

The Intellect

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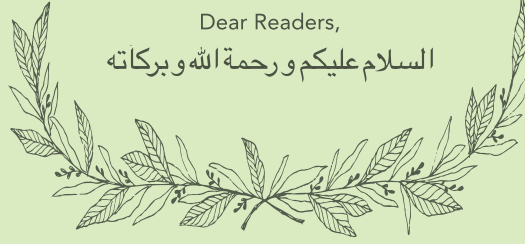


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Editorial



Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

Blessed head bowed, full of humility, brimming with *Taqwa*, supplicating and beseeching his Lord ﷺ – that is how our beloved Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah al-Mukarramah.

The fact that he offered a general amnesty to his most ardent enemies, goes down in the annals of history as an unparalleled fait accompli; I mean, who could imagine that those that banished the Banu Hashim and Banu Al-Muttalib in She'eb Abi Talib in a painful boycott for three years, where the latter were reduced to devouring leaves for satiating their hunger, those who beat, tortured and humiliated Muslims, those who could go to any lengths to completely annihilate Islam, would be comprehensively forgiven when the Muslims entered not as subjects, but as conquerors, the very city they were forced to leave.

Such are the examples followed by those who believe, unabashedly, in following *Sunnah*, even today. Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمته وبركاته pointed out the same in a tweet published on the victory of those who yearn to adhere to the ways of the Prophet ﷺ in Pakistan's neighbourhood: "...their announcement of general amnesty and ensuring peaceful transfer of power reminds us of the conquest of Makkah. It has proved to the world that no power of high-tech forces can stand before the power of trust in Allah ﷻ . A lesson for all."

And what a lesson indeed!

The *Cover Story* featured in *The Intellect* this time brings us closer to understanding the poetry of a man who dreamed of a homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent – a thinker par excellence, whose work is admired equally, if not more, by speakers of Persian, as of Urdu.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal touched a raw nerve of the Muslim society through his deeply touching words, a community of people shackled as much by colonialists and Hindus as by their own inability to recognize and awaken their identity as members of an *Ummah* that had a glorious, unequalled past.

Iqbal reminds and reconstructs times gone-by in an attempt to rekindle hope; he pleads and urges the inert Muslims to wake up from their hibernation to fulfill the task relayed to them by the *Aslaaf*.



The writer of our Cover Story tells us how the work of western thinkers / writers transitioned and transformed through Iqbal's pen into a totally different perspective with infusion of Islamic thought grounded in our love of Allah ﷻ .

When all members of a society remain more focused on demanding their "rights" and absolve themselves of essential "responsibilities", when the cruelty meted out to a particular gender is painted out to be a theological rather than a cultural-cum-societal issue, and when gender-roles are mixed up to an extent which defies and greatly burdens the natural physiological make-up of men and women, is when people must strap up to face unprecedented societal imbalance.

Such warped perspectives lead to the mushrooming of all the varieties of *isms* adorning contemporary nomenclature.

In *Urban Pangs*, the writer touches upon one such thorny *ism*; one that needs to be understood clearly and tackled accordingly.

In our series of stories from the lives of the blessed Companions ﷺ , turn to *A Beautiful Life* to know more about the captivating reversion story of Sayyidina 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh (RA).

The poem in *Poet's Panorama* takes us atop lofty, cold mountains, where men of courage serve in bone-chilling conditions, devoid of the basic comforts of daily life that we take for granted.

Let us salute their perseverance and selflessness!

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid



The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani حفظه الله

Surah Al Maida

Translation with Arabic Text

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ ۖ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسَاكِينَ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ۖ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ أَيْمَانِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ ۚ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

Allah does not hold you accountable for your laghw (ineffectual) oaths, but He does hold you accountable for the oath with which you have bound yourself⁴⁸. Its expiation is to feed ten poor persons at an average of what you feed your family with, or to clothe them, or to free a slave. However, if someone cannot afford, he has to fast for three days. That is expiation for the oaths that you have sworn. Take care of your oaths. That is how Allah makes His signs clear to you, so that you may be grateful. [89]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

O you who believe! Wine, gambling, altars and divining arrows⁴⁹ are filth, made up by Satan. Therefore, refrain from it, so that you may be successful. [90]

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

Satan wishes only to plant enmity and malice between you through wine and gambling, and to prevent you from the remembrance of Allah and from *Salah*. Would you, then, abstain? [91]

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾

Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and be heedful. If you still turn back, be assured that the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey the Message clearly. [92]

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

There is no sin, for those who believe and do good deeds, in what they might have partaken earlier⁵⁰, so if they fear Allah, and believe, and do good deeds; and again fear Allah, and believe, and still again fear Allah and do good deeds⁵¹. Allah loves those who are good in their deeds. [93]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمُ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالُهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

O you who believe, Allah shall certainly test you with some of the game coming in the range of your hands and spears, so that Allah may know those who fear Him, even though He is Unseen⁵². Whoever transgresses the limit after all this, for him there is a painful punishment. [94]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ وَمَن قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُم مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسَاكِينَ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكُمْ صِيَامًا لَّيَذُوقَنَّ وَعَابَ أَمْرِهِ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٩٥﴾

O you who believe, do not kill game when you are in *Ihram* (state of consecration for *hajj* and *Umrah*). If someone from among you kills it deliberately, then compensation (will be required) from cattle equal to what one has killed, according to the judgment of two just men from among you, as an offering due to reach the *Ka'bah* or an expiation, that is, to feed the poor, or its equal in fasts,⁵³ so that he may taste the punishment of what he did. Allah has forgiven what has passed, but whoever does it again, Allah shall subject him to retribution. Allah is Mighty, Lord of Retribution. [95]

أُجِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِ وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرْمًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

Made lawful for you is the game of the sea and eating thereof, as a benefit for you and for travellers. But the game of the land has been made unlawful for you as long as you are in the state of *Ihram*. Fear Allah (the One) towards whom you are to be brought together.[96]

﴿ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ ۚ ذَلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾ [97]

Allah has made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, a source of stability for people,⁵⁴ and also the sacred month and the sacrificial animal and the garlands,⁵⁵ All this is because you may learn that Allah knows what is in the heavens and what is in the earth. Allah is All-Knowing in respect of everything. [97]

﴿ اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [98]

Be sure that Allah is severe in punishment and that Allah is Very- Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [98]

﴿ مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴾ [99]

The duty of Our Messenger is only to convey the Message. Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal. [99]

﴿ قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ [100]

Say, "The evil and the good are not equal, even though the abundance of (what is) evil may attract you. So, fear Allah, O people of understanding, so that you may be successful." [100]

Explanation

- 48) Since one way of making something unlawful is to take an oath, the present verse explains the rules relating to oaths, and their different kinds- 'laghw' is an oath taken without volition, or an oath sworn on a past event by mistake in realizing a fact. For example, if one swears an oath about a person that he has died under the belief that the person has actually died, while the fact is otherwise, this is a laghw (ineffectual) oath in the sense that it neither carries a sin, nor does it require any expiation. Another kind of oath is called ghamus which is a false oath deliberately sworn on a past event. This is a major sin that makes one liable to severe punishment in the Hereafter, but no expiation is prescribed for it. The third kind of oath is called mun'aqidah. It is an oath taken to do or not to do something in future. The words 'the oath with which you have bound yourself' refers to this third kind. Its violation is a grave sin, and it also makes one liable to expiation which is mentioned in this verse.
- 49) 'Altars' mean idols on which the pagans used to offer their sacrifices, and 'divining arrows' mean the arrows by which they used to draw lots. For detail see note on verse 5 above.
- 50) There was a doubt in some minds about the fate of the Muslims who used to drink wine and to

eat out of what they earned from gambling. This verse clarifies that the prohibition has no retrospective effect, and such Muslims would not be held accountable for what they did before the prohibition.

- 51) 'Fearing Allah' is the literal translation of Taqwa (explained in note 52 of Surah 3), a term frequently used by the Holy Qur'an for 'refraining from what is prohibited by Allah'. Repetition of this term here alludes to the fact that there are certain levels of taqwa, and after reaching a particular level, the true believers should always try to attain a higher level.
- 52) Verse 87 has declared that it is Allah only who can make something unlawful. The present verse mentions that Allah has prohibited the hunting of a game animal when one is in the state of Ihram for performing Haj or Umrah. Hunting is also prohibited when one is in the precincts of the Haram around Makkah. even though one is not in the state of Ihram. The verse states that when you are in the state of Ihram or within the precincts of the Haram, some animals of game may come in the range of your arrows or spears, which may tempt you to hunt them. But it is a test from Allah whether you violate the prohibition or refrain from hunting in obedience to Allah's command. See also notes on verses 1 and 2 above.
- 53) These are the rules of expiation for those who have violated the prohibition mentioned above. In summary, if someone has undertaken a prohibited hunt he should first assess the value of the animal killed. For this assessment, two honest experts should be consulted. Once the value is assessed, there are three options for the hunter. He may offer an animal of sacrifice, equal to the assessed value, to be slaughtered in the area of Haram. Secondly, he may use the price so assessed in feeding the poor. (Every poor person should be given 1.75 Kg of wheat or its equivalent.) The third option is to fast for as many days as the number of the poor persons who could be fed according to the formula mentioned above.
- 54) According to some exegetes, this means that the stability of the whole world depends on the Ka'bah in the sense that the world will exist only as long as the Ka'bah exists and is held in reverence and honour. There are some exegetes who explain the verse to mean that Ka'bah was the source of stability for the Arabs. They were respected because of their service to the Ka'bah, and were never attacked even by the militant tribes of the peninsula.
- 55) For an explanation, please see notes on verses 1 and 2 above.



Do not attach yourself to this World!

By Maulana Manzoor Nomani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

(175/35) Sayyidina Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The thing I fear most for my people are *al-hawa* and *tool al-amal*. Al-hawa here implies the following of personal whims with regard to religious obligations and tool al-amal implies great desires for worldly things. As for al-hawa, it turns people away from the truth and tool al-amal makes them forgetful of the hereafter. This world is journeying and moving away while the hereafter is journeying and approaching and both have children (some attach themselves to the world as children are attached to their mother while some have a similar attachment to hereafter. So, if you can avoid being children in the world, do so, for today you are in the abode of action and not that of being taken to account but tomorrow you will be in the abode of the hereafter when action is impossible (there you will be accounted for all the actions done here). (Baihaqi)

Commentary: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has expressed (his) fear of two serious diseases in his people. He has, therefore, warned against them -

al-hawa and tool al-amal. The fact is, it is these two diseases that have really destroyed a large section of the Ummah. Those people who are misled into ideologies suffer from the malady of al-hawa, and those whose deeds are bad do suffer from tool al-amal, and love for the world, and they are neglectful of the Hereafter and making preparations for it. The cure lies in what the Prophet ﷺ has said towards the end of the hadith. They should realize in their minds that this world is ephemeral and perishable while the Hereafter is eternal and real. Once this fact is understood, it is easy to correct ideologies and deeds.

The Danger of Affluence

(176/36) It is related by 'Amr ibn Awf رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "It is not poverty that I fear for you, but what I really fear is that the earth may be spread for you, as it had been spread for those who came before you, so that you may covet it as they coveted, and, then, it may destroy, you as it had destroyed them." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Commentary: Prophet ﷺ had before him the experience of some of the earlier people who, when they attained prosperity, grew more greedy for worldly possessions and neglectful of the real purpose of life, and as a result they became envious of each other, and were, ultimately, destroyed by their own greediness and lust (for the world). The Prophet ﷺ regarded it to be the greatest danger for his own followers too. In the above tradition, he has warned them against it and advised them to be cautious of the deceptive charm and witchery of the material world.



Zakat: Clarifications & Answers

Answered by Dr. Mufti Abdur-Rahman Ibn Yusuf رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

Question

- a) If someone is *talib al ilm* in the shari'ah sciences are they liable to pay zakat if they have savings over the nisaab amount if they intended to use that money on their studying?
- b) If money has been lent to people does this become included in the zakatable amount or is it outside of it?
- c) According to the *fuqahaa* amongst the categories of zakat-eligible is there any order of merit as to prioritizing whom to give to?
- d) How does shari'ah define *al yatiim* (the orphan) – is it one whose parents have died or can it be just one?

Answer:

Assalamu alaykum

In the name of Allah, the inspirer of truth.

1. If the student's saving is over a nisab and no part of it is immediately payable for fees, debts or other expenses, then zakat is necessary on such an amount.
2. Zakat is also necessary on the amount lent to another person if it reaches a nisab along with any other savings a person may have. However, he has the

option of paying year by year when his zakat for everything else is due or to pay when he is repaid for all the previous years. However, if the loan is denied and he has no way of having it repaid to him, then zakat will not be necessary every year. If it is ever received then zakat will be necessary on it for the following year along with any other saving.

3. The most virtuous category are the poor from among one's family and relatives followed by whoever is most in need locally from among the poor students of Din, people in the path of Allah (who benefit the din), and then generally those of the poor who are more in need than the others. It is also mentioned that giving it to a poor knowledgeable person is better than giving it to an ignorant poor person. (*Radd al-Muhtar* 2:68-69)
4. Allama Haskafi states in the *al-Durr al-Mukhtar*, "A yatim is the one whose father has passed away before puberty" (whether his mother is alive or not). [5:440]

And Allah ﷻ knows best.



Stay Hopeful!

Translation by Zawja Asim
Translation series of Maulana Abdul Sattar ؒ spiritual discourses

Leaving Sin Completely & Seeking True Repentance

When a person develops the realisation of the impending doom the sins bring about – ‘a lie can destroy my life; these obscene pictures will cause damage to my life; the unlawful morsel in my home are the ashes of fire; the backbiting will destroy the good deeds performed over months and years; propagating news without researching is unlawful and it will only spoil my life, etc.’ – that is the beginning of true repentance!

This is the first step of *islah*; you displaying courage for the sake of Allah ﷻ, and Shaytan making your way difficult by deluding you into thinking as to how will you lead such a life? *How to veil yourself? Would people still send in marriage proposals for my daughters? How can I change my lifestyle altogether? How to get rid of everything that is impermissible?* The Shaytan would definitely bring forth these excuses but remember:

Translation: Get up, and get going/ and see how God comes to rescue!

Allah ﷻ is Allah, after all – the Almighty! He will make you unconcerned with the world; He will open ways for you, provided you fulfill the first obligation of repenting sincerely.

When Does Allah’s Help arrive?

Once Hazrat Muawiya ؒ wrote to Hazrat Ayesha ؓ: “O Mother, kindly give me some

advice!” so Hazrat Ayesha ؓ wrote a few advices and offered to Hazrat Muawiya ؒ. She said:

‘Whoever tolerates people’s anger and treads on Allah’s path, Allah becomes sufficient for him. And whoever (is concerned with only) pleasing people, Allah hands his affairs to people.’

Whoever wishes to seek Allah’s favour, Allah ﷻ Himself starts to take care of his affairs.

“Judgment is His alone.” (Surah Al- Anaam: 62)

“Allah decides—none can reverse His decision. And He is swift in reckoning.” (Surah Ra’ad: 41)

If He wishes to provide goodness then there is none who can avert it. If He wishes to open the door who can close it? He is *Al-Qahaar*, the mighty one.

“To Allah alone belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.” (Surah Al imran: 189)

Only Allah ﷻ has the solutions for all the problems of this universe.

“And if He intends good for you, none can withhold His bounty.” (Surah yunus 107)

Who can devoid a person whom He wishes to give? Who can spoil something if He wishes to beautify it? Who can disrespect the one whom He wishes to raise in ranks? Who can fail the one whom He wishes to provide success to? Who can

vex the one whom He wishes to provide contentment and security to? And who can help the one whom He doesn't wish to help?

"If Allah brings some harm to you, there is none to remove it except He." (Surah Yunus 107)

"And the one whom Allah puts to disgrace, there is none to give him respect." (Surah Al-Hajj 18)

If the purpose is to seek Allah's ﷻ pleasure then one must display courage as well. Be assured that Allah ﷻ will take the responsibility of your affairs upon Himself. One who remains concerned with the idea of what the community and family thinks of him, and fears their criticism is in reality seeking the pleasure of people. On the contrary, the one he is angering is Allah ﷻ. Hence, Allah ﷻ would hand over such a person to those whose pleasure he seeks. Now it is for us to think if people around us can actually straighten our affairs! Who can come to our rescue if Allah ﷻ decides to send His wrath upon us?

Beware Devil's Whispers!

Ask for true repentance while being ashamed of your sins and remaining courageous, for Shaytan will surely try his best to divert you from the straight path. He would plant doubts in your heart as to how would it be even possible to lead a life of tawbah! Shaking these thoughts off is your task. Allah ﷻ is by your side. Once you ask for repentance, also make du'a to Allah ﷻ: *O Allah, we have done whatever we could. We ask for your forgiveness; we are dependant upon Your help. We will not divide our religion between Allah I and Shaytan. Our lives are wholly for You. "Say, "Surely my prayer, my worship, my life, and my death are all for Allah—Lord of all worlds." (Surah Al-An'aam: 162)*

Mere Ibadah is not Enough

Offering salah is a very mighty *ibadat*, sacrificing animals is also a very significant form of worship, but Allah ﷻ needs that our life and death be for His sake. We need not entertain any insecurities with respect to practicing deen. We should not

be deterred by thought as to how our life would be if we leave a certain sin. A sin spreads like poison in the human soul, and when it does, all worship loses its essence.

Tawbah from the Sin of Hurting

Hazrat Thanvi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه used to say:

"If a person comes to me and says my daily adhkaar and tasbeehaat don't get completed I get hurt; (However,) if someone says that a person got hurt because of me - I feel hatred towards him."

This act of hurting others has become a part of our society. Hazrat Thanvi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه also wrote a book on the topic of etiquettes of social norms and this 'hurt' does not refer to inflicting any physical harm upon someone. Instead, 'hurting' here refers to displeasing others through your tongue; the talk that cut through people's hearts; something that puts a dent in their dignity. Indeed, we must seek repentance from all such sins.

Don't Delay Tawbah

The first step of islah is tawbah and one must ask for true repentance while trusting in Allah ﷻ. If you fall, then do tawbah again, do not delay. Allah does not get tired of forgiving us! Hence, tawbah must not be delayed.

Hazrat Thanvi رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْه used to say that a person who does not delay seeking repentance, and does tawbah before going to bed daily, Allah ﷻ blesses him with one out of two blessings - either his life is purified of the filth of sins, or if he dies he only gets one sin on himself, and Allah ﷻ will forgive him out of His mercy.

What bargain could be cheaper than this? The way towards Allah ﷻ cannot be easier. Do tawbah with humility daily. Tread toward Allah ﷻ and have your hopes grounded in Allah's ﷻ mercy. May Allah ﷻ help us seek true repentance. Aameen.

- Concluded

Why Iqbal?

By Naeema Akram

Once, during a literature class, I asked my teacher as to how we could come up with an intellectual critique of all that we were learning – exposing yourself to Western literature after all meant exposing yourself to the Western civilisation. I remember clearly that this question struck me when I was studying a prescribed text in our syllabus by D.H. Lawrence. I was moved by the expression of the writer, yet at the same time remained disturbed by his philosophy of life. The teacher looked at me for a while and then said that we must first deeply study our own tradition before we plunged ourselves into the act of deconstructing an entire system of thought. Then she very meaningfully paused for another moment, looked up, smiled and uttered just two words, “read Iqbal!” And this simple phrase, at least for me, worked wonders.

It was not very long after the beginning of the twentieth century that many young Muslims from the sub-continent took the bold step of intellectually probing into the Western thought. Many people now sought admission in Western academic institutions and undertook the task of studying, analysing and criticising – wherever necessary – the civilisation of their colonial masters, in order to demystify the myth that claimed the Western civilisation to be superior in every aspect of life as compared to the other civilisations of the world. Dr Muhammad Iqbal was one such Muslim visionary who masterfully deconstructed the idea of Western superiority for his nation, purely on intellectual grounds. He

deeply studied and observed the Western philosophy and civilisation before coming up with an undaunted criticism of the West and his personal ideas for the revival of Islam and Muslims.

His basic criticism of the West was based on how it developed materially at the expense of spirituality. How the concept of God kept changing throughout and was sometimes altogether denied by the Western thinkers. How fragmentary the life had become, devoid of any idea of wholeness in it. How the advent of machines took its toll on the intangible aspects of life that account for man’s inner peace of soul. Although many Western critics themselves have ruthlessly criticised their own ways of life but among the Muslims, Iqbal still remains to be one of the most distinguished figures who performed this task:

*Yeh 'aish-e-farawaan yeh hakoomat yeh tijaarat
Dil seena-e-bay-noor main mehroom-e-tassallee
Taareek hai afrang masheenon ke dhuain se
Yeh waadi-e-aiman nahi shayaan-e-tajjalli
(Zarb-e-Kaleem)*

Unbridled luxury, State pomp and pride,
Rich commerce; but to dwell inside
That lampless breasts all tranquil thoughts refuse.
Dark is the white man’s country with the grime

Of engines, no valley that might see
Splendour descending on a burning tree...

(V.G. Kiernan)

At another instance he criticises those who are deeply influenced by the atheistic and agnostic philosophies of the West by saying:

*Teri nigaah main thaabit nahi Khuda ka wajood
Meri nigaah main thaabit nahi wajood tera
Wajood kya hai? Faqat jauhar-e-khudi ki namood
Kar apni fikar keh jauhar hai bay-namood tera
(Afrang-zada, Zarb-e-Kaleem)*

To your mind God's existence seems unproved:
Your own existence seems unproved to mine.
He whose Self shines like a gem, alone exists;
Take heed to it! I do not see yours shine.

(V.G. Kiernan, Dazzled by Europe)

Yet at another place he outrightly criticises the Eastern nations blindly following the West and warns them:

*Nazar aatay nahi bay-purdah haqaa'eq unn ko
Aankh jinki hui mehkoomi-o-taqleed se kor
Zinda kar sakti hai Iran-o-Arab ko kyunkar
Yeh farangi madniyyat jo khud hai lub-e-gor
(Aqwaam-e-mashriq, Zarb-e-Kaleem)*

Reality shows blurred to eyes whose vision
Servility and parrot-ways abridge.
Can Persia or Arabia suck new life
From Europe's culture, itself at the grave's edge?

(V.G. Kiernan, Eastern Nations)

So far, so good. But how does Iqbal criticise the contemporary Muslims? This question is equally significant as his criticism of the West. Iqbal, in his poetry, greatly laments the Muslims' dissociation

with their glorious past. Before I quote the Iqbalian view on the subject, let me first quote – in order to substantiate my point – a Western thinker – only one out of numerous examples –, Tim Wallace Murphy, who writes about the development of our magniloquent past in his publication, *What Islam did for Us*: "Islam rapidly acquired a degree of sophistication and learning that was not to be equalled, much less excelled, by the Christian West for nearly nine centuries. Under the Umayyads, Arab armies continued to extend the territorial limits of the caliphate, and in 711, led by General Tariq, the Muslims of North Africa crossed the Straits of Gibraltar while others crossed the Indus at about the same time, thus taking Islam in both Spain and India." He further cites that when Baghdad became the centre of all development, "It was the Muslims, and not the Christians, who rekindled the flames of classical Greek science." And also that it was "Under the Umayyad Caliphs, Moorish Spain gained international renown for poetry, literature and learning of both Cordova and Granada. The well-attended and richly endowed colleges in Andalusia were later to provide a model and a template for those founded in Oxford and Cambridge in England. In an era when the vast majority of European Christian nobles, kings and emperors were barely literate, the Islamic Umayyad court at Cordova was the most splendid in Europe; one that provided a haven and an oasis of peace wherein philosophers, poets, mathematicians and astronomers could pursue their studies."

It was perhaps this glory which made Iqbal cry, "aaj kyun seenay hamaray sharrar-aabaad nahi?" (Why do now our hearts lack burning flames?). After all, he says, we were the ones who proved to be the beacons of light in the deserts and seas alike.

*Dasht tu dasht hain, darya bhi na chhoray hum ne
Behr-e-zulmaat main दौरا diye ghoray hum ne*
(Let alone deserts, we also vanquished the seas
Even in the seas of darkness, we fearlessly let run

our steeds)

Iqbal surely reprimands us for the loss of our own past grandeur and splendour and praises immensely our forbearers in his famous *Jawab-e-shikwa* saying:

*Thay tu aaba wo tumharay hee magar tum kya ho
Haath par haath dharay muntazir-e-fardaa ho*

(Your ascendants indeed, they were, but you;

Idly waiting in vain for the future to be yours!)

Apart from this, Iqbal also brought forth to light the ethnic divide amongst the Muslims as being one of the major causes of their state of despair in the contemporary world. The need for unity is what he stresses upon most in his verses. In *Jawab-e-Shikwa* only, he says at one instance:

Yuun tu Sayyed bhi ho, Mirza bhi ho, Afghan bhi ho

Tum sabhi kuch ho, bataao tu Musalmaan bhi ho

(Divided you are in being a Sayyed, Mirza and Afghan

You are everything but a true Muslim!)

The most exemplary thing about Iqbal was that despite being hopeless about the West and deeply concerned about the despairing condition of Muslims, he was full of hope, optimism and provided solutions to the grave problems he highlighted in his verse. He still had faith that were it for the proper channelling of our energies, the glories of the past could always be reclaimed.

Yaqeen afraad ka sarmaya-e-ta'ameer-e-millat hai

Yehi quwwat hai jo surat-gar-e-taqdeer-e-millat hai

Faith of the individuals; an asset in building of a nation,

The only force that can shape the nation's destiny!

Jahan-baani se hai dushwaar-tar kaar-e-jahan-beeni

Jigar khoon ho tau chashm-e-dil se hoti hai nazar paida

Reflecting upon the world is far difficult than constructing it Heart finds true insight only when it bleeds!

Daleel-e-subh-e-roshan hai sitaaron ki tunak-taabi

Ufaq se aaftaab ubhra, gaya daur-e-giraan-khawabi

Fading of stars herald the advent of morn

Sun came up on the horizon, reign of slumber gone

Today, along with great Muslim names like Rumi, Hafez, Sa'adi and Ghazzali, Iqbal is also being rigorously researched upon in Western Universities. And we, for whom he primarily wrote, can be accused of being criminally negligent towards the great poet. I personally believe that Muslim individuals should familiarise themselves with Iqbal. It is high-time that we realise what we have lost in ignoring not merely a poet but an intellectual of great stature who was – during the freedom movement – and still can prove to be a beacon of light, hope and purpose for us. Think and think hard...

Apnay sh'er se

Hai gila mujh ko teri lazzat-e-paidaa'ee ka

Tu hua faash tu hain abb meray asraar bhi faash

Sholay se toot ke misl-e-shaar aawaara na reh

Kar kissi seena-e-pur-soz main khilwat ki talaash!

-Iqbal

To my Poem

I must complain of your self-flaunting airs-

My secrets, when you go unveiled, lie bare.

Instead of floating like a truant spark,

Seek out the fastness of some glowing heart!

-V.G. Kiernan

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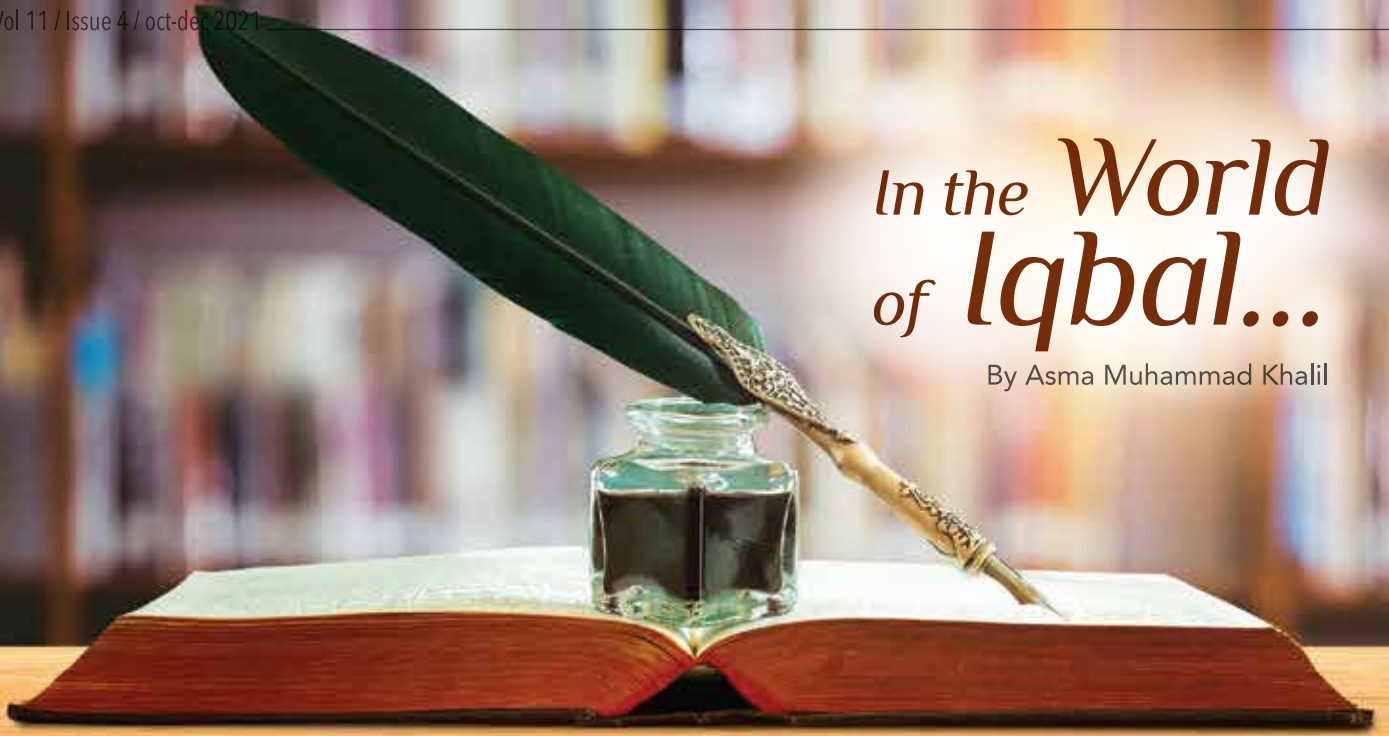


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In the World of Iqbal...

By Asma Muhammad Khalil



When it comes to Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry, I am always amazed by the vastness of his knowledge, his understanding and the creativity with which he presented his work. Most of his poetry, though, is in Persian, leaving us, the Urdu readers, with only a fraction of his work to enjoy, which in itself is magnanimous enough to leave us in awe of the grandeur of his art.

Iqbal was well-versed in both Eastern and Western traditions, and this shines through all of his work. His characters show this amalgamation time and again yet the underlying meanings of his works can only be drawn from the Eastern tradition in which he was trained during his upbringing. Iqbal's poetry is filled with references to Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson, Nietzsche, Einstein etc, and the list goes on. This not only shows how far had he indulged in the Western galore but how he was able to keep his roots grounded in the Eastern tradition. The poems like, *Rukhsat aye bazm-e-jahan*, *eik pahar aur gulehri*, *ishq aur maut*, *roh-e-arzi adam ka isteqlal kerti hai*, *piyam-e-subh*, etc., and his depiction of *Iblis*, has been influenced by the Western Poetic lore but the beauty of Iqbal's depiction is that though he acknowledges all these references as his sources of their

inspiration, yet he successfully transcends these while adapting them using his own tradition.

All of us have read *eik pahar aur gulehri* when we were young in our Urdu books never realizing that Iqbal translated it into Urdu from English. Iqbal himself uses the word '*makhuz*' (adapted) for it, not saying that it is a translation but the interpretation of the poem that he read in English. The original poem by Emerson starts with the narrator, where he is narrating the story of a dialogue between a mountain and a squirrel and the mountain calls the squirrel a 'little prig'. And this little phrase describes how the mountain demeans the squirrel because of its size, having a superiority complex about its own self. And when we read the Iqbal's version of the same poem, there is no narrator, the poem starts from the mountain demeaning the squirrel throughout the whole stanza, asking it to be ashamed of itself for being so small and inciting the squirrel. Iqbal uses irony and sarcasm and uses a whole stanza to actually show contempt of the mountain towards the squirrel.

Koi pahar ye kehta tha gulehri se

Tujhe ho sharam tu pani mein ja ke doob mare

Zara si cheez is per ghuroor kia kehna
 Ye aql, ye samajhh, ye sha'oor kia kehna!
 Khuda ki shaan hai nachee zcheez ban bethein
 Jo besha'oor hoon yun baatameez ban bethein
 Teri bisaat hai kia meri shaan k agay
 Zameen hai past meri aan baan ke agay
 Jo baat mujh mein hai tujh ko wo hai naseeb
 kahan
 Bhala pahar kahan, janwar ghareeb kahan

Though in the stanza it seems that the tone of the mountain is ironical but we actually see that even while doing that Iqbal is actually saying that it is the 'qudrat' of Allah ﷻ that he has given even the minutest of things 'aql', 'sha'oor', and samajh. And this is the leitmotif of the poem that everything has its proper place, has been made by Allah ﷻ and has been assigned particular duties. Allah ﷻ has given them talents to actually perform those duties. For example, He has given the squirrel the ability to climb up a tree and a mountain is there to perform the role of a nail, to keep the earth from moving. Now when we compare Emerson's work with that of Iqbal, we find that Emerson uses the term 'Soul' for the maker of everything;

*There is no great and no small
 To the Soul that maketh all;
 And where it cometh, all things are;
 And it cometh everywhere.*

But when it comes to Iqbal's work, he does not talk about the 'Soul' and this makes all the difference. Iqbal completely changes the idea by saying how remarkable the 'qudrat' is and how differently abled 'Khuda' has made everything; from here automatically the whole meaning of the poem shifts from the idea of the Romantics of that time which had let go of God to the affirmation of Allah ﷻ in the translated version of Iqbal.

Iqbal plays around similarly with other poems that he transported from the English language. The

concept of love and death that he portrays in his poem, 'Ishq aur Maut', again does not carry the same meanings that the original poem of "Love and Death" by Tennyson.

Love:

*"So in the light of great eternity
 Life eminent creates the shade of death.
 The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
 But I shall reign for ever over all."*

In Tennyson's poem, *Love and Death*, he says love reigns supreme and has downplayed

death in the whole poem. He says that even when people die, love remains there. The

kind of love Tennyson talks about is the love between two people and this love does not

wither away like rose in hard times and is not time bound but again there is no closure for it.

The concept of love changes drastically when it is translated into 'ishq'. When we talk about 'ishq', we are not talking about the love that is merely between two people, as we see all over in Iqbal's works of poetry, the word *ishq* is used for the love of Allah or the love of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, and this completely changes the dynamics of our understanding of the world and worldview.

Ishq:

*"Magar eik hasti hai dunya mein aisi
 Sharar ban k rehti hai insaan k dil mein
 Wo hai noor-e-matlaq ki aankhon ka taara
 Tapakti hai aankhon se ban ban k aansoo
 Wo ansoo k ho jinki talkhi gawara
 Suni Ishq ne gufutugu jab qaza ki
 Hansi uske lab per hui aashkara
 Giri us tabassum ki bijli ajal per
 Andheray ka ho nor mein kia guzara
 Baqa ko jo dekha fana ho gayi wo
 Qaza thi shikaar-e-qaza ho gayi wo
 Iqbal hints at more than a simple "love" that*

Tennyson talks about, and follows his own tradition when he says that Ishq has the potential to go beyond that human level. Though even for Iqbal, 'ishq' reigns supreme as compared to death, because even death is liable to vanish, but since for Iqbal the eternal life begins after death and death is merely a phase and nothing more, the meeting with Lord is the highest form of love that can ever exist. And we see these hints present everywhere in other poems as well for example, in the poem 'Masjid-e-Qurtaba', the idea that Ishq is

everything from 'dam-e-Jibreel' to 'dil-e-Mustafa' and it is the 'noor' or the light of this life;

Ishq dam-e-Jibreel, Ishq dil-e-Mustafa

Ishq Khuda ka rasool, Ishq Khuda ka kalaam

In his poem "Bilal", he expresses the idea of Ishq in the most unique way when he

illustrates it with the example of the companion of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Hazrat Bilal RAU

that his Azaan (call for prayers) was the manifestation of his love for Allah and His last Prophet ﷺ.

Azaan azal se tere ishq ka tarana bani

Namaz uske nazaray ka eik bahana bani

If we look at Tennyson's description of death and compare it with that of Iqbal, we see that for Tennyson, death is a phase or a mere 'shadow of life'. Iqbal may be hinting at death being a transient phase but that phase, in itself, is subjected to death.

Death:

... 'This hour is thine:

Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree

Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,

So in the light of great eternity

Life eminent creates the shade of death.

The shadow passeth when the tree

-Tennyson

Maut:

... Ajal hoon, mera kaam hai aashkara

Urati hoon mein rakht-e-hasti k purzay

Bujhati hoon zindagi ka sharara

Meri aankh mein jaadoe-neesti hai

Payam-e-fana hai isi ka ishara;

- Allama Iqbal.

The first excerpt is taken from Tennyson's poem 'Love and Death' where death has been described as something which removes one from this world but it doesn't take you beyond that. It seems as if they want to have faith in the eternal life but they are clueless if it is there or not, so they leave it as is. Similar examples of such representation of death are rife throughout the English Poetry. Shakespeare, Keats and John Donne, for example, believe that death is but a phase but there seem to be a confusion when they say that, for

example in Hamlet, he says;

...To die, to sleep;

*To sleep perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
(Act 3, Scene 1, line 9-11)*

And as John Keats says in his poem 'On Death', again refers to death as sleep;

*Can Death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?*

*The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die*

John Donne also considered death to a mere phase of sleeping, and nothing more.

One short sleep past, we wake eternally,

And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

Throughout the world of English poetry, we come

across the same idea that even death is as transient as life. At places for example in Donne's poem, you feel strongly as if death is just a phase, a phase that pulls you inside the world and has put you to sleep, transition between the world and the sleep is actually death.

But when we come to the part where Iqbal has translated the poem from Tennyson's Love and Death, we find that Iqbal too talks about the transience of life, the reality of death, the afterlife and life itself. In the oeuvre of Iqbal, death is shown as another beginning, a new morning - not a sunset but a new sun rising, as he says in *Humayun*;

Maut ko samjhein hein ghafil ikhtitam-e-zindagi

Hai ye sham-e-zindagi, subh-e-dawam-e-zindagi

In Iqbal's work *Ishq* and *Maut* are somehow related and interconnected as death becomes the only means through which one can meet their Lord, Allah ﷻ, whereas, we fail to find that interconnectivity in Tennyson. Considering both the terms, love and death and their translated versions *Ishq* and *Maut*,

we cannot actually say that love is equivalent to *Ishq* or death is equivalent to *Maut*, as both conform to their own literary traditions.

These are just two small fragments of Iqbal's work, the poems that he transcreated from English to Urdu, created them anew pertaining to his own traditional values which govern the meanings of his words. We can say that the poems are a new creative work with new meanings as they do not convey the same meanings that the original texts aim at conveying.

He that does not command himself
Becomes a receiver of commands from others.
So long as thou hold'st the staff of
'There is no God but He,'
Thou wilt break every spell of fear;
One to whom God is as the soul in his body
His neck is not bowed before vanity.
Fear finds no way into his bosom,
His heart is afraid of none but Allah.
Whoso dwells in the Muslim faith
Is free from the bonds of wife and children,
He withdraws his gaze from all except God
And lays his knife to the throat of his son,
Though he is like a host in onset.
Life is cheaper in his eyes than wind
The profession of faith is the shell, but prayer is the pearl
- Iqbal

The Land of the Midnight Sun

A journey to the far North of the world; Norway, Sweden, Finland.

(Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ))

Translation: Zawjah Zia

The clock had just ticked midnight and yet the sun was shining at the horizon and illuminating the atmosphere. We were at the northern end of the world and despite the sun in sight, we had just called the *Isha Adhaan* and said our prayers in congregation.

This extraordinary experience of life was witnessed during my trip to Norway, in fact, this trip held more than one extraordinary experience for us and proved to be highly informative too. I couldn't help sharing it with my readers.

The Scandinavian Peninsula lies to the extreme north of Europe. Eleven hundred and fifty miles long, this geographical wonder used to be known as just *Scandia* in ancient world history. The countries of Norway and Sweden together share most of this 289,500 sq. ft. land. Attributing to this peninsula only, the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark are collectively called Scandinavia. Although some people consider Finland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands to be included in

Scandinavia but the authentic geographical point of view shows otherwise. Yes, recently a term; *Nordic Countries* has been in use to collectively refer to the countries like Finland, Iceland, etc. along with the Scandinavian countries.

From among all these countries, Norway reaches the farthest north. This amazing land is rich in natural scenic beauty; mountains, rivers, waterfalls and lakes. As per the encyclopedia Britannica, there is a total of hundred and sixty thousand big and small lakes in Norway. It is also loaded with natural resources like oil, gas and wood. Despite all of that, it is an extremely scarcely populated land. The population density is 13 individuals per kilometer with a total population of five million only (*at the time of this visit*). There is absolutely no wonder then that the state provides free education and medical facilities, family, old-age and disability allowances to its people. As per the standard of living, Norway enjoys the top position at the United Nation's world listing.

It was a keen invitation from



the Norwegian Muslims that basically prompted this trip of mine in the year 2000. They had asked me to deliver corrective sermons and hold interactive sessions with them so I could be informed about several issues being faced by the Muslims there and offer viable solutions for them. The activities and gatherings regarding this agenda served several important issues like a meeting with local Muslim and non-Muslim doctors where they were advised about fulfilling the religious rights and needs of their Muslim patients during their time at the hospital. This gathering offered a very encouraging and positive feedback.

Another important gathering was with a group of moderate Christian priests regarding Christianity being a compulsory subject in Norwegian schools, even for Muslim children attending them. This group quite rationally accepted that it was unfair to force the Muslim children to learn Christianity as a part of educational syllabus. In the same regard I met the administration of a soon-to-be-opened Islamic school in Oslo. They sought advice regarding curriculum development in the Islamic educational system. I offered them all possible help I could from my side and encouragement too.

Apart from these gatherings, despite such busy schedules, my hosts' polite courtesy offered me relaxing retreats in Oslo and its outskirts. There's an appreciable serenity and freshness about the general atmosphere in Norway and I felt visibly energized and rejuvenated during this trip.

Therefore, when in 2001, my doctors firmly advised me to take a break from my schedule and spend a fortnight or so at somewhere calm and refreshing, instantly Norway came to my mind. Incidentally, I had to attend a couple of seminars in London in the months of July and August and fortunately I found a two-week gap in between those which I decided to spend in Norway and the neighboring countries.

Arriving in Norway again was indeed refreshing. I was accompanied by my family this time and our hosts had arranged comfortable accommodation for us in a locality of Oslo called *Mortensrud*, which had a considerable Muslim population. There were around fifteen to twenty mosques in this locality! Some of them were being managed by Pakistani

scholars and some by Arab. On the same evening, our host Khalid Saeed *Sahib* had arranged a gathering with all the local scholars managing these mosques, in Madani masjid, the Imam of which was Maulana Basheer Sahib. These scholars included the mentionable Iraqi sheikh Barzanji and many others from Arab-African origins. The main purpose of the gathering was to have a practical discussion upon some imminent juridical issues the community was facing. On top of the list was the issue of rising instances of domestic abuse and then Muslim females not being able to find a way to get the *Nikah* nullified by a religious authority. Since in such situations, in foreign lands, a committee of responsible Muslim scholars can act on behalf of a Qazi and issue and implement judgements, I suggested the formation of such a committee. There and then Alhamdulillah, a committee was formed which would look after not only this but all other religious and juridical issues that the community was facing.

Sunset in Oslo was at 10:30 pm. It was summer time and the extraordinary thing about Oslo is that in summers, the sun never sets as deep as at least 18 degrees under the horizon which is when the *Shafaq* (twilight) disappears and the sky falls dark. So even after sunset, the twilight remains all night until the sun rises back again. Since the disappearance of the twilight is when the Isha time begins by default, technically speaking Oslo never experiences this pre-condition of Isha time all through summers. Same is the case in many other European countries as well.

So, when the Islamic jurists began discussing this contemporary issue, a small group of scholars was of the understanding that since Salah in Islam is obligated strictly with the set preconditions of timings and solar positions, therefore, in these parts of the world where the preconditions of the Isha and Faj'r timings are never met, the Muslims here were absolved of the obligation of these Salahs.

However, the overwhelming majority of the scholars opined that under no circumstances this obligation can be dropped; rather the Isha and Faj'r here were to be performed with estimated calculations of their timings. Then, several practical methods of calculating these timings

were devised by the scholars for the Muslims of these parts of the world.

The weather in Oslo is strangely pleasurable. In the hours of the supposed nights there, waiting for the calculated timings of Isha and then Faj'r, I would stroll upon the verandah of our accommodation looking over beautiful green valleys, mountains and the ocean. The cool breeze and the whisper of the pine trees around would complement and beautifully facilitate deep contemplations upon the creation of Allah ﷻ.

This short, yet fulfilling, stay in Oslo was in fact an amazing opportunity to reflect and appreciate the

beauty of creation of Allah ﷻ. During our stay we got to visit Drammen, a small town in the outskirts of Oslo. This town is situated upon two mountains facing each other and a river flowing in between. Upon the river, successive bridges have been constructed linking the two parts of the town. At one point, a road through an inclined tunnel takes one straight up to the top of the mountain. The moment the car appears out of the tunnel, the sight takes one's breath away; the whole town with the river, hills, bridges, fountains and greenery makes one automatically start praising the noble creative powers of our Lord ﷻ.

Zuhd

By Hakeem ul Ummah Mawlana Asharf Ali Thanwi ﷺ

In order for one to inculcate the quality of zuhd (abstinence from worldly pleasures), it does not mean that one completely renounces and gives up all worldly pleasures. Rather, if one reduces his worldly pleasures, this is sufficient for him to acquire the quality of zuhd.

In other words, one should not remain engrossed in the acquisition of worldly pleasures where day and night, one's concern only revolves around acquiring worldly pleasures, e.g. "I need to prepare such and such delicious meal", "I need to purchase such and such item from such and such place", "The rice in a certain place is delicious so it must be brought from there", or a certain place is renowned and famous for their cream, so one says to people, "Please bring some cream for me from that place."

In essence, for one to remain engrossed in acquiring delicious food and smart clothing is against the demands of zuhd (abstinence from worldly pleasures). However, if these worldly pleasures and enjoyments come to one on their own, without one making any special effort to acquire them, then in this case, these bounties and worldly pleasures should be regarded as the favour of Allah Ta'ala. Hence, one should express gratitude to Allah Ta'ala for receiving this favour.

Similarly, zuhd does not mean that one should eat

very little food. In fact, this is not something that is desired in Shari'ah. The reason is that through eating less, one will not be looking after the treasures of Allah Ta'ala and allowing it to remain full. Similarly, it will not be viewed in the sight of Allah Ta'ala as it is viewed in the world, that if an employer has to offer a full salary to his employee, and he only takes half, it will be viewed as though he is doing a favour to his employer by taking half. However, in regard to Allah Ta'ala, this is not the case (i.e. in regard to the limitless treasures of Allah Ta'ala, one is not doing Allah Ta'ala a favour by taking less or eating less, rather, Allah Ta'ala wants us to enjoy what He bestows us with and express gratitude to Him).

At the same time, one should not over-indulge in eating to such an extent that one's stomach begins to pain and one's health suffers, due to which one finds difficulty in fulfilling his ibaadaat. Our Hazrat Haaji Saheb ﷺ would often say, in a lighthearted manner, "Look after your body well, but also ensure that you take good work from your body." In order words, use your body to engage in ibaadaat to the best of your ability.

(Malfoozaat 22/95)

An Islamic Approach to Humanities

By Dr. Asad Zaman

The methodology of science is suitable for material substances subject to laws, but not for humans with free will. "Social science" was born from the misconception that application of the scientific method to human beings and societies would lead to remarkable progress. However, this approach has failed in many ways, which is documented in this paper. Islam provides us with a radically different approach to the study of human beings and societies, predicated on human freedom to choose between good and evil. This approach is delineated in this paper.

3.3 The Search for Simple Universal Laws

The achievement of Newton in utilizing a simple law to provide an explanation for a variety of physically observed phenomena was universally admired. As Mirowski (1990) documents, the prestige of physics led neoclassical economists to copy models from physics "term for term, symbol for symbol". The idea of appropriating the methodology of physics for use in economics has had immensely harmful consequences. Economists look for simple universal laws of economics, which are invariant across time and space, just like the laws of physics. Thus, methodology of science (as misunderstood by economists) restricts the subject of economics to those laws and principles which operate equally in the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Europe. These laws must also be invariant across time as well, holding equally for colonial India, contemporary Chile and Brazil, as well as pre- and post-unification Germany. Because historical events are particular, special, and unique, they have no place in a scientific study of invariant laws. After all, the law of gravity continued to hold without any change before, during and after the World Wars.

It is a dangerous illusion to think that we can

understand the economics of twentieth century Europe without any reference to the two World Wars – yet modern economic theory tries to do exactly this. Similarly, it is impossible to understand development and under-development without understanding the history of colonialism and imperialism. However, today one can get a Ph.D. in economics without studying any of the major historical events which shaped the economic landscape of the twentieth century. It is natural to study economic events within their historical context, and this was the dominant approach to the subject throughout the nineteenth century. However, an extremely important "battle of methodologies" between the German historical school and Menger's Austrian school led to a decisive victory for the scientific quantitative and a-historical methodology of the Austrian school. The consequence, documented by Hodgson (2002) was the removal of historical and qualitative elements from the methodology of modern economics.

Many famous economists are on the record as asserting that the status of economic theories is on par with that of physics as a science. Thus the law of supply and demand is like the law of gravity. However, no act of parliament or congress can have the slightest impact on the operations of the law of gravity. But if parliaments act to support prices or wages, their legislation will override the law of supply and demand to determine the price or wage. The law of supply and demand states that if the legislated minimum wage is above the equilibrium level, unemployment will result. Yet extensive empirical investigation by Card (1995) found no support for this proposition. The most dramatic failure of the law of supply and demand is furnished by the Great Depression, which created unemployment rates of above 20% for more than a decade.

Keynesian Economics was invented to explain this phenomenon, and argued that real wages were sticky in the downward direction, preventing the law of supply and demand from operating. Ariely (2009, Chapter 4) provides many more examples of the failure of the law of supply and demand in the real world. Just using the word “law” and claiming that economics is like physics does not actually provide economics with the universal laws that it seeks on the basis of the borrowed methodology of physics.

4. The Consequences of Freedom

This world was created as test for human beings. Both the desire for evil and the knowledge of the good have been implanted within the human heart, and the test is to see who can rise above temptations and choose the good. Holy Qur’ān states:

“Blessed is He in Whose hand is the Sovereignty, and He is Able to do all things. Who has created life and death that He may try you as to which of you is best in conduct; and He is the Mighty, Forgiving” [67:1,2]

Had Allah (ﷻ) desired it, he could have compelled everyone to obedience, but since the purpose of the creation was to test men, He implanted within the heart of every human being, simultaneously, the potential for tremendous good and tremendous evil. He then showed him what is good and what is bad.

“Have We not shown him the two ways (of good and evil)? [90:10]”

In initial shaping, Allah (ﷻ) created man with a good “nature” and gave him the liberty to choose the good or the bad path. It is man’s choice, what he eventually becomes.

“Verily, We create man in the best conformation; and thereafter We reduce him to the lowest of low [95:4,595:4,5]”

Thus, man can rise above the angels or fall to be worse than the beasts. Those who struggle against their lowly desires will find the path to their Lord, and achieve the potential for excellence present within their souls.

The ability to make free choices brings great

rewards and also carries with it a great responsibility. We must acquire knowledge of the choices facing us, learn to differentiate between right and wrong, and also choose the right path even when this is made difficult by external and internal circumstances. This gift of volition, of free choice, was offered to the others among the creations of Allah (ﷻ), but they all refused it and shrank from the responsibility. Human beings accepted this gift of freedom, but have not been able to fulfill the associated responsibility for the most part. That is, men have been foolish – they failed to learn of and to evaluate the choices facing them; and evil – they have failed to choose the best action even when they had knowledge of it.

One implication of this verse is that most of creation is subject to laws, and has deterministic behavior – and hence is subject to study by scientific methods. However, human beings have a certain amount of freedom in their choices and hence their behavior cannot be described via universal and invariant mathematical laws. We discuss the implications of freedom in greater detail, to establish that the scientific method is of extremely limited value in studying human beings and societies.

4.1 The Purpose of Human Existence

Human beings have different ends and priorities for themselves.

“Verily, (the ends) you strive for are diverse. [92:4]”

It is only within the context of these diverse motives that we can understand human behavior. Human beings are free to choose their goals, and changing these goals is a key to creating positive changes. Instead of striving for a variety of often conflicting goals, the Qur’ān encourages us to develop a single minded focus on one goal:

“Say: Lo! my worship and, my sacrifice and my living and my dying are for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. [6:162]

As the Qur’ān states, human beings were created for this purpose – to obey and worship Allah (ﷻ). However, they are free to choose other goals for themselves. In general, men have an excessive love of wealth and material possessions.

However, this love must be overcome, or else it will lead to a bad end. This requires constant struggle, as we have been given a disposition to like evil; this is what creates a test. If there was no tendency towards evil then there would be no test. If we succeed in this trial by continuously choosing good over evil, this purifies the heart and allows us to realize the potential for excellence within each human being. If we fail by choosing the desires of our *Nafs* over the good, this leads us to become worse than the beasts.

“Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main, in Allah’s cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah; they are the people who will achieve (salvation)”. [9:20]

The purpose of our study is to learn how to create the transformation towards excellence in human beings. We must also learn how to organize societies so as to bring out and nourish the best tendencies within human beings. The purpose of Islamic social organization is described in the following verse of the holy Qur’an:

“Those who, if We establish them in the land, establish regular *Salah* and give regular *Zakah*, enjoin the right and forbid wrong: with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs. [22:41]

It is only with reference to these goals that it is possible to evaluate human and social activity. It is impossible to study human beings and societies without knowing the purpose of human existence. According to standard secular Western thought, human life is meaningless. As

Bertrand Russell (1903) puts poetically:

“That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath

the debris of a universe in ruins -- all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built”.

But if human life is ultimately meaningless, then the study of human beings is equally meaningless. This is all the more so if human beings are deterministic robots, as suggested by Skinner (1977). If we have no choices to make, then our study of human beings and society is equally constrained to be whatever it must be.

4.2 An Important Inversion: Using the World for Spiritual Struggle

Because of materialist focus on measurable outcomes, even Muslims sometimes forget that while we are required to struggle for justice, we will not be evaluated on the basis of outcomes. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was required to spread the message of Islam, but was told that guidance towards Islam was entirely in the hands of Allah ﷻ. Similarly, there have been Prophets who did not succeed in converting anyone to the message that they carried. Nonetheless, they will be counted among the successful because they carried out the struggle to spread the message, which is all that Allah ﷻ requires.



In Christianity and Buddhism, and many other traditions, spiritual progress demands isolation and withdrawal from the world. Islam offers a radically different approach: spiritual progress is the result of our engagement and struggle with the world, along the lines commanded by Allah ﷻ. For example, it is not the meat and blood of our sacrifices which reaches Allah ﷻ, but the spirit with which the sacrifice is done. Similarly, we are required to feed the poor for the sake of the love of Allah ﷻ – the same act done with the intention of acquiring fame and popularity is not acceptable. The general principle is that we must use our lives and wealth to earn paradise:

“Behold, Allah has bought of the believers their lives and their possessions, promising them paradise in return”. [9:111]

The same principle which applies at the individual level also applies at the social level. An Islamic state is an effort to realize the spiritual by material means through human organization. In popular idiom, it is not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game that matters. Islam is process oriented, more than outcome oriented. Whereas conventional wisdom is concerned with the achievement of favorable outcomes, Islam is concerned with how to carry out the struggle for justice, whether or not this outcome is achieved. If the outcome is achieved, that is a gift from God and an added-value.

4.3 Engaged Participation instead of Detached Observation

An important scientific methodological principle is that of objectivity; one must be a neutral and detached observer in pursuit of scientific truth. Lack of neutrality may result in biased judgments and consequent errors in analysis. This may be a reasonable principle for the study of materials subject to laws (though even here, scientists are frequently passionate about their theories). This principle is completely inappropriate for the study of humans and societies. In fact, Islam prohibits us from remaining neutral when we see injustice:

Abu Saeed al-Khudri  relates that: "I heard the Messenger of Allah  saying, "Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him try changing it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do even that, then with his heart (consider it to be bad in his heart) — and that is the weakest degree of faith." [Muslim Book 1 (Faith) Ahādith 79 and 81]

This difference between the scientific method and the Islamic approach is directly due to human freedom to choose between good and evil. When studying material objects subject to laws, the question of good and evil does not arise. However, in studying human beings and societies where there is a constant struggle between good and evil both on an individual and on a social level, Islam requires us to struggle for the good, and does not allow us to remain neutral. The requirement to be engaged in an effort to change the world also creates another radical difference

between the Islamic approach and conventional scientific methodology. Islamic source materials strongly suggest that it is in the process of struggle that we will be provided with the relevant knowledge:

"And those who strive in Our (cause), We will certainly guide them to our Paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right". [29:69]


Neutral and detached observation required by conventional (mis)-understanding of scientific methodology will not generate knowledge. When actions are chosen according to social norms, a positive and objective description will fail to achieve understanding and explanation required for scientific analysis. For example, **suppose** observe someone driving at the maximum legal speed of 55 miles per hour. **This purely positive and objective fact hides within it the fact that the driver chose to adhere to legal norms. This objective fact would have changed had the legal norms been different, or if the driver had chosen not to obey them.** Understanding norms and reasons for which human being choose to adhere to norms or to violate them is essential to understanding behavior. A purely objective description which does not take the normative elements into account will be unsatisfactory.

As another example, consider the question: are people selfish or cooperative?, which incidentally is the title of Section II in Ledyard's (1995) survey of Public Goods. This is a valid question based on the idea that scientific methodology consists of description and observation. However, from the Islamic point of view, all human beings have the potential for good and evil, and hence both characteristics are simultaneously present within all human beings. Different types of environments can evoke one or the other type of behavior, and this is also what the experiments show. Depending on how the situation is framed, different types of cultural norms may be evoked, leading to different types of behavior. Man's freedom to choose to follow norms or to violate them leads to a failure of the scientific methodology.

(To be continued, *In sha Allah*)

Last
Part

The New Menace and Its Answer

By Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi 

Selfless Preachers

Today Islam needs workers who may be ready to dedicate their entire resources and abilities, their learning, their time, their money, and their energy to its cause and not pay any heed to the attractions of worldly advancement. They must be wholly free from malice, bearing no grudge against anyone. They should serve, but take no service from others, give and not take. Their conduct shall of course be different from that of political workers who are motivated mainly by the lust for power. Sincerity should be their habit, and freedom from every kind of self-seeking, vanity and prejudice their chief mark of distinction.

New Institutions

Furthermore, we require such academics which may produce a literature forceful and inspiring enough to bring the educated youth back to Islam in its wider sense, emancipating them from the bondage of Western ideology which they have thoughtlessly accepted mainly under the stress of the times – a literature that may lay down the foundations of Islam anew in their minds and provide healthy wholesome food for their souls. For this task are needed devoted scholars in every nook and corner of the Muslim World who shall not leave the intellectual front of the battle till the last shot is fired.

For my part, I want to state clearly that I have never been one of those who believe in the separation of religion from politics or who seek to interpret Islam in a way that it may fit into every pattern of life. Nor do I belong to that category of

theologians who include politics among the 'condemned tribe of the Quran.' I am second to none in my desire to see the development of proper political consciousness and leadership among the Muslims everywhere. I believe that a theocratic society cannot be established without the ascendancy of religion and the political structure being based on the precepts of Islam.

Past Experiences

But the question is one of precedence, of first things first, and of the exigencies of time. So far our time and our energies have been directed towards political and agitational activities. This was primarily due to the assumption that the condition of the Ummah was sound so far as faith was concerned. The leadership was in the hands of the Muslims themselves and the ruling classes were alive to their responsibilities towards Islam and eager to bring about its victory in the world. But now the state of affairs is just the reverse of it. The Ummah has suffered a serious degeneration both morally and spiritually without being actually aware of it. Speaking in a general way, its educated and privileged sections have almost been weaned away from the faith by the Western ideas and they are, so to speak, openly in revolt against the basic ideology of Islam, thinking that what they have borrowed from the West represents the *sine qua non* of truth and progress and unless the society is reorganized in the light of

the material concepts there can be no hope for the future. They are pushing forward the Western way of life with all the enthusiasm of new converts and bringing the whole of the Muslim Ummah very close to atheism. It is a different matter that some of them want to hurry through the process while others believe in a more graduated course. The modes of their approach are also different. But so far as the destination is concerned it is the same with all of them.

The Divergent groups among the Theologians

With regard to this section, our theological class – if the term be correct for there is no clerical or priestly class in Islam – is divided into two divergent groups. One of them is emphatically opposed to it and does not want to have any truck with those who belong to it, but it is also completely unconcerned with the question as to what causes and factors are responsible for producing the aesthetic tendencies among the privileged Muslim classes. It abhors to have any contacts with them and does little by way of purging them of their erroneous beliefs. The other group associates with them to the full and seeks advantages in terms of worldly gain as a result of its association. It pays no attention to their spiritual redemption. Hence this group has no call to give or religious pride to display. It seems to have abandoned those sections to their fate and has no solicitude for correction and reformation.

The Group that really is needed

There is unfortunately no group among the religious leaders which may devote itself to the reformation of the Muslim upper classes thinking that they are merely the victims of a disease from which recovery is not impossible – a group which may carry the message of religious reclamation to them with tolerance and wisdom and discharge among them with the obligation of selfless service. Due to this handicap the Westernised ruling section of our society gets no opportunity to come to religion and to the religious atmosphere. The result is that this section spends its life in ignorance and distrust of faith and the distrust is further strengthened by the conduct of

that group among the ecclesiastics which comes forward as its rival in the political field or fights against it for political power with religion as the major instrument of its action. Such religious leaders help only to make it more suspicious of religion for it is natural for man to dislike those who compete with him or a thing which he holds dear may it be belonging to the realm of wealth or of power and prestige or of pleasure and self-indulgence.

The cure of the ills of the Muslim World lies in our capacity to produce a band of dedicated workers who may be above all personal considerations and have no worldly aspirations for themselves. Their entire endeavour should be directed towards loosening the intellectual and psychological knots of the ruling classes of the society through establishing personal contacts with them and bringing forth for them and effective religious literature and through their own piety, sanctity of character, earnestness of purpose, sincerity and selflessness and Prophet-like moral conduct.

Verdict of History

History records that it is men of this class and caliber who have rendered genuine service to Islam during all the phases of its career. The credit for changing the course of the Umayyad rule and bringing Omar bin Abdul Aziz on the throne of the Caliphate belongs to this very class of men functioning under the inspired leadership of Rija bin Hayat. In India, too, the revolution of an identical nature that was wrought during the time of the Mughals owed its origin to a similar band of devoted servants of the Ummah. A powerful emperor like Akbar had resolved, so it did seem to all intent and purpose, to cast the subcontinent in the mould of Paganism in opposition to Islam after it had remained for four hundred years under the benign shadow of Muslim rule. But by the virtue of determined action by an inspired man of faith and endeavour and his illustrious successors the land was won back for Islam – and more firmly than before. Each successor of Akbar proves to be better than his predecessor till there came Aurangzeb on the throne whose reign constitutes

a most glorious chapter in the annals of Islam and religious renovation. History, as you know is always ready to repeat itself – it never tires of the process – the only thing is that there may be some force strong enough to turn its tide and the only force which can bring back the golden era of Islam is the earnestness, the sagacity and the missionary zeal we have just spoken of.

The Current Crisis

We should face the current crisis with wisdom courage and fortitude. A woeful tragedy of moral, cultural and intellectual apostasy has struck Islam. It should be the object of serious concern to all those who have any solicitude for Islam. Today the leading sections of Muslim society almost everywhere are on the verge of the dissolution of faith. They have already discarded, in the main, the moral obligations imposed by the *shariah*, their mental outlook has become wholly materialistic and in politics they are pursuing enthusiastically what must be described as the course of irreligion. There are many among them – to avoid saying a majority of them – who do not believe in Islam as a creed and an ideology. And the Muslim masses although they possess all the seeds of goodness and virtue and constitute innately the most virtuous segments of humanity,

are under the influence and overlordship of these sections due to their educational and economic backwardness. If the present situation continues as it is the apostasy will infiltrate into the masses as well and destroy the faith of the simple minded Muslim peasants and artisans. It has been so in the West and it is going to happen here also in the East if the events are allowed to take their course and the all-powerful Will of the Providence does not intervene.

Immediate Action

There is not a day to be wasted. The world of Islam is threatened with a most dangerous wave of apostasy – a wave that has spread over the most effective sections of it. This wave is a revolt against the moral and social values that are the most precious treasures of Islam. If these treasures are lost, which are a sacred heritage from the Prophet handed down from generation to generation and for whose protection the soldiers of Islam have borne enormous hardships and gone through the severest of trials, the world of Islam will also be there no more.

Shall we wake up to this great reality, to this mighty threat of the times? Or shall we not?

Rules for an Emotionally Healthy Life

- Live beneath your means.
- Return everything you borrow
- Stop blaming other people.
- Admit it when you make a mistake.
- Give clothes not worn to charity.
- Do something nice and try not to get caught.
- Listen more, talk less.
- Everyday take a thirty-minute walk.
- Strive for excellence, not perfection.
- Be on time. Do not make excuses.
- Don't argue. Get organised.
- Be kind to unkind people.
- Let someone cut ahead of you in line.
- Take time to be alone.
- Cultivate good manners.
- Be humble.
- Go on an entire day without criticising anyone.
- Learn from the past. Plan for the future.
- Live in the present.
- Don't sweat the small stuff.
- It's all small stuff.



The Carpenter

A highly skilled carpenter who had grown old was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. The employer was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could make just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter agreed to this proposal but made sure that this would be his last project. Being in a good mood to retire, the carpenter was not paying much attention to building this house. His heart was not in his work. He resorted to poor workmanship and used inferior materials. It was unfortunate

way to end his career. When the job was done, the carpenter called his employer and showed him the house. The employer handed over some papers and the front door key to the carpenter and said "This is your house, my gift to you." The carpenter was in shock! What a shame! If he had only known that he was building his own house, he would have made it better than any other house that he had ever built! Our situation can be compared to this carpenter. Allah Ta'ala has sent us to this world to build our homes in Paradise by obeying his commands. Now, we have to decide how well we wish to build the homes where we will live forever.

Feminism and Where We Stand

By Zainab Wasay

Firstly, feminism and women's rights are two separate things. A person's stance regarding feminism by no means represents their stance regarding women's rights.

Feminism is actually in itself a complete social and political movement, with the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes. It largely originated in the West and is now represented by individuals and institutions worldwide.

To better understand our position regarding feminism, we will first give some context.

Feminism and Islam

It is important to understand that our background as Muslims is very different from that of the West's. Our Prophet, ﷺ, had declared 1400 years ago that all people are equal, saying, "O People, all mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also, a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action." (Bukhari)

Because of this strong ethical base given to us by Rasul Allah ﷺ, our history of moral and social standards has been very different from that of the West's. Up till 200 years ago, a black man in America was by law equivalent to three-fifths of a white man. The Civil Rights Act, which abolished segregation of races among many other vile practices, was only passed in 1964, less than 60

years ago. Whereas in Islam, we have been taught to treat all people with fairness and respect people according to their inner value and not their outer looks. Thus, we love Bilal and Umm Aiman رضي الله عنهما from the depths of our hearts, both of whom were black.

Similarly, until the late 1800s, men in Germany could sell their wives - another unimaginable thing in Islam. It was debated whether women had souls or not. It was widely believed that women had only been created for the pleasure of men, thus they were not considered equal citizens and had no right to education, to own property, to vote, etc.

All of these are contradictory to Islamic teachings. As for education, RasulAllah ﷺ has said that seeking knowledge is a must on all Muslims, whether men or women. His own wife, Umm-ul-Momineen Ayesha رضي الله عنها was a great scholar from whom both men and women sought knowledge. As for owning property, Umm-ul-Momineen Khadeeja رضي الله عنها had her own flourishing business. Also, Islam does not bar women from any profession as the West had done by law until the founding of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 1965. She can choose any profession she wills as long as it doesn't clash with the Islamic values of *Hijab*. Also, she is not expected to earn and provide for the family. She can choose to work or not to work without any pressure from society.

And as for equal citizenship, men and women are no doubt equal in Islam. The Quran has called them "companions of one another" (At-Tawbah: 71). But just as Dr. Zakir Naik has put it, equality does not imply being identical. He explains this with an example: two students score 80/100 in an exam, thus they both are equal and deserve equal rewards. However, this does not mean that their strengths are identical. If we take a look at Student A's exam, we see that in the ten questions of the exam, he scored 9/10 in the first question, 7/10 in the second question and 8/10 in the



rest. Whereas, Student B scored 7/10 in the +first question, 9/10 in the second one and then 8/10 in the rest. Thus, their scores are equal, but that does not mean their strengths are the same.

Similarly, according to their biological and anatomical differences, men and women have different strengths, though they are rewarded similarly. For example, we learn from a *hadith* in Tabrani that the reward for pregnancy and the reward for fighting in the path of Allah are equal. Men can never attain the exalted position of a mother, but Allah ﷻ has given both men and women equal opportunities to earn immense rewards through different means.

Waves of Feminism

The first wave of feminism took place during the 19th and early 20th century. It called for basic legal rights for women such as right to education, right to own property, right to vote, etc. All of these demands were legitimate.

However, all of this was only for white women. Black women and blacks in general were not entitled to any such equality or rights. White women, who were supposed to be the subjugated and oppressed ones, would have under them an entire family of subjugated black slaves, which included men, women and children. The second wave of feminism came about in the 1960s and lasted till the 1980s. It had more broadened demands and was for women of all races, calling for action against domestic violence, rape, 'marital rape', right to birth control, right for a woman to divorce, right to enter all professions, etc.

Although feminism started with legitimate demands, from here onwards we see strands of extremism entering the movement. As Muslims have been described as a "moderate ummah" (Al-Baqarah: 143), as long as we follow the Divine guidelines sent to us, we will remain safe from swaying from one extreme to another. But purely man-made movements are not guaranteed that same safety.

Hence, the third and fourth waves of feminism also took place, and according to some there has also been a fifth wave. Today feminism includes LGBTQ rights. Most importantly, modern feminism identifies 'men' as 'the enemy' against whom women must unite. Thus, we see trends such as

#YesAllMen and #NotAllMen on social media. In Islam, we as women have nothing against men. We are against injustice whether committed by anyone. As for men, Allah ﷻ has described them as our companions with whom we try to excel in all fields of good (At-Tawbah: 71).

Feminism today is also anti-family. For example, if a woman works in an office with three people under her, then after some time two more people are added thus the total is five, it will be considered a promotion for her and the increase of her influence and power will be celebrated. However, if this same woman is at home raising five children, she will be considered oppressed and be pitied. Although her influence on her children is far greater than on anyone working under her in a workplace.

The reason why we oppose movements like the Aurat March and slogans such as #MeraJismMeriMarzi is because they are mostly inspired by Western feminism. #MeraJismMeriMarzi too is an extreme line, to which men can respond by saying #MeriAankh/Haath/DilMeriMarzi. The moderate way of Islam is that both men and women submit to Allah saying #MeraWujoodAllahkiMarzi and follow the examples of the Prophet ﷺ and Sahabiyat (رضي الله عنهم) regarding how to treat one another.

We agree that many different injustices are done against women in our country, but we choose to solve them through education and especially Islamic *Tarbiyah*. As the clear clash between the manifesto and slogans of the Aurat March also indicates, these movements are not focused on simply ending those injustices, rather they seek "liberation" (*Azaadi*) in the Western sense of the word. It is interesting to note here, however, that a research paper by Yale University called "The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness" shows that despite levels of happiness generally being higher in females as compared to men, in the past few years women in the West have been growing increasingly unhappy and now their levels of happiness have fallen below that of men. This places a question on the goals of modern feminism. What does it seek to liberate women from? Their happiness and a beautiful life? Is it something we should really aspire to?

Nameless Warriors

By AZM

(Penned casually while serving the homeland in snowy, desolate mountains)

Above 20,000 feet
They valiantly defeat,
The enemy, rich in source
With spirit, strength and force
Bravo! The men
On the Siachen
For the homeland,
they resolutely stand
Leaving children, home and wives
Laying down their precious lives
Heroes! The men
On Siachen
No words of honour, nor words of praise
No medals and no acclaims
Fighting, stormy nights and endless days
Salute! The men,
On the Siachen



Racked Identities

By Syeda Samar Naim

"I always wanted to be somebody. I should have been more specific." –Lily Tomlin

I for Identity

I, me, myself, are all the pronouns we use to indicate our 'self' or 'identity'. But what do we actually mean by this self? What composes this self and how do we distinguish it from the 'other'? It is very difficult for people to answer the question, "who are you?" Often you would hear people

answering thus: well, I am a lawyer, I am a surgeon, I am a writer, I am a teacher, I am a manager, I am a journalist, I am an engineer, etc. And this answer mostly is well accepted by people. But aren't these all just 'professions'? Being a lawyer, a surgeon, a writer, a teacher, a manager, a journalist or an engineer are but professional roles. Although in our times, largely this is how people are defined and dealt with, i.e. by what they do to earn money and not who they are originally as a person. These, it seems, are more appropriate answers to the question, "what are you?", and not "who are you?"

So who are you? What makes you distinctly yourself? And this is where many people find themselves confused. "How do I define myself? I am a son, a father, a brother etc.," they would say. Well, those too are relational identities. Hence even after some serious reflection, people would say in a frustrated tone, "I am I, It's me ... simply myself!" Still, that is not the answer. Simple as the question may be, its answer is difficult because we have submerged our originality under so many pretences and fake identities that it is now hard for even ourselves to distinctly identify who we are.

When it comes to seeing ourselves in terms of having an identity, one might say that there are numerous ways of describing who we are. Identities may be religious, social, ethnic, regional, national, and so forth. So we are actually performing different roles in different settings. But what is our "core" identity, then? Inherently, who are we? Are we nothing but a combination of different



roles or identities? At this, some would probably say that, "we are humans. That is our core identity." That is what distinguishes us from all other creation and makes us who we are.

The Core Identity

"My Dear Lord what has he missed out on who has found You, and what has he found who lacks You!"

Allah ﷻ says in the Quran that, "We have created man in the best composition" (96:04) And we learn from other verses that humans are the best amongst creation because they have been given knowledge, the ability to think and the opportunity to know their Lord i.e. to attain His 'ma'arifah'. Our core or essential identity is that we are servants of God - and nothing besides. We are 'ibaadAllah' and our all other relationships are only through Allah. We all strongly believe that on the Day of Judgment, we will be raised as servants of Allah, and certainly not as lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers or managers, nor as sons, brothers, fathers or husbands or daughters, sisters, mothers and wives.

Similarly, the worldly positions or possessions will not benefit the people on the Final Day. As it comes in the Quran, in Surah al-Baqarah (verses 88-89): "the Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons, except to him who will come to Allah with a sound heart." Even the relationships will not be of any significance, as it has been revealed in Surah 'Abas (verses 34-37): "the Day when one will flee from his brother, and from his mother and father, and from his wife and sons, every one of them will be too engaged in his own affairs to care for others."

Thus what is significant is to realize that since we have been given the ability to think, we will also be questioned as to how much we utilized this ability and made use of our intellect. We all have been blessed with the ability to think independently, critically, creatively and differently. Why then should we not make use of it? This ability flourishes when we use our rationality in our actions, uncoloured by social pressures of any kind, and decide what we want to achieve on the

basis of who we are essentially. However, this ability may die within us if we blindly follow the society without straightening out our priorities and using our intellect.

When one runs after the world and strives to follow the preferences that others have set for them, it ruins one's own judgment and leaves one swaying away with the capricious winds of society and its fads. Ultimately, it becomes very difficult to actualize one's core identity to its very utmost potential.

Let me narrate a true story here of a farmer's son, who was a real prodigy. His father did not have enough money to bear his academic expenses. But the boy studied so well that he got several scholarships. This boy used to ask his parents and friends as to "what is the highest he could do in life? What should he do so as to be called an accomplished person?" In response, they would name several things, such that it made a long list, which included things like, being highly qualified, getting married, having an expensive car, a comfortable home, and so forth.

It did not take him long to get everything that was on the list. He completed his MIS and MPhil solely on the basis of scholarships and was finally settled with his wife and three kids in a luxurious home with all other luxuries he had dreamt of. Guess what happened after that? He committed suicide. The reason being, that he saw no point in living any further. He had achieved what he thought was expected of him, and so he saw no point in moving on with life.

'One should have a point in life,' as Sheikh Nuh Ha Mim Keller says. "What is the point?" He says, "The point is in the Quran. What is in the Quran is expressed in the Fatiha, in the middle of it. 'You alone we adore and You alone we seek help from!' ... The point is that which makes things fall into place." (from Dars on Fitness and Suluk: Jun 14, 2012)

The Social Pressures and the 'self'

In our attempt to welcome other cultures, we think we are embracing diversity and showing acceptance for 'other cultures and values'. While, essentially, if we notice, we are losing all values, and are being pushed into a mainstream culture, called the consumer culture, which values no other tradition or culture or anything of the past. It makes a human being essentially a consumer in every possible way. We are all witnessing that the marketers no longer want to promote what is good, in terms of physical, spiritual, mental, or psychological health of the people. The marketers are only interested in the pockets of their consumers.

The worst part of this whole system of consumer culture is that it makes the consumers as well as the marketers insensitive to all other things except money. Shockingly, we see this culture seeping in to the whole human society. Schools have become mere business industries, churning out individuals who have not been through rigorous training to think critically, but rather have been rigorously trained to 'follow' what is told, to turn in assignments after assignments, merely reproducing what is written in the books.

At schools, kids are rigorously taught to 'follow' and be 'good' children. As Seth Godin says, "(after the 1900s...) Public school was built intentionally to do two things; train people to become compliant factory workers, sit in straight rows, do as you are told, follow the instructions, and two; *teach kids that the best way to fit in and feel good was to buy stuff.* And it's done a great job in both those things. And they still do it here and still do it in a lot of other countries. They turn out people who obey the instructions, who can fill in with a no.2 pencil in circles and perfect ovals but we don't turn up people who are creative and innovative and ask questions. We don't turn up people who interrupt. We don't turn up people who are artists. We actually shun those people." (italics are mine).

This is what we see happening all around us. We feel so pressurized by 'what people would say if we did this or that' that we eventually lose our

essential ability to think and act rationally. It seems that we are now far away from cherishing 'diversity' of human cultures and traditions and styles of living. We no longer seem to have a sense of authenticity - a sense of possessiveness and protection for 'our' religion, 'our' culture, 'our' language, 'our' customs, 'our' nationality, and 'our' values. While the technology has made available to us many avenues of knowing people from other parts of the world more easily than human history has ever witnessed, it has also posed a big challenge for the people to use their rationality and see where the lines have to be drawn such that we do not forget who we are or lose what we have. The gradual transplantation and transformation of our 'self' can be traced simply by looking at our shopping receipts, our internet browser histories, our text messages, and our facebook wall posts or tweets. We see a growing trend of 'exhibition' of the egos rather than development and improvement of the self. One should calculate by the end of the day what one got through all those tweets, wall posts, photo uploads and text messages. The calculation in most cases generally amounts to zero. In fact, it goes into negative, if you account for the time that you wasted in trying to be 'somebody'.

The marketers' strategy is also to make you feel that 'the only way of being with the society and gaining acceptance by the people is to do what is 'in vogue'. Else, you will suffer the social pressures and you will be left alone and labeled as an outcast. The only message passed around through marketing strategies is "put aside your thinking and jump onto the bandwagon!"

Professor Jay Lemke, Senior Research Scientist and adjunct Professor of Communication at the University of California, San Diego, writes in his book *Troubling Identity (2008)*, "Corporations try to make us docile and predictable consumers through advertising media and marketing strategies, selling us not just products, but lifestyles which incline us to want products, trying to get us to identify with certain stereotypical pseudo-identities which slot our consumption preferences into more predictable

market-segment categories.”

See the Sea for Creativity

Anyone who thinks critically would certainly admit that buying that Rupees fifty pack of potato chips just because it feels good is pointless; following the whims of the society and buying fashionable clothes, high-tech cell phones, iPods/iPads, latest cars, or ceaselessly following facebook/twitter trends, and blogging day in and day out just because it is a fashion is pointless; following link after link in search of something ‘cool’ or ‘amazing’ on the net is pointless; ‘Wearing those sticky pyjamas just because everyone is wearing it these days’ is pointless! Fashions keep coming in and going out ‘pointlessly’. One cannot find reason enough in following fashion trends, which are so changeable. It is only through questioning one’s own behavior, preferences, habits and thinking that one can hope to discover and actualise the core of one’s identity.

At the very roots, we all know that changing the outward appearance of something does not change what is inside it. Buying the latest gadgets, putting up a nice picture on your profile page, and wearing the latest outfit would not make you a better person essentially. It will most probably earn you people’s attention for a brief period of time, but it definitely would not benefit you on the Last Day.

I am posing here some very simple questions that we as Muslims and critical thinkers need to ask before we plunge ourselves into things that attract and occupy our attention:

-Is using Facebook or other social networking communities a necessity? If the impression is that it helps improve communication with friends and family, can we not communicate with our friends and family through emailing - a medium that is less distracting?

-Is the use of social networking really helping us get closer or is it taking us farther apart? Evidence shows that such networking sites and high-tech goods like ipads, etc. are making people lonelier

than ever. Read the article by Stephen Marche *Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?*

-In buying stuff, ask yourself if you are buying it because you need it or just to identify with a social class? Will the buying of it make you a better person? There is essentially no harm in not following the latest trends. In fact, it takes a lot of courage to be novel and unique amongst a group of sheep.

We must trace whether we treat ourselves essentially as Muslims, or is being a Muslim just one of the many roles we picked up from the ones that were advertised to us? Just ask yourself a simple question, do you turn to salat five times a day and return to your work, or is salat a returning point in your life? If the former is the case, then your center or focus of life is your work; in the latter case your deen is your focus and Allah is the center of your life!

In the present day world there are thousands and millions of distractions for a believer. Therefore, one has to be on his guard so as not to be able to sell himself to the identities that do not benefit one in the long run. The moment you recognize who you are, you will find a way to realize as to how you should be making choices in your life.

When the world becomes theocentric (God-centered), everything falls into its right place. As long as the world remains anthropocentric (man-centered), there will be chaos and disorder and confusion of identities. When man realizes that he is nothing, but the servant of God, that very moment his preferences, his standards, and his way of living becomes clear and focused. That is the identity which suits and benefits him most.

“We certainly belong to

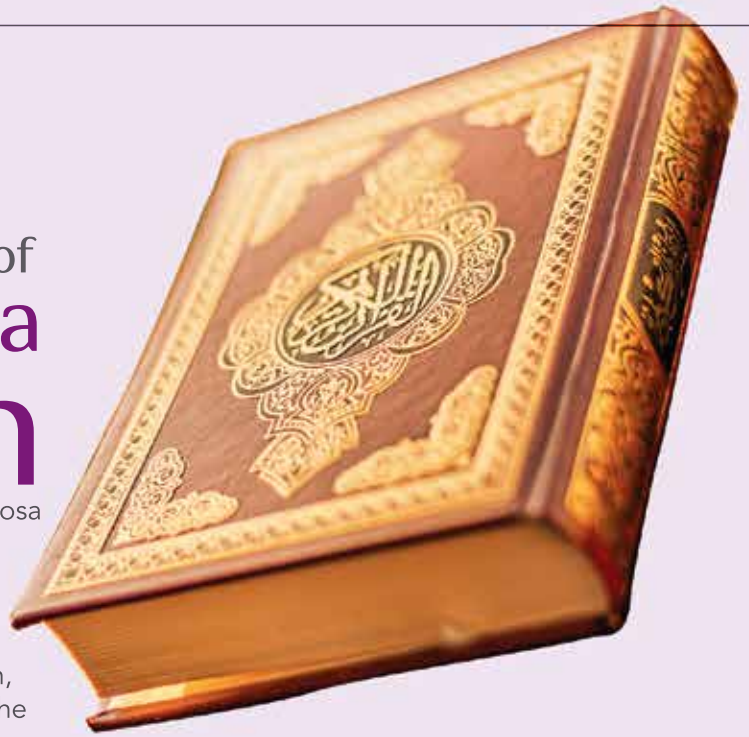
Allah, and to Him we are bound to

return.”

(Qur’an, 02:156)

Five Benefits of Adopting Taqwa from the Qur'an

By Ustadha Khadijah Moosa



Almighty Allah says:

"O you who believe! Fear Allah as he should be feared." (Quran 3:102)

In the opening verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, Almighty Allah describes distinct qualities of the believers who have Taqwa.

"This is a book in which there is no doubt, a guidance for the Muttaqin (the God-fearing ones)." (Quran 2:2)

The term **Muttaqin** (the people of taqwa) is derived from Taqwa which literally means "to fear" or "to refrain from". The Arabic word Taqwa cannot be adequately explained by any one word in the English language. Taqwa is defined as fearing Allah, keeping that continuous awe and reverence in the heart for Him which prevents a person from doing deeds which are prohibited by divine law. Taqwa is that shield that comes between a person and what may harm his spirituality.

Qualities of the Muttaqin

- They have firm faith in everything that the Prophet ﷺ taught us
- They are steadfast in Salah
- They spend in the way of Allah
- They believe in what is revealed in the Quran and the previous scriptures
- They have firm conviction in the hereafter

Almighty Allah praises these people who strive to uphold the quality of Taqwa by saying:

"It is these who are upon guidance from their Lord and it is these who are successful." (Quran 2:5)

In every sphere of life a true believer is expected to beautify himself with Taqwa as true honour is in adopting Taqwa only. As the stars beautify the

heavens, the obedient beautify the earth. Almighty Allah says:

"Verily, the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous." (Quran 49:13)

Often we label individuals 'super-religious' and 'over-pious' when they try and uphold even simple injunctions of faith. A person who has Taqwa strives to do the things that Allah has commanded and avoids things that Allah has prohibited. The under strengthening factor of Taqwa is love and recognition of Almighty Allah which is a favourable state that a believer has to constantly nurture in his heart. When asked about Taqwa, Allah's Messenger ﷺ pointed to his heart and said: "Taqwa is here!" (Muslim)

The Quran and Hadith are replete with commands and exhortations pointing towards the necessity of inculcating Taqwa in the heart. The numerous times that the command of Taqwa repeats should serve as a message to us indicating its importance.

Here are 5 benefits of adopting Taqwa from the Qur'an

1. Ease in matters

"And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him ease in his matter." (Quran 65:4)

Almighty Allah mentions the above verse in Surah At-Talaq where the guidelines of the worst

of permissible deeds i.e. divorce are discussed. The Quran in its majestic style and wisdom alternates these injunctions with the virtues of Taqwa. Whoever has Taqwa, Allah makes matters easy for him in this world as well as the next. This does not necessarily mean that the person will not face difficulty, but through the blessings of his Taqwa, he is guaranteed ease and the strength to bear these difficulties without losing faith or hope.

2. A way out of problems and difficulties

"And whoever fears Allah, He will make for him a way out." (Quran 65:2)

Taqwa serves as a divine guard against trials of this world as well as the difficulties of the hereafter. We see an example of this in the Quran where, in the story of Khidr (alayhissalam), it was the righteous nature of the father that saved his sons from loss even after his death. The Quran says: "As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town; and there was under it a treasure belonging to them; and their father was a righteous man, and their Lord intended that they should attain their age of full strength and take out their treasure as a mercy from your Lord (Quran 18:82). Muhammad ibn al Munkadir (rahimahullah) says: "It is because of the piety and righteousness of a servant that Allah protects his children and the children of his children and his family and even the homes built around his home." (Tafsir Mazhari)

3. Unexpected sustenance

"And He will provide for him from sources he could never imagine." (Quran 65:3)

Almighty Allah is the creator, sustainer and nourisher of the universe. Whatever a person requires and desires of sustenance can be found in His vast treasures. The divine promise is that the God-fearing will be sustained from sources they would never perceive to receive sustenance from. The Noble Quran reiterates this in another verse: "And if the people of the towns believed and had Taqwa, certainly We should have opened for them blessings from the heavens and the earth." (Quran 7:96)

4. Ability to distinguish truth from falsehood

"O you who believe! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (furqan)." (Quran 8:29)

When a believer sees to it that his obedience to Allah and love for him stay above everything else, he is gifted by Allah with furqan (such insight that leaves no doubt between truth and falsehood). Every matter becomes clear in his mind and when he is faced with confusing situations of the heart, he will be guided to the light. In the Noble Quran, the day of the Battle of Badr has been termed "Yawm-al-Furqan" (the day of distinction). This was a decisive day in the history of Islam that proved that no enemy can destroy a people who have the support of Allah and such individuals will be successful in all missions they undertake.

5. Tranquility

"It is He (Allah) who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers." (Quran 48:4)

Calmness and tranquility are sought after states in the daily rat-race of life. These are bounties from Allah which are specifically focused towards the hearts of the true believers. People seek solace in material items, sports, relationships and some even seek it in sin and vice, whereas the true solace that the heart craves can only be acquired from the creator of the heart himself. When a servant attaches his heart, actions, longings and aspirations to Allah, Almighty Allah sees to his affairs and keeps him in a state of peace which even those with abundant worldly wealth envy. The Quran says: "Those who believed and whose hearts are assured by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah hearts are assured." (Quran 13:28)

Besides the above benefits of adopting Taqwa, the Lord of great bounty has many more long term benefits in store for the righteous believers. The high status of the people of Taqwa is mentioned in various verses of the Noble Quran, one of which will suffice for all.

"For those who have Taqwa there is Triumph (Paradise)." (Quran 78:31)

A frequent supplication of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was: "O Allah! Instill righteousness in my soul, and purify it as You are the best to purify it, You are its Guardian and Protecting Friend." (Muslim)

(This article originally appeared on rayyaninstitute.com; courtesy: ilmgate.org)

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Company

By Muhammad Areeb Nafey uddin Siddiqui

In the recent past, some figures from our showbiz industry announced that they were leaving it for the sake of religion. Their decision was warmly welcomed; everyone wished them well and prayed that may they stay steadfast. Some months later, they were back in the industry, shooting for the same kind of shows they previously were doing, if not worse.

My thought then went to Brother Junaid Jamshed RahmatullahAlaih. When he left the industry, he was not just a local celebrity. He was an international icon. Yet we saw him stand with his decision, devoting his life to the service of Deen until Allah called him back. This raised a question in my mind: in terms of what is in human capacity; what was it that made Brother Junaid Jamshed distinct from others who had left with similar intentions?

And I quickly arrived to the conclusion: company. You might have many differences with Tableeghi Jamaat, but there is one thing you can't deny: this group comprises people who remember Allah in abundance. The only worry on their minds is that may we somehow be able to bring a new face to the Masjid, and for this purpose, they spend their days and nights, going door to door, requesting men to come to the Masjid, and in the process, often listen to taunts and abuses, and become the subject of many memes. After leaving the music industry, Junaid Jamshed cut off all ties with his past, and associated himself with this group. Where his previous company marketed concerts, his new company called others to prayer. Where his previous company made others dance to the beats of music, his new company made them cry

to the verses of the Qur'an.

The effect of this change of company? Perseverance. Permanence. Steadfastness. Consistency.

On the other hand, the other celebrities under discussion did not undertake such a serious effort towards changing their company, and we saw what happened afterwards.

Many of us would've probably heard the incident of a man from Banu Israel who, after having committed hundred murders, thought of repenting for his sins. As a part of his repentance procedure, he was advised to leave the community he lived in, and move to another community, wherein dwelled pious people. One may ask what is the relationship between repentance and changing towns?

The answer: company.

Had he stayed in the society he was living in, his companionship of the same old people wouldn't have allowed him to stay steadfast on his *Tawbah* for long, and it would've just been a matter of time that he reverted to his old habits.

The lesson here for us is clear: we need to choose our company carefully. The influence our company has on our inclinations and actions is much more than we can think of. And if we plan to change for the better, changing our company is an absolute must. Be it abstaining from taking bribes, keeping away from interest-based transactions, beginning to wear *niqaab*, deciding to keep a Shari'ah-compliant beard, quitting smoking, stopping the use of cuss words in conversation, or anything for that matter, if you want to change, you have to change your company and surround yourself with people who facilitate you in staying steadfast in your noble goal. Not doing so means inviting negative peer pressure, and being able to withstand it is extremely rare, if not entirely impossible.


Once you have gained the required amount of firmness in your beliefs and practices, you may now go back to your company—but for the sake of *Daawah*. Not having gained enough firmness and hoping that you'll be able to change others as well, is a myth.




'Amr Ibn Al-Jamuh






By Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha

*An honourable old gentleman
who resolved to limp into Paradise.*



'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh  was the chief of Bani Salama in Yathrib. He was a highly respected aristocrat, renowned for his chivalry.

In the pre-Islamic era, it was the custom of the nobles to keep a personal idol in their homes, with the intention of deriving blessings from it, and they would offer regular sacrifices to gain its pleasure and turn to it for succor in times of hardship.


'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh  had a personal idol, Manaath, made of fine wood. He cherished Manaath and regularly anointed it with expensive perfumes.

'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh  was more than seventy years old when the sun of Islam first dawned on the horizon of Madina and people began accepting Islam at the hands of the first caller to faith, Mus'ab bin Umair RAU. The converts included 'Amr's  three sons: Mu'awwidh, Mu'aadh and Khallad RAU as well as their friend, Mu'aadh bin Jabal . 'Amr's  wife, Hind  had also secretly embraced Islam.

Islam spread like wildfire among the inhabitants of Madina and very soon, Hind was grieved to note that her husband was among the few nobles who still clung to idolatry. She was so devoted to her spouse that she could not bear to think of him dying in a state of disbelief and entering the Fire.

In the meantime, 'Amr  was equally concerned lest his sons renounce the religion of their ancestors and succumb to the dangerous eloquence of Mus'ab bin 'Umair , who had


converted most of Madina.

Gravely, he warned his wife, "Beware of letting your sons meet this man (Mus'ab bin 'Umair ) , until we have formed an opinion regarding him."


She replied promptly, "I will certainly obey you! But why don't you ask Mu'aadh about Mus'ab's views?"

He exclaimed in horror, "Woe betide you! Has Mu'aadh renounced his religion without my knowledge?"

The wise wife replied soothingly, "Of course not, but he has met Mus'ab and memorized some of his words."

'Amr  sternly said, "Send him to me."

When Mu'aadh  appeared, 'Amr  commanded him, "Let me hear what this man has to say."

Whereupon Mu'aadh  recited,

*"In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate,
the Merciful.*

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

The Compassionate, the Most Merciful.


Master of the Day of Judgment.


*You alone do we worship and You alone do we
ask for help.*

Guide us to the straight path.

*The path of those whom You have blessed, not of
those who incurred Your anger.*


And nor of those who went astray.” (1:1-7)


‘Amr  exclaimed, “How sublime! Are all his words as glorious?”

Mu’aadh  replied, “Even better, my beloved father. Would you like to follow him? For indeed, all your people have accepted Islam.”


The old man was silent, then he said, “I shall do nothing until I have consulted Manaath, and see what he says.”



The young man tried to dissuade him, “Dear father, what can Manaath say? He is just a block of wood that can neither think nor speak.”


‘Amr  retorted fiercely, “I shall do nothing without consulting Manaath.”


So ‘Amr ibn Al-Jamuh  solemnly went to Manaath. It was their custom that before consulting the idol regarding any matter, they would position an old woman strategically behind it. She would answer their questions and assume that her answers were inspired by Manaath. The old man stood humbly before the idol, leaning heavily upon his sound leg, for the other leg was severely crippled.

First he glorified Manaath, then he said most earnestly, “O Manaath, you must know this man, Mus’ab, intends harm to none but you, for he has forbidden us from your worship. Even though I have been moved by his eloquence, I will not take any step without consulting you. So advise me.”


The idol remained silent. After a pause, ‘Amr  said, “It seems as though you are angry. I assure you, I will do nothing to hurt you. No matter! I shall leave you for some days till your rage subsides.”


The sons of ‘Amr ibn Al-Jamuh  were fully aware of their father’s deep attachment to Manaath. A lifetime of ardent worship had caused the idol to be deeply embedded within ‘Amr’s  heart, as though it had become a part of his own being. Now they sensed that his faith in the idol was wavering and they were determined to uproot it completely.

So the young men set out one night, accompanied by Mu’aadh bin Jabal  and took Manaath with them. They took it to a garbage pit and tossed it inside. Then they secretly returned home.


In the morning ‘Amr  went to the idol for his morning greeting. When he discovered its absence, he roared, “Wow betide you, who has dared to attack our god this night?” There was no reply.

He searched everywhere while bellowing out threats of how he would punish the culprit. Finally he discovered the idol lying prone in the garbage pit. Tenderly, he washed it, purified it, anointed it with perfume and restored it to its original place, swearing, “By Allah, if I ever discover the culprit, I shall surely humiliate him.”

On the following night, the young men repeated their action. In the morning, ‘Amr  again discovered his beloved idol, covered with filth, lying face down among the rubbish. Once more, he extricated it from the pit, bathed it, anointed it with perfume and restored it to its place.

The incident kept recurring every day, until ‘Amr’s  patience ran out. Before he slept, he hung his sword around the idol’s neck and said solemnly, “O Manaath, by Allah I do not know who does this to you every night. If you possess any power, protect yourself with my sword.”

Then he went to bed. As soon as the young men were convinced that their father was soundly asleep, they rushed towards the idol, removed the sword from its neck and took it outside. Then they tied it to the carcass of a dead dog with a rope and flung it in an unused well belonging to Bani Salama.

In the morning, ‘Amr  went in search of the idol. He discovered it lying face down in the well, tied to the carcass of a dead dog, without his sword. He turned away in disgust and chanted the following line of poetry:

“By Allah, had you been a god,

You would not be tied to a dog in the midst of a well.”

And finally he embraced Islam. 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh رضي الله عنه bitterly regretted his wasted youth and now dedicated himself, his wealth and children to the service of Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

When Uhud came, 'Amr's رضي الله عنه sons prepared to go and fight the enemies of Allah ﷻ. 'Amr رضي الله عنه saw their eagerness and sensed their ardent longing for martyrdom and he also yearned to enlist under the banner of the Prophet ﷺ and take part in jihad.

The young men did their best to dissuade their father from his resolve. Due to his disability and extreme age he was exempted from jihad.

They pleaded with him, "Our beloved father, why do you wish to impose jihad upon yourself when Allah ﷻ has exempted you."

Their angry father complained to the Prophet ﷺ, "Rasul Allah, my sons want to deprive me of this marvelous opportunity and are using my limp as an excuse. Surely, by Allah, I desire to limp into Paradise with this crippled leg."

Rasul Allah ﷺ told 'Amr's رضي الله عنه sons, "Leave him be, perhaps Allah ﷻ will grant him martyrdom." So they left him alone in compliance with Rasul Allah's ﷺ command."

When the time for departure came, 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh رضي الله عنه bade his wife the final farewell of one who would not return. Then he turned towards the Qibla, raised his hands towards the sky and prayed passionately, "O Allah, grant me martyrdom, and do not let me return to my family,

without having achieved my desire." And he departed, surrounded by his three sons, and a vast crowd from his clan, Bani Salama.

When the fighting was at its most fierce, and people fell back from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh رضي الله عنه was seen in the forefront of the fighters, as he hopped forward on his sound leg, while chanting, "I long for Paradise! I long for Paradise."

His son Khallad رضي الله عنه was close behind him. Valiantly, both father and son defended the Prophet ﷺ, until they fell down at martyrs. Just a few minutes elapsed between the death of father and son.

When the battle was over, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ arose to bury the martyrs of Uhud. He told his Companions, "Leave them with their blood and wounds, for I will be a witness on their behalf."

Then he said, "Any believer who is wounded in the path of Allah, will come on the Day of Judgment with his blood flowing; the blood will be the color of saffron and its fragrance that of musk."

"Bury 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh and 'Abdullah bin 'Amr together for they sincerely loved each other in this world."

May Allah ﷻ be pleased with 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh رضي الله عنه and his companions from the martyrs of Uhud, and illumine their graves.

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



The art of Pausing

Practice the pause. When in doubt, pause. When angry, pause. When tired, pause. When stressed, pause. And when you pause, pray."

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

There was a garden in front of the Western gate of Masjid al Quba. This was the garden which contained the famous well that is mentioned in Ahadith as 'Bir Arees'. Sahih Bukhari (8:5) contains the following narration regarding this the gist of which, is that Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash'ari رضی اللہ عنہ narrates that one day I decided to remain with Rasulullah ﷺ for the entire day. I went to Masjid Nabawi but did not find him there. People pointed out the direction towards which Rasulullah ﷺ had gone, so I followed that path in his search and found him sitting at Bir Arees. He went to relieve himself, performed Wudu, then uncovered his blessed shins and sat in the middle of the well with his legs dangling. Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash'ari رضی اللہ عنہ says that I reached the gate of the garden and told myself that I will be the gatekeeper for the Blessed Messenger ﷺ today. Shortly, Hadhrat Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ arrived and pushed the gate. I asked, "Who is this?"

He replied "Abu Bakr."

I said, "Wait a while." Then I went to Rasulullah ﷺ and informed him that Hadhrat Abu Bakr has come and is asking for permission to enter. He ﷺ replied, "Let him enter and give him glad tidings of Paradise." Thus Hadhrat Abu Bakr entered and sat on the right side of Rasulullah ﷺ with his legs hanging. Hadhrat Abu Musa Ash'ari says that I thereafter returned to the gate. I had left my brother performing Wudu, and wished that if he came at this time it would be very good (so that I would ask permission for him to enter, and he would also get glad tidings of Paradise) but when there was some movement at the door this time, it was Hadhrat Umar RadhiAllahuahu. When I

asked permission for him to enter, he was also given permission and glad tidings of Paradise. He sat on the left of Rasulullah ﷺ with his legs dangling. Then Hadhrat Usman RadhiAllahuahu came. The Messenger of Allah also gave him the permission to enter, and gave him glad tidings of Paradise along with the prediction of a trial which he would have to face. Now there was no more space to sit with Rasulullah ﷺ so he sat in front of him with his legs dangling. Hadhrat Sa'eed Bin Al-Musayyab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), who is narrating this Hadith from Hadhrat Abu Musa Rahimahullah, after narrating this incident, says, I felt an indication from this event that after their deaths the graves of Hadhrat Abu Bakr and Hadhrat Umar (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with them) came to be located adjacent to Rasulullah ﷺ while the grave of Hadhrat Usman Rahimahullah was not with theirs, rather in front of them in Baqee'. (*Sahih Bukhari, Book of Merits of the Companions*).

When our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ came to this well he sat on it with his legs dangling into it; Bhai Jaan also did the same and I followed suit. A second remarkable feature of this well is that Rasulullah ﷺ had had a ring made for sending letters, which had the blessed words 'Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah' engraved on it. After his demise, this ring was passed on to Hadhrat Abu Bakr, then Hadhrat Umar and later to Hadhrat Usman (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with them all). It is narrated in Sahih Bukhari that one day Hadhrat Usman sat on Bir Arees while wearing this ring and removing the ring, began tossing it from one hand to the other, when it eventually slipped and fell into the well. Hadhrat

Anas Rahimahullah relates that we continued searching for the ring in the well for three days but could not find it. Thereafter Hadhrat Usman رضي الله عنه had all the water of the well removed but it could still not be found (*Sahih Bukhari*).

This well is therefore also known as Bir Al-Khaatam (the well of the ring). I first visited this well with my respected father Rahimahullah when I was eight years old, then in 1963 and then again probably in 1964. When I visited after this the government had incorporated the garden and the well into a road. During our stay in Madinah Munawwarah I got the opportunity to visit Jannat Al-Baqee' many times. It used to be open to visitors in those days. I also remember that I had broken a tooth during that time regarding which my respected mother Rahimahullah told me: "Bury it in Jannat Al-Baqee' so that at least one part of your body gets buried in Jannat Al-Baqee'." I thus eagerly dug a hole in Jannat Al-Baqee' and buried the tooth there.

These are the few things I still dimly remember

from that journey of Hajj. I also remember the journey by Safeena-e-'Arab on our return, and also that during our return voyage we got the news of the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, respected Liaquat Ali Khan, having been martyred in the Company Bagh of Rawalpindi. It was 16th October 1951, and a wave of shock spread throughout the ship as soon as the news was received. I even saw tears in my respected father's eyes. Hadhrat Haji Muhammad Afzal Sahab, the Khalifa (spiritual deputy) of Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab رحمته الله, was also travelling on that ship, and when this news reached us he was sitting close to our respected father رحمته الله. He was also teary-eyed and was repeating the sentence: "This is the decision of Allah Ta'ala." Our respected father would also repeat those words, and I remember that this was the first time I had heard those words. The flag of the ship remained at half-mast for several days, until the ship reached the coast of Karachi.

- Continued, Insha'Allah....

In the Footsteps of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم

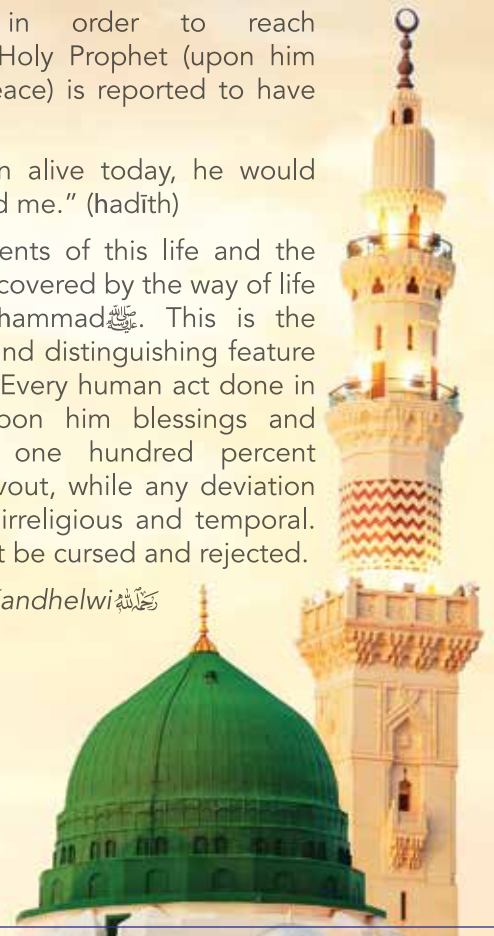
Certainly Allah gifted each one of His prophets and messengers with qualities most admirable and potentialities most perfect of all persons of their times, and He sent them as models of progress and success for the enlightenment and guidance of mankind. These holy persons, as a class, are the real fountainhead of everything that man has achieved and are the source of all the progress that he has made in the secular as well as spiritual field. In the end, Allah sent Muhammad (the seal and master of all the prophets, صلى الله عليه وسلم). He was the final word in excellence and perfection. Through him the limit up to which man was destined to reach has been achieved and it is impossible, therefore, for any to transcend him in any field. The only way now left for the approach to perfection is to follow in the footsteps of Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Any track which deviates from his path is bound to lead to eternal gloom, abasement, and humiliation. So much so that even if the great and gifted prophets like Mūsā and Isā عليهما السلام were to return to the world

today, they would have to follow Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم in order to reach perfection. The Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) is reported to have said:

"Had Mūsā been alive today, he would have but followed me." (hadith)

All the requirements of this life and the next life are fully covered by the way of life brought by Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. This is the singular beauty and distinguishing feature of his teachings. Every human act done in Muhammad's (upon him blessings and peace) way is one hundred percent religious and devout, while any deviation from his path is irreligious and temporal. Therefore, it must be cursed and rejected.

- Mawlana Ilyas Kandhelwi رحمته الله



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