

The Intellect

Re-awakening to the
ideals of a Blessed Life

Al Quran
Surah Nisa – Part 15

Al Hadith
Criterion of Excellence and
Nearness

The Awakening
Repentance-the Right Way



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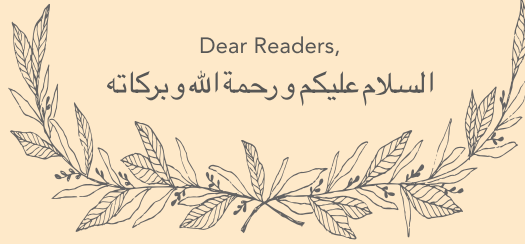


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Editorial



Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

*"I envy the sand that met his feet
I'm jealous of honey he tasted sweet*

*Of birds that hovered above his head
Of spiders who spun their sacred web*

*To save him from his enemies
I envy clouds formed from the seas*

*That gave him cover from the heat
Of a sun whose light could not compete*

*With his, whose face did shine so bright
That all was clear in blinding night..."*

(Excerpted from Spring's Gift by Shaykh Hamza Yusuf)

Expressions such as this and the blessed *Burdah Sharif* reflect the intensity of the love the *Ummatis* feel for their most sincere benefactor; who cried and prayed to make ease for us; whose supplications are the reason for the *Ummah's* safety from collective punishment; whose days were spent in erecting milestones for us and whose nights were spent in long prayers for many he had not even seen.

How can we ever thank and repay our beloved ﷺ?

Through the one way he & Allah ﷻ recommended for us: following him, obeying his *Sunnah* and adopting his *Seerah*. It is essential for us to remember this life-lesson; especially in the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

Moving on to another *Ummah*-related matter and a grave one indeed: the lifting of Article 370 in Occupied Kashmir. Our apathy in this regard needs no mention. We sleep comfortable nights in air-conditioned rooms, our loved ones by our side, while our brethren across the border suffer without recourse, darkness encroaching upon them from all sides. We will keep *talking* about the issue, harping on the same old tunes, but will any substantial outcome emerge from it? It's anyone's guess!

"Our Lord, do not turn us into a victim of the unjust people and save us through Your mercy from the disbelieving people"

(Yunus – 10: 85-86)

(Du'a of the Israelites against persecution by the Pharaoh).

Is it external change that comes first within an individual or does internal metamorphosis take precedence? This is a matter up for debate and discussion. But which is easier? Which is more easily sustained? Which creates greater stress in its realization? Again, one can argue over the responses to such questions but there are a number of contributing factors that need to be considered in answering them: personal strength; family support or lack there-of, resistance from one's social circle, level of devotion and persistence, peer pressure etc.

Our *Cover Story* and the piece featured in *Transformations* give insight into the roller-coaster ride called "change" and its incumbent ups and downs when a person decides to work on self-improvement and actualization.

Appearances can be greatly deceiving. Unattractive terrains can hide mines of gold, and flashy, inviting exteriors can prove to be hollow and unfulfilling from inside.

We leave you to ponder over a timeless extract from *In Mustafa ﷺ – Our Honour, Indeed!* by Shaykh Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi ربه، featured in this issue of *The Intellect* (see: *From the Pens of the Pious*):

*"Neither grass grows here nor flowers bloom,
Yet even heavens bend themselves low to meet it.*

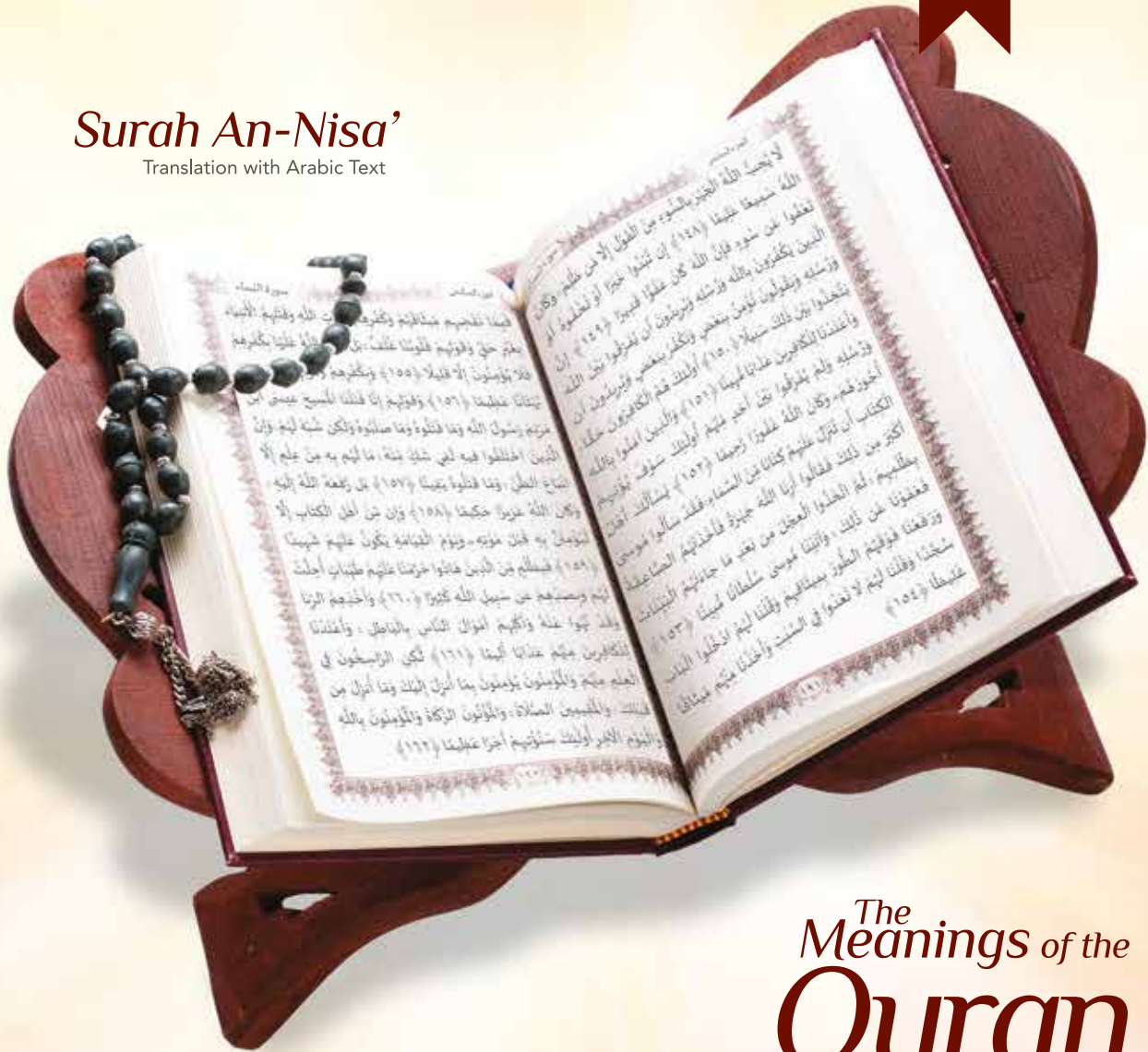
As I saw the apparently unattractive stretch of land, I felt how devoid of scenery that town was. At the same time, however, I thought what a great favor it had bestowed upon mankind. Without it, the wide world would have been nothing more than a golden cage, and man, a prisoner. This was the town that took man out of the narrow confines of the earth and made him acquainted with limitless possibilities of development, and restored to mankind its glory and freedom. It relieved humanity of the heavy load under which it was groaning and broke the fetters unjust rulers and ignorant lawgivers had put around its feet..."

Request for Du'as,

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid

Surah An-Nisa'
Translation with Arabic Text



The
Meanings of the
Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرَهُمُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

Those who have believed in Allah and His Messengers, and have made no division between any of them, to them He will give their rewards. Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [152]

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنَ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾

The People of the Book ask you to bring down upon them a Book from the heavens, (which is not strange,) as they had asked Musa something greater than that when they said, "Make us see Allah openly." So, the thunderbolt took them for the wrong they did. Later, they took to themselves the calf, even after the clear signs had come to them. Then, We forgave them, and gave Musa an open authority. [153]

وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِيثَاقِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾

We raised the(Mount of) Tur high over them for binding them to the pledge, and We said to them, "Do not transgress in (the matter of) the Sabbath." We took from them a firm pledge. [154] ⁶¹

فَبِمَا نَفَضِهِم مِّيثَاقَهُمْ وَكُفْرِهِمْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلِهِمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۚ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾

So, (they met their fate) for breaking their pledge, and for their disbelief in the verses of Allah, and for their slaying of the prophets unjustly, and for their saying, "Our hearts are sealed" - rather, Allah has set a seal over them for their disbelief, so they do not believe but a little [155]

وَبِكُفْرِهِمْ وَقَوْلِهِمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾

and for their disbelief and for what they said against Maryam as a grim imputation, [156]

وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ ۚ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ ۚ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾

and for their saying, "We have certainly killed the Massey 'Isa ﷺ the son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah", while in fact they did neither kill him, nor crucify him, but they were deluded by resemblance.⁶² Those who disputed in this matter are certainly in doubt about it. They have no knowledge of it, but they follow whims. It is absolutely certain that they did not kill him, [157]

بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾

but Allah lifted him towards Himself. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. [158]

وَإِنَّ مَنِ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِهِ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾

No one will remain from among the People of the Book but will certainly believe in him before he dies,⁶³ and on the Day of Doom, he shall be a witness against them. [159]

فَبِظُلْمٍ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾

So, because of the transgression of those who became Jews, We prohibited for them good things which were made lawful for them earlier⁶⁴ and for their preventing (people), very often, from the way of Allah, [160]

وَأَخَذِهِمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ هُمُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾

and for their charging (usury or interest) while they were forbidden from it, and for their devouring of the properties of the people by false means. We have prepared, for the disbelievers among them, a painful punishment. [161]

لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَالْمُقِيمِينَ الصَّلَاةَ وَالْمُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أُولَئِكَ سَنُؤْتِيهِمْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٦٢﴾

But those well-grounded in knowledge among them, and the believers, believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you, as well as those observing Salah and paying Zakahy and those believing in Allah and the Last Day. To them we shall give a great reward. [162]

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَعِيسَى وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُونُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَآتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ زَبُورًا ﴿١٦٣﴾

Surely, We have revealed to you as We have revealed to Nuh and to the prophets after him; and We have revealed to Ibrahim, Isma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qub and their children, and to 'Isa عليه السلام, Ayyub, Yunus, Harun and Sulaiman, and We have given Zabur to Dawud . [163] ⁶⁵_(We have sent)

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ مُوسَى تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٤﴾

some Messengers We have already told you about, and some other Messengers We did not tell you about, and Allah has spoken to Musa verbally [164]

رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾

Messengers giving good tidings and warning, so that people may have no plea against Allah after the Messengers (have come). Allah is All- Mighty, All-Wise. [165]

Explanation

61) For the details of these events, please see 2:54-56 and 7:142 with their respective notes.

62) It means that another person who resembled 'Isa عليه السلام was killed by the Jews,

63) This verse indicates that 'Isa عليه السلام will come again to this world before the Day of Judgment, and then all the People of the Book will truly believe in him before he dies a normal death. Some commentators, however, suggest that the pronoun he dies' refers to 'one among the People of the Book' and the sense is that every Jew and Christian will believe in 'Isa عليه السلام as a prophet (and not as a god) immediately before his death, when he will witness the scenes of Barzakh (the state between death and Ressurrection).

64) Details of these things may be seen in 6:146

65) These are the names of the prophets Biblically spelt respectively as follows: Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Israel (aka Jacob), Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon and David. Zabur is the name of the Book revealed to Dawud Biblically known as 'Psalms

Criterion of Excellence and Nearness

By Maulana Manzoor Naumani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

Hadith: Abu Zarr narrates that the Messenger of Allah [once] said to him: You, as a person, enjoy no superiority over a white-skinned or a black-skinned man. You can, of course, be excellent through piety and fear of Allah" (Musnad Ahmad).

Commentary: It shows that honour and superiority does not rest with wealth, nationality, birth, language or face and figure. It is determined by piety [i.e., fear of Allah and the way of life stemming from it]. Thus, with Allah he is greater in honour who is more pious.

As the Qur'an says:

Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you [Al-Hurajat 49:13].

Hadith: It is related by Mu'az Ibn Jabal that the Messenger of Allah sent him to Yemen (as the Governor or Judge). [When he was leaving for that place] the Prophet ﷺ went with Him [for some distance by way of seeing him off], giving him [necessary] instructions and advice. At that time, Mu'az [at the bidding of the Prophet] was riding on his mount while the Prophet ﷺ was walking on foot beside him. The last thing the Prophet ﷺ said, after he had given the necessary instructions was "We may not meet again after this year [i.e., it is the last year of my life and I am about to depart from the world]. It is possible that [when you return from Yemen] you may visit my mosque and grave." Upon hearing this, Mu'az began to cry. Turning his face away from him and in the direction of Medinah, the Prophet ﷺ remarked, "Much closer and dearer to me are the bondsmen who fear Allah [and observe piety], whoever they are and wherever they may be" (Masnad Ahmad).

Commentary: The concluding part of the above tradition denotes that the spiritual nearness and attachment is the main thing, no matter at whatever distance a man may be from the Prophet ﷺ physically. He may be in Yemen or in any other part of the world, if he possesses the virtue of piety and has the fear of Allah, he is close to him, or, rather, with him. On the other hand, if a person is near him, in the physical sense, but his heart is devoid of piety, he is removed from the Prophet ﷺ and the Prophet ﷺ is removed from him, all the seeming nearness notwithstanding.

The Prophet, in this way, consoled Mu'az. He advised him not to grieve over the apparent separation for with piety and the fear of Allah in his heart he will not be far from him even if he lived in Yemen. Moreover, the present existence is transitory, and the permanent dwelling place is the future world where all the righteous bondsmen of Allah will live with the Prophet ﷺ forever and there will be no question of separation.

The Prophet ﷺ had turned his face away while speaking these words, probably, because he, too, had been moved to tears at the weeping of Mu'az and wanted to conceal it from him. It could also be that the spectacle of a true friend weeping was unbearable for the Prophet, and, therefore, he looked away.

The Prophet ﷺ ordered Mu'az to ride on his Mount while, for Himself, he preferred to walk on foot by his side. What a great lesson and good example does it contain for those who are regarded to be the religious and spiritual deputies of the Messenger ﷺ!

May Allah cause us to fear Him and entitle us to have spiritual nearness and company of the Messenger ﷺ in the Hereafter.

Touching an iPhone or PC which has Qur'an stored on its Memory without Wudu

Answered by Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari

Question:

I recently downloaded the Qur'an application onto my iPhone and have the entire Qur'an saved both in audio and digital forms. I have two questions: Firstly, do I need to have Wudu in order to touch my iPhone, or is wudu required only when the app is open? Secondly, would it be impermissible to take the phone to the lavatory given that the entire Qur'an is stored in digital form on its memory?

Answer:

In the name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

1) The position of all four Sunni schools of Islamic law is that it is unlawful (*haram*) to touch **any part** of a textual copy of the Qur'an (*mushaf*) without being in a state of minor ritual purity (*wudu*), as a way of honouring the book of Allah. The majority of the Imams of Qur'anic exegesis (*mufasssirin*) state that the verses: "It is surely the Noble Qur'an, (recorded already) in a protected book (i.e. the Preserved Tablet) that is not touched except by the purified ones (the angels). A revelation from the Lord of the worlds" (Qur'an: 56/77-80) refers also to physically touching the Qur'an. Moreover, Imam Malik (Allah have mercy on him) relates in his *Al-Muwatta* that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) wrote a letter to Amr ibn Hazm (Allah be pleased with him), in which he said, "None should touch the Qur'an except one who is in a state of purity." (Al-Muwatta no: 534)

Apart from the Mushaf, if a complete verse of the Qur'an is written or inscribed on something else such as a wall, piece of paper, slate or coin [m: and by extension, if the Qur'an is stored electronically in a digital format on an iPhone, PC or some other device, since it cannot be classed a Mushaf], there are two opinions of classical Hanafi jurists (*fuqaha*) regarding its ruling:

Some jurists are of the view that in addition to the Mushaf itself, it is not permitted to touch an item on which a complete verse of the Qur'an is inscribed. It is stated in *Maraqī al-Falah*:

"Likewise Wudu is mandatory in order to touch a Mushaf, and even [to touch] a verse inscribed on a coin or wall due to the statement of Allah Most High, "it is not touched except by the purified ones" whether [to touch] the inscribed part or the blank space. Some of our [Hanafi] scholars, however, stated that what is prohibitively disliked for the ritually impure is to touch the actual area where the text is written and not the blank space because one is not touching the Qur'an literally. The correct position is that touching the blank space is akin to touching the text itself [in that both are not permitted]." (See: (Marāqī al-Falah with the commentary of Tahtawi P: 82)

Acknowledging that some Hanafi jurists limit the prohibition of touching to the actual area where the Qur'anic text is inscribed, Imam Shurunbulali in the above passage explains that the correct position is that if a verse is written on anything besides the Mushaf, on a slate for example, then

not only is it prohibited to touch that part of the slate where the verse is inscribed but the whole slate itself. Based on this, if the Qur'an application is activated and the verses appear on the screen of an iPhone, PC or other electronic devices, it is not permitted to touch the device without Wudu.

The second opinion within the Hanafi School is that if Qur'anic verses are inscribed on something other than a Mushaf, then it is only impermissible to touch that part of the item where the verses are inscribed and not the whole item. Imam Ibn Abidin (Allah have mercy on him), quoting Halabi and *Al-Bahr al-Ra'iq*, states:

"... It is not unlawful in other than a Mushaf [to touch] except the area where the verses are inscribed." (Radd al-Muhtar ala 'l-Durr al-Mukhtar 1/173)

This position, chosen by Imams Ibn Abidin, Ibn Nujaym and others, can be acted upon given the need and widespread usage of digital forms of the Qur'an. It is, however, superior and closer to propriety when possible to take precaution and act upon the first position.

Based on this, once the verses of the Qur'an appear on the screen, it will not be permitted to touch the area where the actual text appears without Wudu. Touching other parts of the iPhone or device, however, will be permitted.

Note that if the Qur'an application is not activated and hence the verses do not appear on the screen, then it is totally permitted to touch the device including the screen without Wudu.

2) As for taking to the lavatory/toilet a phone which has Qur'anic verses, Hadiths, Prophetic supplications, etc stored on its memory, if the application is not running and the text is not visible on the screen, then it is permitted. However, taking the phone into the lavatory with the text visible on the screen is highly disrespectful and blameworthy. It is stated in *Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyya*:

"It is [prohibitively] disliked to enter a lavatory with a finger ring on which the name of Allah Most High or some part of the Qur'an is inscribed" (Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyya 1/50)

And Allah Knows Best

- Courtesy: ilmgate.org



Repentance – The Right Way

By Maulana Abdus Sattar Sb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

The Manner of Seeking Taubah

First of all, feeling repentant, you must remember to follow all the instructions outlined earlier and then, observing due diligence, make intention to offer two *Rakaat Salah* (Prayer) of Taubah. It would be better if you take *Ghusl*, wear new clothes, put on perfume and then offer two Rakaat Salah of Taubah with the strong conviction that Allah ﷻ has not only forgiven all your sins but has erased them of your *Na'ama-e-Aamal* (List of Deeds). And if the Taubah is of a superior degree, then, rest assured, Allah has replaced all your sins with good deeds.

Prescriptions for Remaining Committed to Taubah

After one has repented for one's sins, there are three remedies for remaining committed to Taubah:

1. The first thing needed for unswerving commitment to Taubah is good company. Hazrat Mufti Wali Hassan رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to say one shouldn't despair and be fearful of one's failed Taubah, instead, one should continue seeking it with dedication. Like some people are regular in offering *Tahajud* prayers, some in offering *Ishraaq* prayers and other *Nawafil* and yet others in other types of *Ibadaat* (forms of worship). Whoever has been bestowed with regularity in seeking Taubah by Allah ﷻ, he too shall be raised up amongst the committed ones on the Day of Judgment. But, the first

condition for steadfastness to emanate from seeking Taubah is 'good company'.

And it is a fact that until and unless a person learns Deen or adopts the company of one of Allah's pious people, he is unable to even see the list of sins. He only considers self-deduced sins as sins and all the rest of them are invisible to him. So, when he is not even familiar with the list of sins, how can he aspire to seek Taubah? He will make mistakes and sin. Commitment to Taubah stems from the blessings of good company only, as it keeps one's conscience awake.

2. The second thing, my friends, is "Qayam-ul-Layl" (i.e. praying at night). Allah ﷻ says

"Verily, the rising by night (for Tahajjud prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for governing oneself, and most suitable for (understanding) the Word (of Allah)".

(Al-Muzzammil 73: 6)

Allah grants commitment to Taubah through the blessings of the Tahajjud prayer at night. Whoever is blessed as such will himself feel the purity with which he spent the day, free from all kinds of rubbish.

3. The third thing is remembering Allah ﷻ often. Actually a person drifts towards Allah's disobedience because his heart and mind are devoid of His remembrance; Allah's greatness and magnificence has become unapparent to him. Otherwise, e.g. how can a person dare to commit a sin when he knows his mother or father is watching? When a person consciously realizes that Allah ﷻ is watching, how can he dare to sin? Thus, whoever praises and remembers Allah often, He ﷻ saves him from sins.

Thus, three things are important for commitment to Taubah:

- 1) Good company, 2) Offering Qayam-ul-Layl with due diligence, 3) Remembering Allah ﷻ often. This remembrance (*zikr*) includes the recitation of

the Holy Quran, *Durud Sharif*, *Istaghfar* and other *Azkaar* (words of remembrance) too (In case of an established relationship with a Saahib-e-Nisbaat (spiritual guide), one should recite Azkaar provided by him as well).

Categories of the Seekers of Taubah

Imam Ghazali Rehmatullah has described four categories of the seekers of taubah. Each one of us should try to find himself in one of these four categories:

1. The first type of Taubah seekers are those who commit to sincere and lasting Taubah). Allah ﷻ swaps their sins with good deeds.
2. A second category of people ask forgiveness for bigger sins but they keep committing smaller sins unintentionally; they do not plan to get involved in these sins but just falter once in a while. Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

"Those who avoid great sins and Al-Fawahish, except the small faults." (An-Najm 53:32)

So goodness dominates evil in the lives of such people too and there is a strong probability of their success in the Hereafter.

3. A third type of people do good deeds in the course of their lives but at times, they unintentionally commit bigger sins; they do not keep at them though, rather, they feel ashamed and ask for forgiveness right away. Allah ﷻ says about such people:

"And (there are) others who have acknowledged their sins, they have mixed a deed that was righteous with another that was evil." (At-Taubah 9: 102)

Goodness dominates evil in lives of such people as well and there is ardent hope of their faring well in the Hereafter.

4. The fourth category consists of people who have not sinned unintentionally in their lives but rather, they have adopted a planned, well-orchestrated life of sin. Evil dominates goodness in their lives and there is apprehension of their Iman (faith) being

taken away before they die. Because Allah ﷻ may deprive one of the treasure of Iman due to insistence on certain sins. (Ihya-ul-Uloom, Volume 4, Pg.57 to 61)

So pray that we don't turn up hopeless in His court.

Allah ﷻ is Very Forgiving and Merciful

Allah forgives in His court all those who seek forgiveness, even if they have spent their entire lives in sinning. But, it must be clear that this seeking forgiveness should not be at the very end, when the illness of death has inflicted one, but rather before it. An event narrated in books informs us that a person had spent his entire life sinning; once old, he felt repentant and with the intention of seeking forgiveness he came to Allah's court with quivering feet and said:

O Merciful Lord! I have come in a state where my back is bent, my pocket is empty, friends have left me, my wife has also pained me with her separation and relatives too have turned their faces away. O Merciful Lord! I have not one good deed in my kitty, I have spent year upon year of my life in these very sins and Your disobedience; but now, I have come to Your doorstep with a heavy heart and hopeful of Your Mercy.

After hearing this, Allah ﷻ said to the Angels:

Go tell this person: O servant of Mine! There can be delay in your coming, but none in My forgiveness.

So, this is Allah's Glory; He is Gracious; He is Merciful.

Ibn-e-Qiyyam رضى الله عنه says that if a Momin (one with true faith) who has sinned comes to Allah's Court with these intentions and complete repentance and says:

O Allah! I present myself at Your doorstep, I confess my sins and acknowledge being a sinner; if You forgive me, then You are able to do so; if You do not forgive me, who else will? (Who else should I plead to?)

Then, Allah ﷻ will shower His blessings and

mercy on such a person, but the precondition is sincere and superior Taubah.

A Simile of Sins

A Hadith narrates that once our Holy Prophet ﷺ was staying near a stream. He saw a bird gather a little sand in its beak and drop it into the stream. To the Prophet's ﷺ amazement the bird did so once and then again. Hazrat Jibrail رضى الله عنه descended in the meantime and said:

O Prophet of Allah! Allah says the example of sins of all beings is like the sand in this bird's beak and My mercy's river is like this stream. If the sinners of your Ummah seek Taubah, then the rivers of My mercy will wash away these sins.

Seek True Taubah

When our Lord is so Gracious, then living a sinful life isn't a good choice. We must, then, seek true Taubah before Allah ﷻ and for all our sins: obvious ones, unapparent ones, all. Whoever does so, he will be able to reap its benefits instantly. Just like a child whose mother is upset at him says: "Mother! Please forgive me," and the mother hugs him; then, his dismal heart instantly fills up with contentment, his gloominess changes into tranquility.

By Allah! Whoever seeks true Taubah, there will be no delay in its result. Allah ﷻ will immediately give him a solid return; his heart's state will alter; his distress will change into peace; his unease will change into relief. This is the very indication of Allah's ﷻ acceptance of his Taubah.

Final Request

This is why it is imperative to seek forgiveness for all our sins (There are sins which we categorize as sins on our own and then, there are sins that are part of the list defined by Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ); we must keep all of these in our mind while seeking Taubah.

I pray that Allah ﷻ graces us with the act of seeking true Taubah. (Aameen)

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A Mirror on the Wall

By Umm-e-Zainab

The orange hues of the sinking sun made a beautiful backdrop to the clouds lazily swimming across the auburn sky. Saman sat in her patio rocking chair, rosary in hand, enjoying the sleepy scenery. The lush green lawn of their newly purchased house was a treat to her eyes: red roses, white daisies and the intoxicating smell of jasmine.....she didn't how to thank Allah ﷻ enough. There was nothing to complain about really, and why would she even dream of complaining? After all, it had been seven slow but very rewarding years that she and her husband had gradually turned towards their religion of birth; and what a blissful, serene change it had been!

Bang Bang Bang!!

What was that?!

The reverie was broken.

Her visiting mother was trying to push open the freshly painted windows from inside, but the latch wouldn't give away. Finally, she was able to push it up a little. Cross with the effort and already in a bad mood she almost shouted out: "Saman, what is this I hear from the kids?"

"What Ammi Ji?" She was dreading what seemed like the beginning of another argument. "Oh no, not again!" She muttered to herself. Ever since she had come from their hometown for a few days, this was the umpteenth time she and her mother had come to loggerheads.

"Since when did you people stop celebrating birthdays?" Her mother demanded.

Attempting to respond sweetly, Saman kind of fumbled with her words: "Umm Ammi Ji, why do we celebrate them in the first place? Just because everyone else does. Right? I read somewhere that most such celebrations have pagan roots."

"Oh come on! Are you trying to label us all as pagans? And how does cutting a cake and putting up a few balloons for the kids hamper your practice of religion? Don't you eat cake otherwise? You know what, this is exactly what I foresaw and predicted to your father – taking things to the extreme."

"Now who will decide what's extreme and what's not?" Saman said, biting her lip.

"And who said YOU could decide?! Listen Saman, I am your mother, and I only want what's best for you and your children. You two are forcing your children to grow up in a cocoon. And when they come out to see the real world, they would fall into a deep inferiority complex. You take my word for this. You'll see."

"Ammi Ji, we are only trying to protect them from negative influences. Isn't that what parents are supposed to do?"

"As if you two are the only parents in the world! As if no one else has ever brought up children? Don't try to impose your 'righteousness' on others, okay. We are also Muslims, Alhamdulillah!"

Cheeks burning, Saman's voice got increasingly heated: "It's not enough that one prays five times a day Ammi! You need to read up more about our religion."

"Yeah, just like you need to read up more about how to talk to your mother!"

That was a volley strong enough to silence a heavy weight wrestler. Saman weakly shrank back in her chair and was very upset at getting involved, once again, in a useless argument. "But she draws you into it!" She consoled herself. "Swear!"

While trying to pay her bill through the Internet and after controlling herself for at least half an hour, Saman couldn't resist pointing it out anymore: "Ammi Ji, why do you keep humming these old film songs to the kids? We don't want to expose them to such lyrics!" Her tone was laced with irritation.

"Oh my God! Now that too is a problem! Saman, you know your big new house can become very claustrophobic. I came here just for my grandchildren's sake; not to listen to your endless sermons. And if I am humming old or new film songs, how does it impact your life? I have to go to my own grave. Not yours."

"Now who says you are going to my grave?! But your songs have an influence over my kids".

"Look who's talking? A mother glued to her laptop!"

"I am NOT glued to my laptop; I was just paying the phone bill!"

"Why don't you disconnect the phone too? Just like your TV. Doesn't the phone lead to sins? Backbiting and all..."

Saman got up and went towards her room in anger. She banged the door shut but not before she heard her mother's acidic parting remarks: "Wow, what manners. This is what you've learned about your religion. Covering yourself in a *burka* hasn't taught you how to behave with your elders?!"

Saman began to cry and she couldn't stop crying. She and her mother had always been the best of friends. They had had a lovely relationship, up until now.... until their lifestyles, thoughts and ideas started to diverge, sharply.

Not that her mother was unlike other 'average' Muslims. She fulfilled her basic religious obligations; and she was also kind-hearted, compassionate and sincere. It was only when there was a clash between what was considered "normal" and what her daughter was now proclaiming as irreligious that the problem began. And the "norm" and "normal" sphere was too big

for Saman to circumvent and stand against without fighting at each and every instance.

The greenery visible through her bedroom window was no longer pleasing, it seemed all thorny. And the newness of her home held no excitement for her anymore; in fact, she felt what her mother had pointed out a little earlier: claustrophobic; the vastness drawing upon her like a dark shadow.

She sat down to do what she knew was the best recourse: writing to her mentor. She poured out her feelings and tried her best to avoid dishonesty in describing the events that spiraled out after her mother's arrival. She pleaded that on the one hand she was bound by the rule of total respect for her mother (which she was honestly finding quite hard to follow!) and on the other hand, clear injunctions of the *Deen* were being fogged out through weak arguments. She explained that she found it impossible to keep quiet when wrong was attributed to right and the moment she opened her mouth to do so, she was barraged by counter-arguments which heated up the discussion. In the process, her voice would get raised, her tone would become bitter and the discussion would become animated. What was the way out now?

The letter arrived less than a fortnight later. Its crisp white envelope announced the peace she would feel after reading and absorbing its contents. The answer to her long, emotional barrage was in a single sentence – a sea of advice enwrapped in a few words:

“Try to remain quiet at all instigations of argument and explain with love whenever she is in a good mood”

Just before leaving home for her *Tafseer* class, Saman stopped for a few seconds in the foyer and peeked at the mirror on the wall. A fully covered lady stared back. She knew her outward change was complete but had she really absorbed the spirit of Islam inside her heart? Was she truly transformed? She feared not. But at least, it was a beginning – the awareness that more needed to be done, much more.

That single moment of looking at her image on the wall told her that the struggle wasn't over; it had to continue till she reached the conclusion of her worldly life; an ongoing effort, a constant exertion, an uphill, long trek, culminating in what she now knew would be the *real* transformation.

In the Intricate Paths of Life...

In the intricate paths of life when difficulties and hardships confront a man, and the darkness of difficulty and suffering becomes long, it is patience only that acts like a light for a Muslim, that keeps him safe from wandering here and there, and saves him from the muddy marsh of disappointment, desperation and frustration.

- Imaam Ghazali



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What Truly Defines Us

By Ateefah Sana Ur Rab

Anticipating the outcome of an act she wouldn't be able to escape from in the near future, Zara bit her lips as she continued to shorten the distance between the bus stop and her home. It wasn't fairly new to her what had occurred today. For a long while, it had been like this. Life playing its course in a way where she felt ashamed of herself more than ever. The images of her cousins with medals and trophies flashed again to torment and to remind her of the road to disgrace. An inevitable truth hung over or perhaps it was more of a tag she'd found beside her name often. Zara - the one, never good enough.

The focus shifted from the ground to what lay in front. The very door she loved to return to, and uncannily the one she dreaded the most at such times. She wanted to run away and hide until everything miraculously went back to its original place; where no more a victim of mockery she would be. Inside must be a good atmosphere—celebration upon the addition of awards to her cousins' collections, as always. Why was she the imperfect one, amongst people who seemed to excel at whatever they did?

Assalam-o-Alaikum, her voice faded away into the cheers of excitement when she entered.

There was the much-awaited sight; Hamid standing in the middle with his little sister, surrounded by the elders. She wanted to leave before any pair of eyes belittled her for the crime she had committed once again. Clutching the straps of her bag, she ran upstairs into her room and locked the door. Everyone was too busy to notice her figure scurrying away. Or maybe they knew what to expect from the good-for-nothing child.

It wasn't until a while later that Shaista knocked, asking her daughter to come out.

"Mom, I'm tired. Can I just sleep for now?"

"Zara, it is about lunch time. Come on, you can sleep afterwards."

"I am not hungry, Mom." She tried to find a believable reason.

"Okay. But can you please let me in?"

The pleading tone of Shaista got her out of bed

and to open the door. Her mom came inside, closing it behind her and ushered Zara towards the bed. They both sat down in silence for a moment.

"What happened, Zara? Why are you so upset?"

"I... I couldn't secure any position..." She lowered her gaze in embarrassment.

"That does not matter, my dear."

"I... didn't even make into the ranks after that..." Tears blurred her vision.

Shaista let out a sigh and smiled. "Zara, look at me."

Reluctantly, the child raised her head.

"Zara, let me say this. Marks do not define you at all. They do not determine who you are and what your worth is. Scores don't evaluate your capabilities, my dear."

"But... Hamid and Warisha—"

"You don't need to compare yourself to them. No, you should never do that. Everyone is not the same, my dear. We all are different. We weren't born to compete with each other."

A few droplets fell from the little girl's lashes. "But I am always told that I am not doing anything to make my parents and family members proud..."

"Oh, no," She enveloped Zara in a motherly embrace, "That's not the case. I am proud of you and your father is proud of you, too."

"But mom, I barely even manage to get a B grade... Why aren't you angry?"

"There's nothing to be angry about. We don't need you to work yourself to the point of exhaustion. No, *beti*, we care about your health. We care about your happiness, not something that will fleet with time. Yes, we do want you to score good but no, we don't want you to stress yourself over what is not of much importance."

"But they all make fun of me... I don't want to live with them, mom. They say it to their friends too and together pass comments on me... It hurts so much..." A sob escaped her lips as pain found the path to freedom. Shaista patted her daughter's head and let out a sigh. A lot of things needed to be done. She must make sure to protect her little one from the unimportant norms of society. Norms that required to come to an end. She must do something or else, more would have to suffer at the hands of people; the ones who had failed to understand that happiness was of more value than a bunch of numbers. This had to change. It was now or never.

"Now, get up. Wash your face and come for lunch, okay?"

"Won't you ask for my report card?" Zara blinked in confusion.

Shaista shook her head. "I can take a look, later. Right now, lunch is of priority. You're coming to eat, okay?"

"Okay, mom." Zara gave a nod, rubbing her cheeks vigorously.

The family sat together around the long-stretched dining table, chatting and eating; enjoying their time in the company of each other. All was well. No one asked Zara about the result. She quietly finished without noticing anyone. It wasn't until she had stood up, that suddenly Hamid dropped the bomb. "Hey, Zara! Wasn't your result announced today?"

"Oh, good! How did it go?"

"Anything special? The... third position, maybe?"

"Why don't you bring it here so we all could see?"

Voices chimed in like an avalanche under which she had trouble breathing. Darkness drew over her vision as she forced herself to not run away. That would be more humiliating, for sure. She braced herself for a list of comments full of disappointment and then mumbled, "62%."

"Oh."

"Well, uhh... I should have expected that..."

"No position? Hm... Try next time."

"Zara, why don't you study like me?"

"Look at me! I achieve positions in every class! The space in my wardrobe is getting smaller for all the trophies now!" Warisha flaunted, her hands spread out in mid-air.

"But marks don't define anyone's capabilities." Oh, yes. Zara had dared to speak after all!

"Says the one who never—"

"Why? Why does it matter? Why do I have to be treated like this? Do I need a lot of medals for you to accept me? Why am I stuck inside a never-ending competition?"

Everyone fell silent. The shock on their faces was evident, for they never thought she'd question them for all the chastising.

"No, you don't." It was her mom who firmly stood by her.

"You don't, my dear. I am proud of you, just the way you are. For me to be happy and satisfied, you don't have to push yourself to achieve more. If you ever do, it should be for yourself. Not anyone else. I am sorry, my dear.

I am sorry that we have been valuing marks over the well-being of our children. I am sorry that we let you be put in a competition like that where you're forced to run alongside others. We all were born different and definitely not to compete with each other. If there is someone we are to compete with, it's our own self! What holds importance is this!

How have we bettered ourselves, from who we were, the day before?"

"This is indeed very true." Agreed Zara's grandfather, who hadn't been a part of the conversation till now. "Our capabilities don't match with each other. We have different passions, different likes and dislikes, different thoughts and different ways of doing things. Yes, if there's anyone we have to compete with, it's ourselves. Not others."

"Now, kids," The grandmother addressed the brother and sister sitting together, "If you were to write, would you be able to write captivating stories like Zara? Or, Warisha, what if you were to paint like your brother? Would you be able to solve math puzzles like your sister, Hamid?"

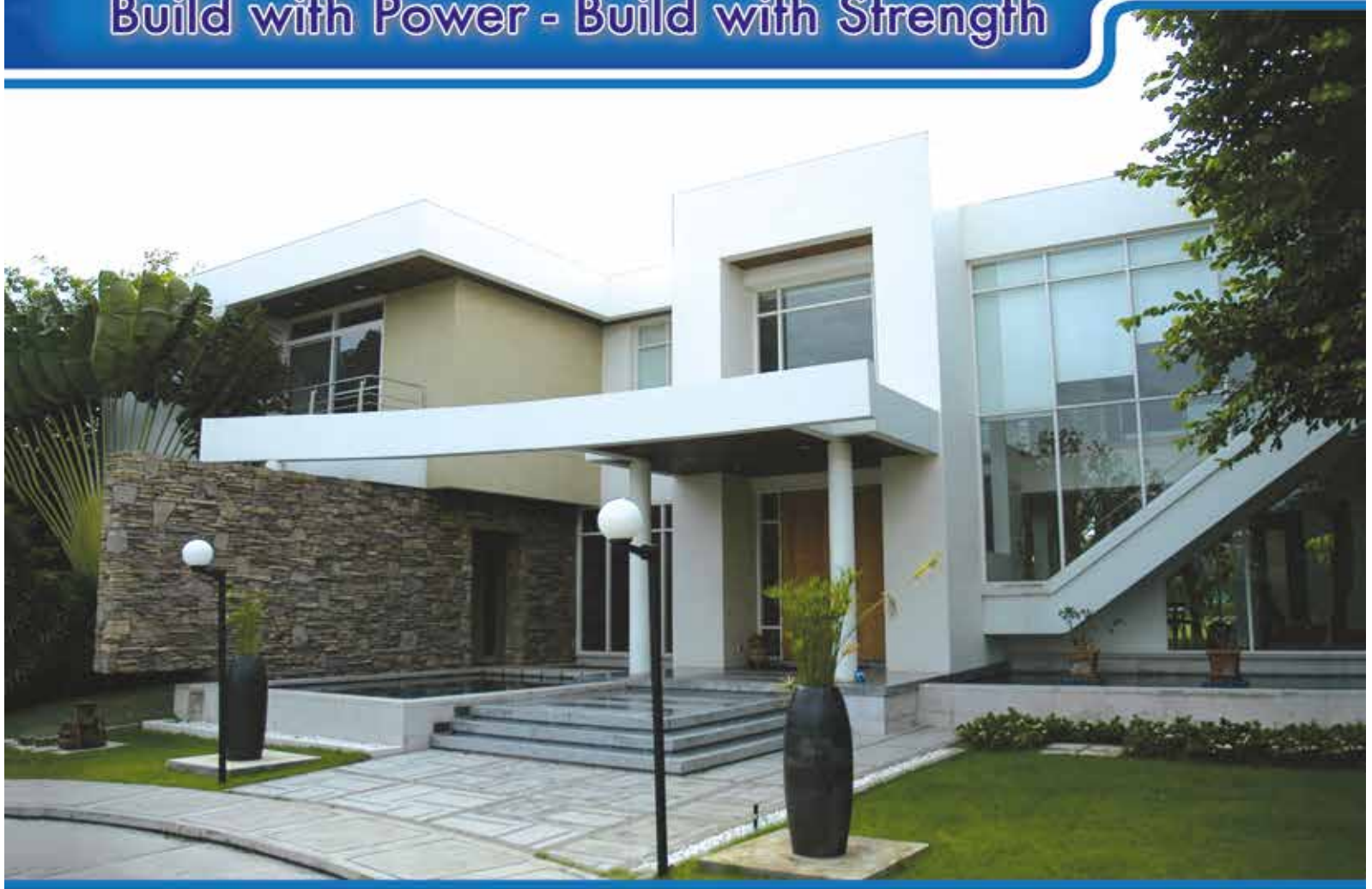
"No..." They shook their heads in denial.

"See! We all have our own special talents; things we are best at!" She smiled, drawing towards the conclusion. "Now, what do we learn from that?"

"That we all are unique and worthy!"

"Excellent!" The old lady clapped alongside her children and grandchildren.

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Islam in a Changing World

By Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

The subject of discussion presented here is 'Islam in a Changing World'. It consists of two parts, Islam, and the changing world, and I would like to take this opportunity to present my views clearly on both aspects of the problem so that we can give some thought to it in a free and frank manner.

So far as the changeableness of time, or, in the words of Iqbal, its fondness for the new is concerned, it is generally supposed that there is no constancy or permanence in time; that time is simply another name for change and alteration. But it is not so. Time is the combination of both change and permanence.

Whenever this state of equilibrium is disturbed, i.e., permanence over-rides change or change exercises an upper hand over permanence; it causes serious repercussions on society and civilization. There is a greater need for proportion here than in a chemical compound.

Time possesses the ability to change and it should change. Change is not a sign of weakness or imperfection, but the law of life. As Iqbal has said: "Life is ever-moving, ever-flowing, ever young." A life which is devoid of the capability for growth and development is not life.

Resistance to change is also an inherent quality of time. The manifestations of change are plainly visible to us and we all know how greatly times have changed. But, in the ordinary course of things, we fail to appreciate the struggle time puts up in order to preserve its good and healthy attributes, its real nature and character. For it, a special kind of microscope is required. Take the river which offers an ideal example of movement. No two waves are alike. Yet, in spite of its passing waves, the river has

been there for thousands of years with all its characteristics, its name, its direction and its channel. Tigris and Euphrates, Ganges and Yamuna are still what they were in ancient times.

Time is stationary as well as moving. Both of these qualities are essential. Without either of them, it cannot maintain its usefulness. In the same way, negative and positive forces are always at work in all living and non-living objects in the world. By their actions and reactions, these objects are fulfilling their destiny.

Religion is the Guardian of Life

As a follower and student of religion, I do not accept the position that religion should respond to every change. Nor will you accept this. It is not a thermometer whose function is merely to record the temperature. It is not a weather cock to be defined in those terms. It cannot be reduced to a mechanical contraption. None of us would like it simply to operate as the recorder of the changes of the times. A revealed faith, or even a so-called religion, cannot tolerate that position.

Religion recognizes change as a reality and affords the fullest scope for the free play of things that are needed for a healthy and wholesome alteration. Religion marches hand in hand with life; it does not merely follow it. Its duty, also, is to discriminate and distinguish between healthy and unhealthy or correct and incorrect changes, between constructive and destructive trends. It has to determine whether an alteration is beneficial or harmful for mankind, or, at least, for its followers. While, on the one hand, it keeps abreast of the dynamic life, on the other, it acts as its guardian and custodian. It has to discharge the duty of

superintendence and control as well. It is not the job of a guardian to support whatever his ward does, to uphold all his good and bad inclinations, and to set his seal of approval on everything his ward chooses to pursue. Religion does not possess only one seal, only one ink and only one hand. It is not for religion to fix its stamp of approval on all documents or deeds. It must discriminate and pick and choose. First, it will examine and then pronounce its verdict. If a thing is wrong or harmful, religion will try to put it down, gently if possible but forcibly if necessary. If a document is considered injurious for mankind, religion will not only refuse to set its seal on it but will also strive to resist it. Herein, lies the difference between ethics and religion. Religion regards it a duty and responsibility to check a wrong trend; ethics contents itself with indicating it.

Some Trials in the History of Religion

In the history of religion, we find some periods during which religion appears to have lost contact with life. However, the fault was not with religion but its followers. It is not the religion that fails to keep pace with life, but, due to lethargy and indifference, its adherents fail to practice its high ideals and lofty values. The followers are left lagging behind while the caravan of life moves on. This subtle difference between religion and its followers is generally overlooked and we do not bother to determine which of the two really is to blame. We are apt to couple them together. But if a critical and unbiased study is made, it is obvious that Islam as a Divine Faith was not responsible for this sorry state of affairs. There is nothing in Islam that prevents it from answering the needs of the practical world and solving its problems.

It is a common failing among men to blame someone or something other than themselves. When Muslims fail to find the answers to their problems in the light of the Qur'an and to work out a synthesis between the eternal laws of faith and the changing realities of the world, they begin to find fault with the Qur'an rather than themselves. They give the impression that the Qur'an is defective and imperfect because it does not provide a justification for their very whim, desire or need. In the words of Iqbal:

The creed of these slaves is that defective is the Book,

For it teaches not the Muslims the ways of servility.

Some people even go a step farther and try to subordinate the Qur'an to their waywardness, inclinations and ambitions. They offer interpretations that justify their perverted ideas and actions. Instead of casting themselves in the mold of the Qur'an, they try to cast the Qur'an in the mold of their thinking and acting.

In his inimitable style, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has shed light on this failing, in his commentary of the Qur'an. He writes: "When they felt that they could not go along with the lofty heights of the Qur'an they tried to bring it down from them so that it could go along with their lowness."

Lack of Men of Ability

The periods of stagnation in the cycles of faith or the confusion, complexity and inner conflict among its followers are, in fact, the periods when there was a scarcity of men of worth and ability who could accept the challenges of the times and serve as forceful representatives of religion. In the annals of Islam, whenever, faith has had effective representation, the Islamic Society and the Shariat have never been confronted with a crisis of confidence. Throughout the long and checkered history of Islam, we come across outstanding men who rose above the common level and put an end to the disorder of the day. They found solutions to the new problems and successfully discharged the responsibility of representing their faith and standing and speaking for it. Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik, Imam Shafiee and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal were born at a time when Islam and the world needed them. By presenting the Islamic Canonical Law in a clear and concise manner, they solved the problems created by expansion in the dominions of Islam. Later, there appeared leaders of thought and action such as Imam Abul Hasan Ashari and Imam Ghazali who grappled with the challenges of their times and found appropriate solutions for them.

- To be concluded in the next issue, insha'Allah



Books – a thing of past?

By Abu Zahra

A few months ago, one afternoon I received a message from a very dear friend. The tone of the message bordered along the lines of extreme excitement (it was almost euphoric!). The reason for this was a recently acquired eReader that he had been planning to buy himself for some time but had been unable to do so due to his financial constraints. Finally, the eReader was gifted to him by his cousin who sent it all the way from London. Now, this friend of mine, I tell you, is one of those rare people who are devoted book lovers and to see his excitement for a electronic book reader was both amusing and a bit surprising. It was surprising because I was not expecting another book-lover losing out to the dizzying pace of technology (I thank God, this friend of mine eventually did not!).

Traditional book reading is a dying habit still kept alive by a vanishing breed that is both few and rare to find these days. Over the years, I have seen quite a few book-lovers becoming book-martyrs by falling prey to Google, Wikipedia and virtual libraries. In today's fast-paced life information is

quite literally the need of every minute; people are scrambling to get hold of every bit of it and while there are far more ways to hold on to these alternative ways of information, traditional books have managed to create and keep a space of their own in our lives. Hence, this latest addition of electronic reading devices, such as Kindles, Nooks, Kobos, etcetera have and will further reduce the possibility of reviving the great tradition and culture of book reading.

While mass book publications had started around six hundred years ago, traditional written text has remained with us since time immemorial. The history of the traditional text, whether written on papyrus for scrolls, clay tablets or ciphered through hieroglyphics pertaining to a pictographic script by the earliest civilizations going back to thousands of years, has remained with man as his only way of expression and learning, which helped in the development of human thought and intellect. The same cannot be said for the virtual text staring back at us through an electronic screen. Although these devices have

made life “easy” by helping us cut down on a lot of time that was spent in searching through piles and piles of books, and have made thousands of books portable, the million-dollar question still remains: has our intellectual productivity and depth increased? Have our reading skills – life-line for a writer – improved?

Recent studies reveal that constant reading through electronic screens can in fact cause a disinterest in readers disturbing their reading patterns. People will ‘speed-read’ and scan through a book and the focus would shift from reading the book to searching only for the relevant content. This habit of reading (or scanning) relevant passages out of their context can only give way to a shallow intellect that is low on critical analysis, and high on merely ‘consuming’ information.

Moreover, the screen culture is fast taking away our ability to concentrate on one thing. It has become all the more ‘easy’ to google the verse of the Quran instead of taking the pains to open a real *mushaf* or a *tafsiir* and going through it with concentration. Our kids now prefer learning through videos as it is a ‘fun’ way to learn something. What is getting lost, however, is our kids’ ability to sit and make a concerted effort to read through the printed page, which they consider to be a ‘boring’ activity.

We must remember that great writers (or intellectuals) in history had always been great readers and every writer had the support of extensive reading behind his writing. There is no doubt that behind every book there are hundreds of books which act as its source in terms of idea, inspiration and the message it intends to convey.

In our tradition, our *akaabireen* (pious predecessors) have always been great readers which only made them prolific writers. *Hakeem ul Ummah*, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته اللہ علیہ wrote about fifteen-hundred books in a life span of only seventy-nine years. He did not have the luxury of modern technology or internet at his disposal and yet his intellectual productivity was such that he not only left a valued treasure of his writings, but also managed his time in such a manner that would allow him to read extensively. Amazingly, at

the same time he was a source of *islah* (spiritual reformation) for millions of people and became the *Mujjadid e Millat* (the Reviver of the Muslim Ummah), despite spending so much time with books.

Similarly, Imam al-Ghazzali رحمته اللہ علیہ wrote about four-hundred books in less than thirty-three years and became one of the greatest scholars of the Islamic tradition. He earned the prestigious title of being the *Hujjat al-Islam* (proof of Islam), which only shows the respect he commanded. His celebrated work *Ahya ul Uloom al-Din* is still the most widely read book amongst the Muslims after the holy Quran. He devoted his life to the revival of Islamic spirit and religious studies. He is one such personality to whom, it can be said, we owe our correction of belief (*aqaid*). Allah ﷻ blessed us with Imam al-Ghazzali at that juncture of our history when the Western philosophy was wreaking havoc with the Muslim thought. Imam al-Ghazzali, in his extensive treatise, *Tahaafat ul Falasifa* (‘The Incoherence of the Philosophers’) refuted the Western philosophy with extreme intellectual force, practically helping the Muslim intellectual tradition to retain its pristine glory and remain uncontaminated under the influence of Western philosophy which had started to heavily impact it.

There are countless such examples that can be quoted from the Islamic tradition where books have always remained central to the acquisition and spreading of knowledge. What remains to be seen is whether these modern-day devices which are gaining immense popularity, especially amongst the youngsters, as an alternative to books, would offer us that similar intellectual depth as that of our *akaabireen* or would they simply act as another source of distraction? Only time will tell if the modern “gadget readers” would manage to live up to the standards set by their spiritual and intellectual predecessors, or would the human mind simply become a passive receptor of knowledge and turn into another electronic device.

Would the words become any less interesting and engaging if we change the source of the script or do we move on with the advancements taking place in the modern world and enhance the

productivity of the human intellect? Will too much reliance on technology silence the nature which would hamper the intellectual ability of the human mind? Would we be able to wake up to the damage this gadget-filled, pharmaceutically-enhanced twentieth century is doing to our brains? If all the books would become electronic then what would become of the basic human skill of writing? Would we then need a daily dose of 'Ritalin', a medication used to improve concentration levels? Aren't we becoming an Orwellian society, devoid of all originality? We at least need to start thinking about these questions critically...

Books are here to stay and people shouldn't let them fall victims to the changing technological fads. Loss of books would entail the loss of authenticity and the original sources of knowledge. Yes, we live in a modern world which has its own needs and requirements and reliance

on technology is not a bad thing at all but too much emphasis on modernization (read: 'technologisation') can also make us lose our way in this technological wilderness. I would always prefer books because for myself; an eReader cannot buy the excitement that comes with the buying of a new book, or going to a bookstore with its distinctive musty smell and to enjoy the pleasure of flipping through the pages of a latest edition! Take the common example of the comparison between a hand-written script of a letter and a typed text of an email; while the latter comes in handy when it comes to saving time, the former is quite a personal experience. There is no doubt that book-reading is a habit that should be nurtured from young age, and we still need to place books into our children's hands as a first step towards learning, just as it has always been the case in the olden times. We ought to consider the digital media only as an adjunct, and never as a replacement for real books!

A Dream

When the night is completely dark,
It finds them staying up in the night
Fear has chased away their sleep
So they stay up
While those who feel secure in this life
Quietly sleep on.

-Ibn Al-Mubarak

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The story of the man and a thirsty dog

From the *Gulistan* of Sa'adi رحمته الله

In a desert, a man found a dog that was dying from thirst. Using his hat as a bucket, he fetched water from a well and gave it to the helpless animal. The prophet of the time stated that God had forgiven the man his sins because of his kindly act.

Reflect, if you are a tyrant, and make a profession of benevolence.

He who shows kindness to a dog will not do less towards the good among his fellows.

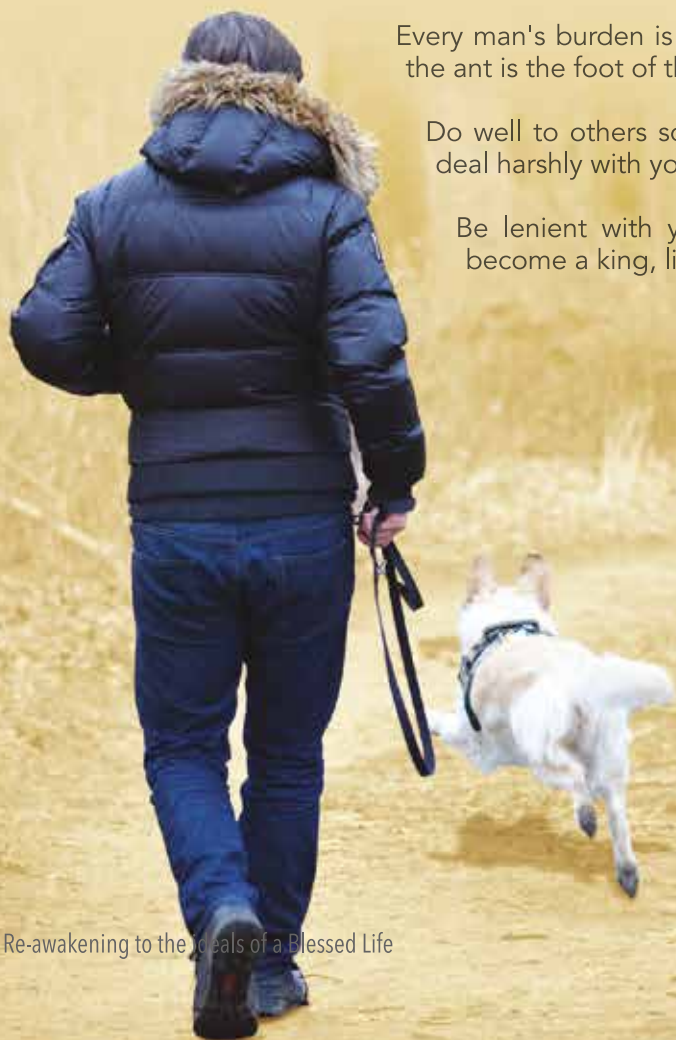
Be generous to the extent of your power. If you have not dug a well in the desert, at least place a lamp in a shrine.

Charity distributed from an ox's skin that is filled with treasure counts for less than a *dinar* given from the wages of toil.

Every man's burden is suited to his strength - heavy to the ant is the foot of the locust.

Do well to others so that on The Day God may not deal harshly with you.

Be lenient with your slave, for he may one day become a king, like a pawn that becomes a queen.





Postcard from
Kashmir

By Agha Shahid Ali

Kashmir shrinks into my mailbox,
my home a neat four by six inches.

I always loved neatness. Now I hold
the half-inch Himalayas in my hand.

This is home. And this the closest
I'll ever be to home. When I return,
the colors won't be so brilliant,
the Jhelum's waters so clean,
so ultramarine. My love
so overexposed.

And my memory will be a little
out of focus, in it
a giant negative, black
and white, still undeveloped.

A Journey of a Thousand Miles

By Dr. Asad Zaman

In a quest to resolve a deep dilemma, I was guided across many uncharted seas, and turbulent waters, finally arriving, after a journey spanning decades, towards an undiscovered continent of unbounded opportunities. I learned that understanding the answer to just one question provides a key to the solution of thousands of questions. This question is the following:

The Central Question: How did the message of Islam lift the early Muslims from ignorance and backwardness, and turn them into world leaders? How did this message create a civilization which dazzled the world for a thousand years with distinctive social, spiritual, philosophical, poetical, political, literary, scientific, and technological achievements?

The deep dilemma which confronts all Muslims is that this message seems to have lost its power.

Muslims are once again trapped in ignorance and backwardness, at the bottom rank of world civilizations. The first revelation to our Prophet Mohammad ﷺ in the cave of Hira describes God as a Teacher "Who taught man what he did not know" (Q96:5). It was this *knowledge* that created a revolution in the lives of Muslims, and changed the course of history. What was this *knowledge*, and does this *knowledge* have the same power today? This is a sharper way of formulating the central question which guides our quest.

Today, anywhere we turn, we are confronted with the power and the glory of the Western civilization. The chair I am sitting on, the keyboard I am typing on, the walls around me, the electricity driving the fan, the internet and computer I am using — everything around me bears testimony to the deep impact of Western technological achievements on our daily lives. Measured in any

dimension — wealth, power, prestige, scholarship, literature, philosophy — the Islamic civilization as a whole is far behind the West. To progress today, it seems essential to acquire the body of knowledge created by the West over the past few centuries. There is nearly universal agreement that, whatever else may be needed, the cure for the ills facing the *Ummah* today requires acquisition of Western knowledge. While the majority of the *Ummah* is illiterate, the vast majority of those who do go to school learn mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, and an entire range of subjects, none of which seem to have any connection with the teachings of Islam.

This creates the deep dilemma — one the one hand, there is clear historical evidence which demonstrates the enormous power of the teachings of the Quran. On the other hand, today these teachings ‘seem’ irrelevant. There is one clear resolution to this problem, universally accepted by **non-Muslim** intellectuals and academics: *the message of the Quran was perfectly suited for the simple times of a thousand years ago. As times changed, the message gradually became obsolete, and lost its relevance. It no longer has anything of importance to say about contemporary problems. More accurately, all relevant portions have already been absorbed and assimilated within the corpus of modern Western knowledge.*

Muslims have implicitly, by their actions, accepted this diagnosis of irrelevance of the Quran. However, the Quran contains explicit declarations that it contains complete and perfect guidance for all times to come. This forces believers into an impossible situation. One the one hand, with our tongues, we must acknowledge that the Quran is complete and perfect, the greatest gift of God to mankind. But with our actions, we prove the opposite — the *Ummah* as a whole spends an enormous amount of time learning the ways of the West in depth and detail, while devoting an insignificant amount of time to the deep, complex, and sophisticated intellectual traditions of Islam.

Spending four months in *Tableegh* in the summer of 1991 strengthened my faith sufficiently to

overcome a lifetime of training in the ‘scientific and rational’ frameworks of thought we learn during our Western education. My heart became convinced that the natural laws of the universe were created by God, who is all powerful, and capable of suspending them, or altering them, as He chooses. He can make the fire cold, and suspend the flow of river waters, split the moon in two, reverse the flow of gravity, and change the direction of motion of the planets. All of the creation: stones, trees, planets, and suns, prostrate before His Glory (that is, they are obedient to His commands). My western education had trained me deeply to believe in empirical evidence (what can be seen) and logical reasoning (the rational faculty) as the sole reliable sources of knowledge. In contrast, the Quran starts by describing the God-conscious as those who believe in the unseen. Furthermore, it is the heart which testifies to the presence of God.

In the terminology of Imam Ghazali, deepening of the faith in the unseen leads to the creation of an “eye” with the ability to see beyond the realm of the intellect and the sensations. But there was a dramatic discord between the world as it appeared to my eyes and intellect, and the world according to my newly opened eyes of faith, and the testimony of my heart and soul. When the two eyes show dramatically different pictures of the world, one becomes dizzy, unable to walk. When faith is weak, and there is conflict between sayings of faith and what our eyes show us and what reason tells us, we accept the testimony of the eyes and the head and reject the testimony of the Book and the heart. However, my experience in *Tableegh* had created for me a different way of living in the world. This experience made it possible for me to understand that one can also reject the apparent external reality, in favour of the hidden and the unseen. This needs further clarification and explanation.

When Musa عليه السلام faced death by drowning in the Nile in front, and death at the swords of the armies of Fir’aun behind them, the apparent external reality showed no avenues of escape. It was the faith of Musa عليه السلام that led him to say that My Lord will show me the way; even though no ways appeared to exist in the realm of physical possibilities. Similarly, when Ibrahim عليه السلام faced

certain death by fire, he rejected the aid of the angels, saying that my Lord is watching over me. When the desert Bedouin brandished a sword over the sleeping Prophet ﷺ, and asked who will save you, the Prophet ﷺ responded "Allah" with complete calm. His faith in the power of the unseen God was greater than his fear of the visible sword. This is the quality of the faith in the unseen, which is required of believers. This is a condition of the heart, which one must strive, and make efforts, to acquire. We must acquire the faith that even though we have seen fire burning a thousand times, and we have never seen God, yet it is through the will of God that fire burns. If God wills to withdraw this power, the fire will become cold. Denying a lifetime of experience with burning fires, in favour of an unseen God, is the requirement of faith: all power belongs to Allah ﷻ alone. Both al-Darr and al-Nafi` are the Attributes of Allah: (Q10:49) *Say: I do not control for myself any harm, nor can I benefit myself in aught except what Allah pleases.* Even though our eyes, logic, and life experience teach us that there are numerous earthly powers which can benefit us, and many others which can cause us harm, this is all an illusion. In reality, all power belongs to Allah ﷻ alone. If all of the creation of Allah combines to try to harm us, or to help us, against the will of Allah ﷻ, they cannot succeed.

Equipped with this understanding, I set out on a journey to make sense of the world with the eyes of faith. To encourage me in this quest, the Quran (3:196) informed me that I should not be deceived by the apparent power and glory of the West. The Quran (10:58) informs me that "In the Bounty of Allah, and in His Mercy (i.e. Islam and the Quran); -therein let them rejoice." That is better than what they amass." That is, even though surface appearances may suggest otherwise to us, the knowledge given to us Muslims is far superior to anything that the unbelievers can gather. Finally, the Quran (2:256) re-assures me that Allah T'aala Himself is the friend of the believers, and He has promised to bring us out of the darkness of ignorance, and into the Light of His knowledge.

So equipped with the certainty that the words of the Quran are the Truth from Allah ﷻ, and override anything that I can see, understand, and experience, I set out on the journey to discover

how. How could it be that, despite appearances to the contrary, the Quran is NOT obsolete? How could it be that the Quran contains complete and sufficient guidance for us, and is fully capable of helping us to solve our modern problems? It is clearly **not sufficient** to *have faith* that this is so. One must be able to demonstrate this. One must be able to show that the Quran provides real solutions to modern problems which are outside the range of the best thinking currently available in the secular domain. Similarly, when the Quran says that the unbelievers will be led from light to darkness, justification of faith in this sign of Allah ﷻ (Q2:256) requires that we must be able to show that what passes for wisdom of the West is just an illusion.

So it was that more than twenty five years ago, I started praying to Allah ﷻ to show me how the knowledge given to us in the Quran was better than all that they can amass. To show me how the apparent sophistication, complexity, and depth of Western knowledge was hollow on the inside. As He has promised, Allah T'aala led me out of the darkness of the ignorance created by my education in the West, and towards the light of the knowledge of Islam. This did not happen in a blinding flash of insight. Rather, it was a natural process of growth in which the wrappings around my eyes created by my training gradually unfolded, and I learned to see the world in a different way from the way I was trained to see in the West.

In order to benefit from the *Nur* of the Quran, we must learn to see the world in the way that was taught to the Companions ﷺ by our Prophet ﷺ. A Western education trains us to see the world using a Western Worldview, which is diametrically opposed to the Islamic Worldview. First we must UNLEARN a lot of things we have been trained to believe in, in order to understand the message of the Quran.

It is these false beliefs that prevent us from seeing the Light of the Quran. Iqbal expressed the matter succinctly as follows:

My eyes were not dazzled by the brilliance of Western knowledge, for they were protected by the Kohl made from the dust of Medina and Najaf.

Tears of Worry

Translated by Bint Akram

In *Ghazwah-e Mu'tah*, the Messenger ﷺ of Allah sent an army of about three-thousand. The famous Companion, Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ was also a part of it. Scholars of the seerah have mentioned that Abdullah bin Rawaaha ؓ cried profusely when the Messenger ﷺ of Allah saw him off. When people inquired him about the reason for his tears, he responded, 'I am not crying for the love of this world or its people; I am crying because I have heard the Prophet ﷺ of Allah recite this verse: *There is none among you who does not have to arrive at it (the Jahannam). This is undertaken by your Lord as an absolute decree, bound to be enforced.* I just do not know what will become of me when I will arrive at it!

Upon hearing this, the companions consoled him and prayed to Allah ﷻ that may Abdullah bin Rawaaha return to them safe and sound. At this, Abdullah ؓ recited some verses of poetry in Arabic and prayed to Allah for martyrdom. Henceforth, he embraced *shahdah* in the same Ghazwah.



The
Bounties *and*
the **Greatness** *of*
the **Quran**

*From Letters to a Daughter
by her Loving Father...*

By Hakeem Shamim Ahmed
Translation by Syeda Samar Mubashir

My beloved daughter, lots of warm wishes!

I think among all the letters I have written so far,

this is the most important letter, because the extent to which the world is perplexed and stirred today, it has never been before. Every country is

facing new challenges and temptations, and to no one knows how to overcome these temptations. No one can be more sympathetic towards children than their own parents. They always warn their offspring about all forms of temptations, evils, and risks. And no one was ever so sympathetic and concerned for the Muslim nation than the Prophet ﷺ. We should sacrifice our lives for our great leader, Prophet ﷺ who not only foretold us about these temptations, but also guided us as to how we can protect ourselves from those. All the prophets warned their nations against the temptations of Dajjal, and the last Prophet ﷺ also sought refuge from this bait and taught us *duas* that would ward them off. In this regard, it has been narrated from Hazrat Abu Darda رضي الله عنه. that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever memorizes the first ten verses of *Surah Al-Kahf* will remain safe from the lure of Dajjal."

Hazrat Abdullah Bin Umar رضي الله عنه. says that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever will recite *Surah Al-Kahf* on Friday will get divine light from his feet to the heights of the sky and this divine light will give light on the Day of Judgment, and from the last Friday to the day, all his sins will be forgiven" (*Tasfeer Ibn Kaseer, Vol.3*).

Read another Hadith as follows on the subject of temptations:

It has been narrated from Hazrat Ali Al-Murtaza رضي الله عنه. that I heard the Prophet ﷺ say, "Beware, a big temptation is about to come." I said, "O Prophet of Allah ﷺ, what is the method of saving ourselves from the harm of this temptation?" He ﷺ said, "The Book of Allah! In this Book, it has stories and their morals of the people who went before and it has details about what is to come after you (meaning the worldly and other worldly results of your actions and deeds that are to come in future have all been explicated in the Quran) and also the commandments and decision regarding the problems that come up between you people. It has commandments (regarding truth and falsehood, right and wrong) which are words of wisdom and not something said in vain. And whoever will leave it out of arrogance and haughtiness (meaning, will turn his face from the

Quran as a result of treading the path of hubris), Allah will break him. And whoever will try to seek guidance outside of the Quran, he will get nothing but misguidance (meaning that he will remain deprived of true guidance). Quran is *Habl-ul-Lah Al Mateen*, meaning the only powerful means of one's relationship with Allah, the complete guidance and the straight path. It is the way of Truth, the only way which saves one from narrow thinking, and tongues cannot change the words of this Book (i.e. as the earlier revelations were modified and misinterpreted and the interpreters misread and changed the meaning of the revelations; no one will be able to change the Words of the Quran, and Allah Will preserve this Book till the end of times.) Learned men will never feel satiated from its learning. The speculation on the Words of Quran and research on the meanings of the Quran will continue forever and ever, and the learned men will never feel that they have attained complete understanding of the Quran. Rather, the more they will speculate on the Quran, the more will be their thirst for knowledge and they will feel that what they know is much less than what they still need to know. Also, the pleasure of reading it will never diminish for its readers (unlike ordinary books which upon several readings become bland and uninteresting; however, Quran is exactly the opposite of it. The more someone reads it and speculates upon it, the more pleasure it gives) and its mysteries (meaning its lucid and subtle) will never cease to unravel" (*Mishkaat Al Masabeeh*).

It is the excellence of the Quran that,

"Indeed we have heard an amazing Recital (Qur'an) that guides to the right way, so we have believed in it" (Surah Al-Jin, Verse no. 1-2).

Dear daughter, the bottom line is that the only solution to the problems and temptations of the modern day world is only through the Holy Quran and nothing else.

Your well wisher, your father!



The Ship and The Lifeboats

By Khalid Baig

Although the pen and the sword are arrayed against it, Islam is spreading. But there are also problems within the Muslim reawakening.

We are living at a time when the daily news about the world, especially about the Muslim world is quite depressing. In Palestine, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq, and many other places Muslim life, property, and honor have been declared fair game by those who wield worldly power. It is not just armies waging this war. A whole gamut of institutions, from sophisticated research centers to slick media, is dedicated to the campaign to sow doubts, to spread confusion, and to denigrate Islam. In hot spot after hot spot around the world, the sword is busy prosecuting a war on Islam.

The pen is busy in both conducting a war on Islam and in trying to foment a war within Islam. While the unprecedented and unexpected momentum gained by the anti-war movement in the middle of February has given some hope that the mad rush to slaughter may be deflected, overall picture remains grim.

And yet these are also the times when people all over the world are coming to Islam in unprecedented numbers. At a time when Muslims have lost control of the sword and the pen, Islam is finding new followers everywhere every day. (It is quite revealing that even as Islam continues to spread despite the sword, some people should continue to insist that it spread by the sword. As Qur'an repeatedly reminds us, the opponents of Islam are a very closed-minded lot).

Within the Muslim world also there are signs of awakening. Muslims are coming back to Islam after having toyed with one false ideology after another. Colonialism had hit them hard. It subjugated them physically, politically, economically, culturally, and mentally. An education system that they embraced as a ticket out of their miseries during that period of oppression compounded their problems by producing self-doubt and self-hate. It produced generations of perfect strangers within the house of Islam, who were then - for this 'achievement' - given leadership roles in all areas of Muslim societies. They hated their languages, their culture, and their religion. It is such people who rule the Muslim world today.

Yet, the scene is changing. More women are choosing hijab and are becoming



more assertive about it as a symbol of their Islamic identity. There is a greater interest in Islamic knowledge. Qur'an lectures are attracting crowds that were not seen in the past. The nature of the questions people ask about Islam is also changing. There are more 'how to' and 'what to' questions than 'why' questions coming from the secular educated groups. Tablighi ijtemas attract millions of attendees. What is more, they come from widely varying segments of society. A parallel growth can be seen in Islamic activism. Politics, media, relief and charity, education, and community service are all attracting new workers and new organizations. There is a new enthusiasm, new energy, and new awareness.

But there are also problems within this awakening. The period of colonialism was a big crash in which our ship was destroyed. In the immediate aftermath, survival was the main goal, and people came with whatever lifeboats they could. Now is the time to pick up the pieces and build the ship again. The problem is we have been living in the lifeboats for so long, we are confusing them with the ship. The schools for secular education were one such lifeboat. They imparted some skills necessary for survival in a changed world, although they impoverished Muslim education and society tremendously in so many ways. But today so many well-meaning people who get excited about spreading education in the Muslim world think of nothing more than establishing more of these same schools. Campaigns for 'democracy', whatever it means, were another such lifeboat, aimed at returning control of Muslim affairs to them thereby seeking liberation. Today, democracy or no democracy, nowhere do Muslims have any control over their affairs, but this lifeboat has become a ship and Khilafah, the Islamic system of governance, remains a strange entity. Islamic organizations were such a lifeboat, aimed at gathering like-minded people so they could focus their resources and energies on some of the important things. Yet each of them is considered to be the ship by its occupants and captains, thereby creating new lines of cleavage within the Ummah.

There is another issue. Most of our new activism thrives on sincerity, concern and drive but not on knowledge or guidance. There are Islamic relief




organizations providing much needed support for the destitute millions. But many do not show a sensitivity to check whether their fund raising methods are Islamic; whether they are distributing the zakat according to Shariah; whether their operation meets the Islamic guidelines. There are organizations focused on media and political activism - certainly very important fields - that sometime say things that the media or political establishment they are talking to would like to hear, even if they are totally wrong and un-Islamic. They seem to be doing as much damage as good through ignorance and carelessness.





The same observation can be made about our efforts at spreading Islamic knowledge. It is embarrassing how many of those giving lectures, issuing 'fatwas' (not necessarily calling them so but issuing legal opinions nonetheless), and conducting Qur'an lessons have no qualifications for the job. Yet they find a ready audience among those who confuse eloquence with scholarship.

Our renewed interest in our religion is great but it is good to remember that Islamic revival will not take place through the blind leading the blind. All Islamic work - whether Dawah, or Jihad, or relief work or political or media activism - requires guidance from the Shariah, which in turn requires knowledge and understanding. Recognizing the need for such guidance from true scholars is the first step in getting it. The questions we need to ask may not have ready-made answers but that does not justify not asking them or accepting answers from unqualified sources. There is a very good example in the work done in the field of Islamic finance during the last decades. It was the collaboration of religious scholars with experts in economics and finance that produced the body of knowledge today that did not exist before. A similar effort is needed in other fields. Muslim journalists working with scholars can help evolve an Islamic protocol for Journalism. Muslim activists working with scholars can help evolve Islamic protocol for media and political activism. Relief organizations can establish Shariah advisory boards to ensure their operations are within the bounds of Shariah.

Bringing our own house in order is the only response we can and must have to the threats, challenges, and fears we face today.





Sa'eed ibn 'Aamir al-Jumehee


Sa'eed bin 'Aamir  was a man who bartered this world for the Hereafter and gave preference to Allah  and His Messenger  to the exclusion of aught besides...



The young Sa'eed bin 'Aamir Al-Jumehee  was but one man in the surging throngs heading towards Tan'eem in the outskirts of Mecca. The leaders of Quraish had called them to witness Khubaib bin 'Adee's  execution. Khubaib  was one of the blessed Companions of the Prophet , who had been captured by treachery.



Full of youthful fervour, he jostled and shoved his way among the teeming crowds, until he was parallel to the leaders of Quraish who were leading the procession, men such as Abu Sufyaan bin Harb, Safwaan bin Umayya and others.





Finally, he saw the prisoner, shackled in chains. The Meccans were dragging them towards death, desiring vengeance for those who had been killed at Badr.



When the seething crowd reached the destination, Sa'eed  towered over the others to watch Khubaib  as he was forced towards a sinister wooden cross. He heard the prisoner speak in a calm voice that rose above the frenzied screams of the women and children. Khubaib  said tranquilly, "Allow me to pray two rakats of prayer before I die." Sa'eed  gazed upon him in awe as he faced the Ka'ba and prayed two rakats of wondrous beauty and serenity.



Then he saw Khubaib  turn to face the leaders and say, "By Allah, I would have certainly prolonged my prayer, but I knew you would have assumed I fear death." They hacked off limb after limb, mocking him all the while, "Don't you wish

that Muhammad  was in your place and you were safe?" Blood gushed forth from his wounds as he vowed with passion, "By Allah, I would not wish to be safe and sound amidst my family and children, while even a single thorn would prick Muhammad .

The din rose even higher as the mob howled, "Kill him, kill him!" It was then that Sa'eed  saw Khubaib  raise his gaze heavenwards and utter, "O Allah, count each and every one of them, and kill them all and spare none." Then he breathed his last and died.

Quraish returned to Mecca and soon forgot the murder of Khubaib  with the passage of time. But Sa'eed was unable to forget him for an instant; all his dreams and moments of wakefulness were haunted by the image of Khubaib  as he stood in prayer with such serenity and presence of heart, undaunted by the fate awaiting him. In his mind, he could still hear the reverberating echo of Khubaib's  voice as he invoked the curse against Quraish. And Sa'eed  would tremble with fear lest a thunderbolt from the heavens smite him at that very moment.

Thus Khubaib's  death taught Sa'eed  an unforgettable truth of which he had never known before. He learnt that true life entails certitude and passionate striving for one's convictions, even if it leads to death. And that true faith can work wondrous, unimaginable miracles. Finally, he realized that a man who could evoke such devotion and adoration in the hearts of his Companions could only be a divinely appointed Messenger.

And so Allah  opened Sa'eed's  heart to Islam, and he stood fearlessly before the people,

and made a ringing declaration that he would renounce idolatry forever and enter the fold of Islam. By doing this, he was disassociating himself from Quraish.

Sa'eed bin 'Aamir رضي الله عنه migrated to Madina and kept the blessed company of Rasul Allah ﷺ and participated in Khyber and subsequent military expeditions.

After the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was united with his Beloved Lord, he remained as an unsheathed sword in the service of the Muslims in the Caliphates of Abu Bakr and 'Umar رضي الله عنه. He was a unique and shining role model for anyone who wished to choose the Hereafter over this fleeting world. And he unwaveringly preferred the pleasure of Allah ﷻ to the meaningless pleasures and desires of the self. Both Abu Bakr and 'Umar رضي الله عنه recognized his sincerity and piety, hence they always valued his counsel and advice.

Once he visited 'Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه in the early phase of his Caliphate and exhorted him, "Umar, I advise you to fear Allah ﷻ regarding people and do not fear people regarding Allah ﷻ. Let not your deeds belie your words for the best speech is that which is corroborated by one's deeds. O 'Umar, be vigilant in the affairs of those Muslims whom Allah ﷻ has entrusted to you, be they near or far. Love for them what you would love for yourself and your household and dislike for them what you would dislike for yourself and your household. Face all dangers in following the Truth and never be intimidated by the censure of any while obeying Allah ﷻ." 'Umar رضي الله عنه said, "Who is capable of doing all this, O Sa'eed?"

Sa'eed رضي الله عنه replied, "A man like you is certainly capable of doing so for you are among those to whom Allah ﷻ has entrusted the affairs of the Ummah of Mohammad ﷺ and none will intervene between you and Allah ﷻ."

Soon afterwards, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab رضي الله عنه invited Sa'eed رضي الله عنه to join his government. "O Sa'eed, we hereby appoint you Governor of the people of Homs."

Sa'eed رضي الله عنه exclaimed, " 'Umar, I beseech you in the name of Allah ﷻ, do not plunge me in tribulation."

'Umar replied wrathfully, "Woe betide you all for hanging this millstone (of leadership) around my neck and then leaving me in the lurch. By Allah, I will not leave you."

Ignoring Sa'eed's رضي الله عنه protests, 'Umar رضي الله عنه appointed him Governor of Homs. He asked Sa'eed رضي الله عنه, "Should I appoint a salary for you?"

His reply was, "What would I do with it, O Ameer-ul-Momineen? The stipend I receive from Bait-ul-Maal already exceeds my needs." Sa'eed رضي الله عنه set forth for Homs.

Soon afterwards, a trustworthy delegation from the people of Homs visited 'Umar رضي الله عنه. 'Umar رضي الله عنه told them, "Write down the names of your needy people so I may fulfil their needs."

They handed over a parchment which bore the names of sundry men including Sa'eed bin 'Aamir رضي الله عنه. Surprised, 'Umar رضي الله عنه asked, "Who is this Sa'eed bin 'Aamir رضي الله عنه?"

They answered, "Our Governor."

'Umar رضي الله عنه repeated, "Is your Governor poor?"

They replied, " Certainly, by Allah, many days pass by before a fire is kindled in his home."

Hearing this, 'Umar رضي الله عنه wept so profusely that his beard was drenched, then he sent for a thousand dinars and placed them in a pouch, saying, "Greet him with salaams from me and tell him that Ameer-ul- Momineen has sent this money to enable him to fulfil his needs."

When the delegation handed over the pouch to Sa'eed رضي الله عنه, he thrust it away, while exclaiming, "To Him we belong and to Him we will return."

His wife came out in alarm and asked,

"What is the matter, Sa'eed? Has Ameer-ul-Momineen passed away?"

He replied, "Something more terrible."

She asked, "Have the Muslims been defeated in battle?"

The answer came, "Something worse than that."

Puzzled, she asked, "What could be worse than

that?"

He said, "This world has pounced upon me, seeking to corrupt my Hereafter and a terrible catastrophe has befallen me in my very home."

Unaware of the money, she replied promptly, "Rid yourself of it."

He asked, "Will you help me in doing so?"

She replied in the affirmative, so he divided the money into several pouches and distributed them among the impoverished Muslims.

Shortly thereafter, 'Umar bin Al-Khattaab رضي الله عنه travelled to Syria to investigate the welfare of the Muslim. He also visited Homs, which was also known as Al-Kuwayfa, as an abbreviation of Kufa, whose people were notorious for their excessive complaints about their rulers.

Upon arrival, he greeted the inhabitants and enquired,

"What is your opinion of your Governor?"

They began a litany of complaints, citing four main objections, each more grave than the last.

'Umar رضي الله عنه said, "So I assembled them all, including Sa'eed رضي الله عنه and prayed that Allah سبحانه would not disappoint my opinion of him for I had great confidence in him.

When we were all assembled together, I asked, "State your objections concerning your Governor."

They replied, "He does not come to us until the sun has considerably ascended."

I asked, "Well, Sa'eed, what do you have to say about this change?"

Sa'eed رضي الله عنه paused momentarily, then answered, "By Allah, I hate to divulge this and only dire necessity could make me say it, Actually, we do not have a servant. Thus, every morning, I arise and knead the dough for my family, then I wait for it to rise. After I have prepared the bread, I perform ablution and go out to the people."

'Umar رضي الله عنه asked, "What other objection do you have?"

They answered, "He replied to none at night."

I said, "What do you have to say about this, Sa'eed?"

He replied, "By Allah, I detest having to say this but the truth is, I have apportioned the daytime for them and kept my nights for Allah Most High."

I said, "What are your other complaints about him?"

They replied, "There is one day of the month on which he does not come out to us at all."

I said, "Why is this, Sa'eed?"

He answered, "I have no servant, O Ameer-ul-Momineen and the only clothes I possess are the ones I am wearing now. So once every month, I wash them and wait for them to dry. Then I go out to the people in the last part of the day."

Finally I asked, "And what is your last complaint?"

They said, "Sudden fits of fainting overcome him from time to time, which render him totally unconscious."

I asked, "What is the reason for this, Sa'eed?"

He answered, "I beheld the killing of Khubaib bin 'Adee رضي الله عنه when I was a pagan and I saw Quraish hack at his body while they said, "Don't you wish that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was in your place?"

"And Khubaib رضي الله عنه replied, 'By Allah, I would not wish to be safe and sound with my family, were even a thorn to prick Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم.' By Allah, whenever I recall that day and how I refrained from helping him, I am convinced that Allah سبحانه will never forgive me and I lose consciousness."

Whereupon 'Umar رضي الله عنه exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah Who did not disillusion me regarding Sa'eed."

Then he sent Sa'eed رضي الله عنه a thousand dinars to help him in the fulfilment of his needs. When his wife saw the money, she exclaimed, "Praise be to Allah Who has freed us from requiring your service. Hire a servant for us."

Sa'eed رضي الله عنه said, "Would you prefer to adopt a better course of action?"

She asked, "What is that?"

He answered, "That we entrust it to One Who will return it to us at a time when we will be in far greater need."

She asked, "How is that possible?"

He replied, "By giving it to Allah ﷻ as a beautiful loan."

She responded, "Certainly and you will be blessed therein."

Before leaving that gathering, he had already divided it in pouches and ordered one of his family members, "Take this to the widow of so and

so, give this to the orphans of so and so, and give this to the needy members of such and such family...."

May Allah ﷻ be pleased with Sa'eed bin 'Aamir Al-Jumehee ؓ for surely he was one of those who gave preference to others, despite his own dire need.

- Excerpted with permission from 'Stories from the Lives of the Sahaba' (Vol 1); Trans. by Umm Husain

Words of Hope

"We suffer the pains of labour to survive in this world and to find our place in the next world. The deeper our need in this world, the higher our potential is in the next world."

"When He gives, He shows you His Kindness; when He deprives, He shows you His power. And in all that, He is making Himself known to you and coming to you with His gentleness."

"Nothing you seek relying on your Lord will ever be difficult and nothing you seek relying on yourself will ever be easy."

"If you do not know the blessings you have when you have them, then Allah will teach you about them by taking them away from you."

"Knowing that Allah knows our condition gives us patience with Allah's decision."

"Knowing that divine goodness' subtleties hidden in every difficult gives us patience in high degrees to endure all divine decrees."

- Imam Ibn Ata'Allah a-Iskandari

The Quran, My Mirror

By Somaya Ramadan Ahmad
Translated by Zainab Wasay

Once a person decides to translate the Aayaat of the Quran into their actions they become alert and heedful while reading the Quran. This is exactly what happened to me. The following ayat struck me and I pondered on it for a while:

"They were guided to purity of speech. They were guided to the path of the Most Praised." (Al-Hajj: 24)

Before I had contemplated over this ayah, I would be very strict with my children. I would reprimand them on the most trivial of mistakes. I simply wouldn't allow any of them to say a word regarding any decision I had made or anything I had done.

But when I read the above ayah, I learnt that good

speech is actually guidance bestowed from Allah ﷻ. Thus, I asked Allah ﷻ to bestow this guidance upon me and I prayed to Him to allow me to speak the best of words. I then began to practise this not only with my children but with everyone I would interact with.

Allah's conversations with His Messengers also caught my attention as they are truly at the peak of love and affection. Every word is a gift of Mercy and Compassion from The Most Beneficent. Allah ﷻ even calls His Messengers by their personal names although He is the Mighty, the Creator and they are but His slaves.

In speaking to the Angels we see Allah ﷻ employing the same consideration for their feelings. When He told the angels "I am placing a successor on earth," they asked "Will You place in it someone who will cause corruption in it and shed blood?" (Al-Baqarah: 30) Allah ﷻ is The Most Wise and All-Powerful while the Angels are merely



His creation and no match for Him, however, He didn't snub them. In fact, He gently presented them with evidence and a solid argument: "Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful." (Al-Baqarah: 31)

When the angels weren't able to, Allah ﷻ said to Adam ﷺ: "Inform them of their names." (Al-Baqarah: 31) Adam ﷺ immediately informed them of the names since Allah ﷻ had taught them to him. Hence, the fact that Allah's decisions are based on truth and complete knowledge was established before the Angels. The Angels, powerful as they are, are merely a creation among Allah's numerous creations; they're nothing in comparison to The One and All-Powerful, but Allah ﷻ still addressed their concerns lovingly.

Even in Allah's conversation with *Shaitan* (Satan) - despite the fact that *Shaitan* spurned His

command - we see that Allah ﷻ fulfilled his desire and gave him respite till the Day of Resurrection: "[Iblis] said: 'O my Lord! Give me then respite till the Day they will be resurrected.' Allah said: 'Then, verily, you are of those reprieved, till the Day of the time appointed.'" (Al-Hijr: 36-38)

So I returned to the aayah of Surah Al-Hajj and began implementing it with utmost enthusiasm. I would only let the best of words flow from my mouth and I gained immense peace of mind. I wouldn't always be stressed because of constantly yelling at my children. In fact, after becoming gentle and loving towards my children I got much closer to them and got to know a lot more about their personalities. Indeed, this aayah has been a wonderful teacher and guide for me.

Do Not Grieve

Don't grieve.
 Anything you lose
 comes around in another form.
 The child weaned
 from mother's milk
 now drinks wine & honey mixed.
 God's joy moves
 from unmarked box
 to unmarked box
 from cell to cell.
 As rainwater down
 into flowerbed,
 as roses up
 from ground.
 Now it looks like
 a plate of rice & fish,
 now a cliff covered
 with vines, now
 a horse being
 saddled. It hides
 within these till
 one day it cracks
 them open.

- Rumi رومی



Recovering from a *Western* Education

By Dr. Asad Zaman

Most people admire and appreciate my educational credentials — BS Math 1974 from MIT, completed in 3 years at the age of 19, and Ph.D. Economics 1978, from Stanford at age 23. They would find it difficult to imagine that it has taken me decades of life experience to recover from the damage that this education has done to me. The damage was done in so many different dimensions that it is hard to even catalog the whole list. However, before explaining this in greater detail, I must answer some questions which immediately arise whenever I make such statements.

Q1: Do I regret having had this education?

To the contrary, I deeply appreciate having had this chance for training at the finest educational institutions that currently exist in the world. This type of education currently shapes minds and thinking of people all over the planet. Without having it, I would be unable to understand their mindsets, ways of thinking and communicate with them. Those who have not experienced this type of brainwashing would be completely ineffective as critics, or at providing remedies for the disease which afflicts the vast majority of human beings.

Q2: Would education in Pakistan have been better?

Not at all. All over the planet, what we have is copies of Western educational models – second rate, third rate, or even worse. Given that we have to drink of this poison anyway, it is best to drink it at the source, where it is pure and strong — as they say, if it does not kill you, it will make you stronger. Third rate copies are very bad because you do not understand what you are being taught, but you get exposed to the ill-effects anyway — you get all the bad but nothing of

the little bit of good elements of the education. Remaining un-educated is also not an option, because the ways of looking at the world created by higher education are absorbed by everyone and reflected in our conversations, social media, novels, and news — there is no escape.

Q3: But what about *madrassas*, or purely religious education — would that not have been better?

Currently, our *madrassas* do not provide the kind of education that was available to Imam Al-Ghazali in Nishapur, where he said that *I have now mastered all the knowledge that currently exists, except for that of the Sufis who claim that their knowledge is based on experience, and cannot be transmitted by books*. The point is that religious knowledge is meaningful when you know how to apply it to the world you live in. In the past, the Islamic tradition of education provided training in all subjects — math, chemistry, physics, technology, medicine, as well as the Quran and Hadeeth. By confining the subjects, students are not equipped to apply the teachings of the Quran and Hadeeth to the study of subjects like mathematics etc. Further, in some instances, they are led to believe that Quran and Hadeeth have not much to say about contemporary real world affairs — for this, one must consult Western textbooks. This has the immediate implication that Islam is not relevant to our daily lives in the modern world — it only provides information about how we can have a better afterlife, and go to Paradise.

Q4: People listen to me only because I have these great educational credentials. If I did not have them, no one would listen to the kind of crazy things that I am saying. So am I not being ungrateful, for saying bad things about the education that made me what I am today, and also gives me the respect and admiration of the people?

As I said earlier, I am very grateful to the West for giving me the opportunity, along with many other foreign students, to take from the best that they have to offer, without any prejudice or discrimination. The intellectual tradition of the West has gone astray in many different ways, due to false philosophies which emerged and became widely accepted by everyone. However, people

in the West, and in the East, do not realize this. These false philosophies poison our minds, and prevent us from leading rich and fulfilling lives, and achieving the potential for excellence which exists within every human being. This message is equally true and valid for Western and Eastern audiences. Learning about the false and poisonous philosophies underlying the western educational process is of essential importance in solving the tremendous problem humanity as a whole currently faces. There is massive inequality — the majority of people in the USA suffer obesity from over-eating, while millions of children die of starvation and malnutrition. The planet is on the verge of an ecological catastrophe. Wars in the past century have taken millions more lives than in any other period of human history. The list goes on and on. Unless we wake up to the defects of modern education, it will not be possible to remedy these problems.

Q5: What I am saying today is a direct product of the education I have received. It is hypocritical, and self-contradictory, to use the education that I have to say that this education itself is bad?

First, let me acknowledge that there were some very good things in the training I received. These were mixed in with very deadly poisons, but nonetheless, I did derive a lot of benefit from these good elements. But the ability to understand that this education was substantially harmful, and that it is possible to design far better ways of training people — these insights came to me after spending four months in *Tableegh*. During this period, I learned many things which were the opposite of the ideas that I had absorbed at MIT and Stanford, and came to realize that in many ways, the truth was exactly the opposite of what I had been taught. So what I am saying today is an Islamic perspective on a Western education, which does not derive from my Western education.

Though I have expressed these ideas and articulated some of the main serious problems with Western education in many different talks but I do hope to write more about some related substantive issues in follow-up pieces in a point by point way, that explains how exactly a Western education is harmful for us; *InshAllah*.

Mustafa ﷺ – Our Honour, Indeed!

By Shaykh Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

*What type of world would it have been
without Makkah and Madinah?*

Friends have invited me to give a talk on Madinah, describing what I saw there, and I have readily agreed. As a Persian poet has said: "To talk of the beloved is no less pleasant than to meet him."

I do not know when I first heard of Makkah and Madinah. Like all Muslim children, I was brought up in an environment in which Hijaz (Arabia) and Makkah and Madinah were household words. I, distinctly, remember people saying Makkah, Madinah together as if these were the same. When they took the name of one of them, they, generally, mentioned that of the other as well. I, thus, came to imagine that Makkah and Madinah were not two different places, but one, and learnt to appreciate the difference only as I grew up. It, then, became clear that these were two different towns separated from each other by over 300 kilometers.

In my childhood, I had heard people talking about Arabia and the two towns with the same fervor and enthusiasm as they did about Paradise and its joys and comforts, and it was from that time that I was seized with the desire to attain Paradise and visit Arabia.

Soon I realized that it was not possible for anyone to see Paradise during his lifetime, but he could, of course, go to Arabia. Parties of Hajjis (pilgrims) were visiting it regularly. So, why could I, also, not make a visit to that 'Paradise of Faith?'

Days rolled by and I grew in age. My old eagerness was revived when I read books on the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and studied the

history of Islam, and the urge to perform the Hajj and make the pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah became so strong that I was never without it.

Then, it so happened that I did reach the place where neither the grass grew nor rivers flowed. Only barren mountains stood on all sides of it like



sentinels. Yet, as famous Pakistani poet Hafeez Jullundri has said:

*Neither grass grows here nor flowers bloom,
Yet even heavens bend themselves low to meet it.*

As I saw the apparently unattractive stretch of land, I felt how devoid of scenery that town was. At the same time, however, I thought what a great favor it had bestowed upon mankind. Without it, the wide world would have been nothing more than a golden cage, and man, a prisoner. This was the town that took man out of the narrow confines of the earth and made him acquainted with limitless possibilities of development, and restored to mankind its glory and freedom. It relieved humanity of the heavy load under which it was groaning and broke the fetters unjust rulers and ignorant lawgivers had put around its feet.

As I reflected over what the world would have been without this town, I thought of comparing it with the bigger towns of the world and seeing what would have been the loss of human race and civilization had the latter not come into existence. One by one, all those towns came to my mind, and I felt that they were flourishing merely for the sake of a handful of men and had made no notable contribution to human progress and happiness. On the contrary, they had been guilty of various sins against man, at various stages of history. For selfish gain, one town had razed the other to the ground, and one country had ravaged the other countries.

Civilization would have been none the poorer without those cities. But without Makkah, humanity would have, certainly, remained unblest with truths, beliefs, ideals and sciences that were its pride today. It was owing to it that the world regained the imperishable wealth of Faith and rediscovered the true knowledge that lay buried under a thick crust of conjecture and speculation. It got back the dignity and nobility that had been trampled under the feet of cruel oppressors. In fact, humanity was reborn at Makkah, and history turned a new leaf.

But what am I saying? What do I mean when I ask: What would the world have been like had there been no Makkah? It had remained asleep, until the 6th Century, with its dry mountains and huge

sand dunes, even with the House of Ka'aba and the Well of Zam-Zam, while humanity was caught in the clutches of death. Surrounded by its mountains and sand dunes, it went on leading a secluded life as if it had nothing to do with the larger human family, and was not a part of, but apart from the world that lay around it.

I should, therefore, not be enquiring what would have been the state of the world without Makkah, but without its illustrious son who turned the scales of history and showed a new path to mankind.

As I reflected on it, a few scenes emerged on the landscape of my mind. It appeared as if the leader of the Quraish was circumambulating around the House of Ka'aba, alone and by himself, and people were jeering at him and passing sarcastic remarks, but he was carrying out the circumambulation with supreme indifference to all hostility and opposition.

On finishing the circumambulation, he wants to go into the House of Ka'aba, but the key-bearer, Osman bin Talha checks him with a firm hand. The leader of the Quraish bears it, too, with exemplary fortitude, and says: "Oh Osman! What will it be like on the day when the key will be in my hand and I will give it to who I please?" "Will all the Quraish be dead on that day?" asks Osman in anger. "No", he replies. "On that day, they will attain real respect and honor."

I, then, see the same leader circumambulating around the House of Ka'aba, on the occasion of the Victory of Makkah, and his Companions who had sacrificed their all for his sake gathering around him like moths. He sends for the keeper of the key, and says to him: "Osman! This is your key. Take it. Today is the day of showing kindness and keeping the promise."

As history tells, the celebrated son of Makkah did not only become the owner of the key with which he could open the door of the House of Ka'aba, but, with him, also, was the key with which he could open the locks of humanity no seer or philosopher had been able to do till then. It was the Qur'an that had been revealed to and the Apostleship that had been bestowed on him.

After performing the Hajj, I flew towards Madinah on the wings of eagerness. The hardships of the way seemed to be a blessing to me, and before my eyes was drawn the soul-stirring image of the earlier traveler whose camel had passed through the same route.

The first thing I did on reaching Madinah was to offer two Rak'ats of salat and express my sincerest gratitude to the Almighty for granting me the good fortune to be there. After it, I betook myself into the 'presence' of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. How boundless was his favor upon me, really! I could never give thanks to him as was his due. I offered Durood and Salaam, and affirmed that he had conveyed the Message of the Lord to the world, proved true to the trust He had placed with him, showed the Straight Path to the Ummah, and strove till the last breath of his life in the way of God.

I, then, made the salutation to both the trusted friends of his whose selfless devotion was without a parallel in history. No one had discharged the duties of companionship or fulfilled the obligations of succession as they did.

From the Prophet's Mosque, I went to Jannat ul-Baq'ee. What a priceless treasure of truth and purity, of love and dedication is buried in this small plot of land! Asleep here are those who had sacrificed the life of this world for the life of futurity. These are the men who willingly abandoned their hearths and homes in the way of faith, and preferred to spend their lives at the feet of the sacred Prophet ﷺ than with friends and relatives. "Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah." [Al-Ahzab 33:23].

Thereafter, I visited Uhud where the most spectacular drama of love and fealty was staged. It was here that the world saw living models of faith and steadfastness; it was here that it learnt the true significance of courage and constancy. On reaching there, it seemed that I heard Hazrat Anas bin Nazr, Radi-Allahu anhu, say: "I feel the sweet smell of Paradise coming from the side of Uhud." Or that on hearing the news of the martyrdom of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Sa'ad bin Mu'ad, Radi-Allahu anhu, was saying: "What is the

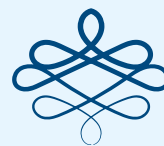
joy of fighting and Jihad when the Apostle of God is no more?" And Anas, Radi-Allahu anhu, interjecting: "What is the joy of living after him?"

It was here, again, that Abu Dujana, Radi-Allahu anhu, had made his back serve as a shield for the Prophet ﷺ arrows pierced his flesh, but he flinched not. Syedna Talha, Radi-Allahu anhu, in the same way, had taken the arrows aimed at the Holy Prophet ﷺ on his hands until the arms were paralyzed. Hazrat Hamza, Radi-Allahu anhu, was killed on this very battlefield and his body was cut to pieces, and Hazrat Mas'ab bin Omair, Radi-Allahu anhu, was martyred in such a state that even a shroud could not be provided for him, and he was buried in a blanket which was so short that if the head was covered, the feet became bare, and if the feet were covered, the head became bare.

Would that Uhud gave something of its treasure to mankind! Would that the world got a small particle of the faith and steadfastness of those glorious times!

Friends say: "You took us to Cairo and acquainted us with its important personalities; you have told us about Damascus and its people, and introduced us with its scholars; you have taken us round the Middle East. Now, tell me something about Hijaz and its distinguished sons." But what am I to do? To me Hijaz stands only for one man about whom I can go on talking forever. It is because of him that Hijaz is Hijaz, and the World of Islam is the World of Islam.

Our honor, indeed, is by Mustafa's name!



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Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دوست بزرگاتہم

Translation by Umm Abdullah

Poetry and Literature were very popular in our house. The compilation of my respected father's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ poems has been published in his, *kashkol*. Our elder brother (Maulana Muhammad Zaki Kaifi, May Allah's mercy be upon him) was a qualified poet, and thus many poets used to visit our house. My two elder sisters were such that they never attended any school or *madrassah*, rather their education was confined to what was learnt at home. Despite this their literary taste was very authentic. Sometimes they would even compose poetry. Being exposed to such environment helped me memorise quite a number of couplets in the early years of childhood. I would recite poems in my lisping manner and my family members would entertain themselves by listening to those in my accented voice. This was the time when Hindu-Muslim conflicts had sparked in various parts of India. When one such conflict took place in Garh Mukteshwar, a poet of that area described it in a heart-rending poem. I remember the following verses of that poem from that time only:

*What happened, under the patronage of the
current government,*

At the shore of Ganges!

Houses burnt; flames flying in the air,

At the shore of the Ganges!

Those whom parents used to kiss a hundred times,

Who they used to love!

The kuffar struck spears on those cheeks!

At the shore of the Ganges!

My sister, who is the youngest of all sisters and elder than all four of my brothers, whom we used to call Chhoti Aapa, and with the Grace of Allah ﷻ she is still alive, had once recited this poem to me in a rhythmic note. I liked it so much that I

would not go to sleep until I had heard it from her. Thus, she used to use this poem as a lullaby for me. And later I addressed her in a poem I had composed about her, the first verse of which was:

*Chhoti Aapa! You are the title of this poem of mine
You are the adornment of this gathering,*

The last verse of this poem alludes to this lullaby:

*You have taught me lessons even in lullabies
Yes, you are my sister, my friend, my mother you are!*

Besides this when the movement for the creation of Pakistan started in the town the poets began composing emotionally charged poems. Whenever I heard one of them from somewhere I would twist them, in I don't know how many ways, and repeat them in my lisping manner. The following poem of Maulana 'Aamir Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ became very well-known:

*Either don't fear sorrow and distress, or don't say
freedom!*

*If you cannot bear the gallows, don't take upon
yourself the blame of freedom*

The following was another of his poems:

*If you want freedom, come to Muslim League
Conquer the world of disbelief by upholding the
flag of brotherhood*

I would repeat such poems in my lisping voice, not understanding their meaning and jumbling their words and my family members would be amused by this.

This was a time when the Independence Movement was at its peak throughout India, and the demand for the establishment of Pakistan from the Muslims was intensifying. Thus, processions used to pass from the small road which was on the eastern side of our house. Most of the processions used to have slogans chanting "Zindabad" (long live) for someone or the other, and whenever I would hear the sound of any procession coming afar I would tell my family members in my lisping tone, "Jindabad aa lahe hain" (Zindabad are coming). Having heard the various slogans many times I had memorised some of them. For example:

"seenay pe goli khaen ge, Pakistan banaen ge

(We'll take the bullet on our chest, we will make Pakistan)!"

All family members would enjoy themselves when I would repeat those slogans in my lisping tongue.

The in-house school of *Phuphi* (aunt) Amatul Hannan in our locality, near the Chowk which I have mentioned before, was the house of an elderly lady of our family. We used to call her *phuphi* as she was a distant cousin of my respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Her house was not just a house but also a school in which was not only attended by the children of our family, rather children from far away would also come to educate themselves. Many a generation had received education in that house. She used to teach how to read the Quran to girls and very small boys; also, through *Bahishti Zewar*, she would teach girls everything they needed to know in life. And this was not restricted to just teaching the ideologies; rather she would make sure the students put it into practice. This was her pastime, and this was what she cherished. It was through her teaching that she taught humanity to hundreds of boys and girls. We had all studied under her, from my eldest sister to myself.

I was not old enough to be a formal student of this school but my parents would informally send me with the Qa'idah Baghdadi, and thus I started Qa'idah Baghdadi in that home-based school where respected Amatul Hannan Sahiba (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon her) would assiduously fulfill her responsibilities of teaching and upbringing.

I remember all these things, and many more besides these which would perhaps not be of interest or benefit to the readers. What was my age at the time, I cannot tell with certainty, but it was definitely less than four-and-a-half years, because we had migrated from Deoband to Pakistan before I reached five. However, I do remember the marriage of my eldest brother, respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ which took place in 1946. I was certainly three years of age at that time. Thus, whatever I remember is definitely from between the ages of three to four-and-a-half years. It's amazing that today I cannot remember some of the things that took place yesterday only, but I remember these events of that small age as if I am seeing them now. It is noted from this that the things which are imprinted on the mind during

one's childhood are very long-lasting and permanent. It is therefore said that we should do good things in front of children, and we should not think: "What effect will these things, which are beyond their understanding, have on these blissfully ignorant children?"

Nevertheless, the regret remains in the heart that at that time Deoband was home to great (Islamic) scholars and the noble friends of Allah ﷺ, but I was so young at that time that I don't remember visiting any of them; but I do remember visiting Thana Bhawan with my parents once, and this was my first travel by train as far as I can remember. At that time I did not have any understanding as to what Thana Bhawan was and what was our purpose of going there. However (after the demise of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ the most beloved teacher of my respected father and his spiritual guide, Hazrat Maulana Sayyad Asghar Husain Sahab رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ (who was famous by the name of Hazrat Miyan Sahab) was alive at that time (most probably my respected father would have had my *tahneek* (1) performed by him). But sadly I don't remember seeing him. However, later I saw him in a dream, and when I described his physical characteristics to my elder siblings, they confirmed that that was indeed how Hazrat looked like.

Similarly, such great scholars as Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Maulana Sayyad Husain Ahmad Sahab Madani and Shaykhul Adab Hazrat Maulana I'izaaz Ali Sahab رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ were present in Deoband but I could not attain the honour of meeting them due to my small age.

During this time, on 27th Ramadan 1366 AH, that was 14 August 1947, on the blessed night of the last Friday (of Ramadan), Pakistan was established. I was eight days short of being four years old. I don't remember that specific day but due to the repeated mention in our house of Pakistan being created I imagined that a big building had been built which contained a big hall and a picture of the moon and a star is painted on its wall.

Hindu-Muslim riots erupted as soon as Pakistan was created and an episode of heart-rending tyrannies of Sikhs on Muslims began in the Eastern Punjab. Since Saharanpur, which is a district of U.P. of which Deoband is a town, was adjacent to Eastern Punjab, thus there was a considerable population of Sikhs in this area. The circle of their cruelty had extended to our district as well, and

they also continued to receive support from the Hindus. Their processions with violent slogans also used to pass by. Since Hindu population inhabited the eastern side of our locality – their locality was known as *Hindu Waara* –, every night we would hear rumours of prospective attacks by the Sikhs or the Hindus. In view of this danger, young men of the area used to take turns to keep guard at various check posts of the neighbourhood. Due to these circumstances, my childhood mind had formed a fierce image of the Sikhs, and the notion had become infused in that four-year-old's mind that Sikhs were dangerous beings. One night, I became upset at some action of my family members, and boycotting them, laid down at a corner of the eastern door of the house. From my perspective, this corner was dangerous for two reasons. Firstly, firewood used to be kept there from which scorpions were sometimes discovered. Secondly, that door of our house which opened on to the road leading to Hindu

Waara, from where Sikh processions used to proceed, was located at this corner. And the greatest threat of attack from them was from this side. But I, from my point of view, was taking on these two great dangers to show my family members that something they had done was so intolerable that it had moved me to register such a serious and potentially fatal protest. Thus, when my brothers and sisters would take turns to try to appease me and take me home, I would have only one answer which in my lisping tongue was: "*chahe chhith aao, chahe bichhu tato, hum tu yahein pale lahein de,*" which meant 'even if Sikhs come or a scorpion bites, I will keep lying at this place'. Finally, when none of my siblings succeeded in making me end this serious protest of mine, my respected father رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ stepped in. He came, took me in his lap, kissed me, and took me home in his arms. And apparently, my demands were complied to thereafter.

Notes:

(1) *Tahneek is the practice of a pious person chewing something sweet (preferably a date) until it is suitable for a newborn to consume. It is thereafter placed in the mouth of the newborn, mixed with a little saliva of the pious person.*



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