentioned above it was against the norm to ask for something, but I also wanted to remind our father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ that he had forgotten something. My little mind found a way out of this dilemma and I said to my father: "Abbaji, if nothing else, please give me these



potatoes only". My father spontaneously laughed at this, and instead of potatoes he bought me something I liked, and then we reached home. He narrated this incident to everyone in the household, which later became a joke in the family.

Similarly, in Deoband, a bazaar used to be set up on Wednesdays where people from the neighbouring villages would sell their products, and where household items were found at a low price. It was called 'The Wednesday Bazaar'. Our father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ once, while going to that bazaar, took me along. I don't remember the things he bought from that bazaar, and also the bazaar mainly sold household items, which were of no interest to children. Thus, I did not get anything that day as well. On our way back home, in the last shop, (we spotted) a heap of *batashaay* (a kind of sweet) made of sugar. I could not repress myself when we passed by and said to my father: "Abbaji, kindly ask the rates for these *bataashay*." That is how I reminded our father of something he had forgotten.

The neighbourhood in Deoband where our house was located was known as *baray bhayon ka mohalla* (literally: the neighbourhood of Elder Brothers). Actually, the offspring of our ancestor used to be called *baray bhai*, and the neighbourhood had come to be known by this name.

In the direction of the main door of our house (which was on the eastern side) was a small road which distinguished the community of Hindus from the community of Muslims. On that road, the opposite side of our house was inhabited by Hindus, but we had good neighbourly relations with them. On that same road, opposite our house was a flour mill which we used to call an 'Engine'. I remember that once a fire broke out at that mill. Our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was the first person who rushed for assistance, and remained busy for long in trying to extinguish the fire with water and mud; - amicable neighbourly relations with non-Muslims was a distinguishing characteristic of all of our elders - this was an interesting sight for me, and after watching this scene from our house I would describe the events to my elder siblings in my lisping speech and

would gesture with my hands and feet to illustrate what had happened. And while describing the scene that had taken place, I would climb upon my siblings just as I had seen people doing while helping to extinguish the fire.

Till the age of around six years, I used to lisp while speaking, and there are many jokes about this which became popular in our family. The elder son of Hazrat Maulana Anwar Shah Sahab Kashmiri, Hazrat Maulana Azhar Shah Qaiser (May Allah's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ mercy be upon them both), who was the editor of the monthly, Dar ul Uloom, Deoband, for a long time, was a friend of my elder brother, Muhammad Zaki Kaifi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, and thus would often visit us at home. He used to love me a lot. My family used to affectionately call me "Taqqoo" instead of "Taqi" and Maulana Azhar Sahab also used to call me by this name. He would often take me in his lap and tease me by calling me "Taqqoo, Taqqoo". On the other hand, his name was Azhar which I would twist and pronounce in my lisping tongue as 'Ajhal' (in Arabic, the word means, 'the most ignorant'). So when he would knock at our door and I would come out and see him, I would go to BhaiJaan and tell him: "Bhai Ajhal has come". Maulana Azhar Sahab would amuse himself with my accent. Thus, after coming to Pakistan when monthly *Al-Balagh* started under my supervision and its first edition reached Maulana, he sent me a letter (which was his first letter to me after many years) in which he wrote:

Today you are Maulana Taqi Usmani but to me you are still the same "Taqqoo Miyan" who used to call me 'Ajhal'.

And at the end of the letter, in place of his name, he wrote: "Your very same, Brother Ajhal."



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