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Surah Al-An'am – Part 1

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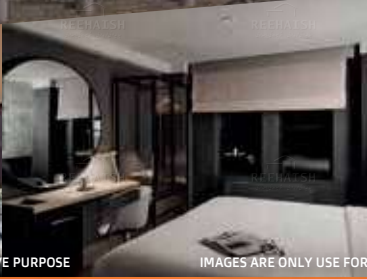
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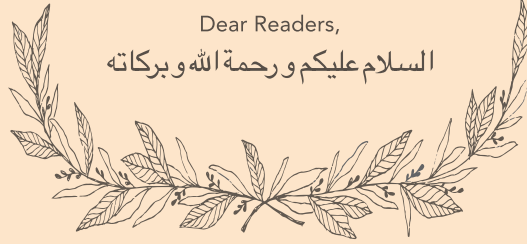
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Translation by Kaiser Nizamani

Editorial



Who would've thought that a poem written by a school teacher from Sialkot would become the rallying cry for the movement that led to the creation of Pakistan?

Asghar Sodai's *Pakistan Ka Matlab Kya, La Illaha Illallah* reverberated through pre-independence Muslim homes like no other anthem before it.

Yet, does the state of present-day Pakistan resonate with the meaningful lines of this memorable poem?

Naeema Akram explores this and other pertinent questions in our Cover Story: *A Dream Deferred*.

The writings of Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi رحمته الله not only carry strong action points for earnest readers, but are also profound and reflective. The following excerpt is a case in point: "...the Muslims had not come out of Arabia attracted by booty or any material considerations, which would accrue to them. Rather, they felt pity for their fellow human beings. They intended to free them from their narrow and dark cells. The Persians and non-Muslims appeared to them as caged animals leading only an animal-like existence; for, the Persians were slaves to their own desires and fashions of the day. They were so much bound by their own traditions and customs that they could not do anything on their own. They needed help and support at every step".

Turn to *Our Intellectual Legacy* to partake the pleasure of reading the complete text.

In the 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*, author Francis Fukuyama argues that man has come to the end of his 'ideological evolution' with the rise and acceptance of Western liberal democracy. He declares it the 'final form of human government'.

Though Muslims may not suffer from the tunnel vision epitomized by such a line of thinking, but they have decidedly given up on their individual and collective quest to look into their past, learn the good and unlearn the mistakes.

For developing a holistic understanding of the world we live in, undertaking an in-depth study of history is indispensable. A generation which ignores history has no past and no future (~ Robert Heinlein). History helps us to understand tradition and most importantly, ourselves. It is, without exaggeration, a beacon for the present and the future.

The Power of History expands upon these themes in our *UlulAlbab* section.

In most societies, with political unrest comes personal mudslinging of the opposition. The boundaries of balance and fairness become blurred in a person's support or negation.



Sheikh-ul- Islam, Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ explains his father's stance in the biography: *Meray Waalid Meray Sheikh*:

Once a personal vendetta takes root in support or opposition of a person or group, then neither patronage nor hostility remains in bounds; the one who is being supported is portrayed as a flawless angel and the one who is opposed is equated to the devil. The faults of the former are downplayed and hidden, while the flaws of the latter are not only exposed, but exaggerated exponentially.

Mufti Sb says that his father (Mufti-e-Azam Pakistan, Mufti Shafi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) stood up against such a biased and prejudiced approach and declared it not only unfair and unjust, but also a possible source of embarrassment for the perpetrator in times to come. He also used to lash out against rumour-mongering and encouraged others to look for the good in people.

In this context, Mufti Sb narrates an incident where a person made an unfounded allegation against Hajjaj bin Yousaf in the presence of a Companion رضی اللہ عنہ. The Companion رضی اللہ عنہ told him: Do not think that if Hajjaj is a tyrant, baseless insinuations against him become *halal*. Do not forget that as Allah ﷻ takes account of the tyrannies of Hajjaj, He will also question you about your unproven allegations against him.

Golden words these; we mustn't let them slip out of our minds in times of heated arguments or in the midst of a charged or prejudiced atmosphere.

Wassalam,
Zawjah Farid

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

Surah Al-An'am

Translation with Arabic Text

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ۚ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١﴾

All praise belongs to Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and made darkness and light; yet those who disbelieve equate (others) with their Lord. [1]

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا ۚ وَأَجَلًا أُجَلًّا مُّسَعًّىٰ عِنْدَهُ ۚ أَنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

He is the one who created you from clay, then destined a term. ¹ The term lies with Him, yet you are in doubt. [2]

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ وَجَهْرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾

He is the true God in the heavens and the earth. He knows what you conceal and what you reveal, and He knows what you earn. [3]

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤﴾

Yet whenever a sign from the signs of their Lord comes to them, they do nothing but turn away from it. [4]

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ۖ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٥﴾

So, they rejected the truth when it came to them. Now there shall come to them a full account of what they used to ridicule. [5]

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ نُمْكِنْ لَكُمْ ۖ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ

تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Have they not seen how many generations We have destroyed prior to them – those whom We had given such a strong position in the land as We did not give to you, and We poured on them abundant rains from

the sky, and made rivers flow beneath them? Then We destroyed them because of their sins, and raised up another generation after them. [6]

﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

If we had sent down to you something written on paper, and they had even touched it with their hands, still the disbelievers would have said, "This is nothing but obvious magic". [7]

﴿٨﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ سَوَّلُوا أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَاً لَقَضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

They say, "Why is it that an angel has not been sent down to him?" Had We sent down an angel, the whole matter would have been closed, and thereafter no further time would have been allowed to them. ² [8]

﴿٩﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكَاً لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبِسُونَ ﴿٩﴾

If We had made him an angel, We would have obviously made him a man, and would have caused them the same confusion they are causing now. ³ [9]

﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَيْتُمْ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Even before you (O Prophet,) many messengers were ridiculed. Those who laughed at them were, then, besieged by what they used to ridicule. [10]

﴿١١﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

Say, "Go about the earth, and see what was the fate of those who rejected (the prophets)." [11]

﴿١٢﴾ قُلْ لِمَن مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَنَّكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Say, "To whom belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth?" Say, "To Allah". He has prescribed Mercy for Himself. He will surely gather you on the Day of Resurrection in which there is no doubt. Those who have brought loss to themselves are not going to believe. [12]

﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

To Him belongs all that dwells in the night and the day, He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. [13]

﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أَعْيَرَ اللَّهُ أَخْذٌ وَلِيًّا فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ سَوَاءً تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

Say, "Would I take as guardian someone other than Allah Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and Who feeds, and is not fed by anyone? Say, "I have been asked to be the first to submit (to Him) and never to be one of those who ascribe partners to Allah." [14]

﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

Say, "If I disobey my Lord, I fear the punishment of a momentous day." [15]

﴿١٦﴾ مَن يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ ۗ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

Whoever is spared from it (the punishment of the day) is, indeed, blessed with His mercy. That is the manifest achievement. [16]

﴿١٧﴾ وَإِن يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِن يَمَسَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

If Allah causes you harm, there is no one to remove it except He Himself; and if He causes you good, then He is powerful over everything. [17]

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

He is Dominant over His servants, and He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware [18]

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلِ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرْكُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ ۖ أُنذِرْكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۚ قُلْ لَا أَشْهَدُ ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

Say, "Whose testimony is the greatest?" Say, Allah is the witness between me and you, and this Qur'an has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you, and whomsoever it may reach. Do you really bear witness that there are other gods along with Allah?" Say, "I bear no such witness." Say, "In fact, He is one God, I disown what you associate (with Him). [19]

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ۗ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Those to whom We have given the Book recognize him (the Messenger) as (certainly as) they would recognize their sons. ⁴ Those who have brought loss to themselves, they are not going to believe. [20]

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

Who is more unjust than one who invents a lie against Allah or rejects His signs? Beware, the unjust shall not prosper. [21]

Explanation

1) That is, the term of life for everyone, or the term of the life of the whole world after which it will come to an end.

2) In response to their demand for sending an angel, two different reasons have been given in verses 8 and 9 to explain why an angel was not sent. The point made in verse 8 is that, according to Allah's ﷻ practice, when a particular demand of disbelievers, to show a particular miracle is accepted by Allah ﷻ, and yet they do not believe, they are destroyed at once, and no further time is allowed to them. Since the denial of many disbelievers was based on their stubbornness, it was known that they would not believe even after seeing the angel with their own eyes. As a result, they would be destroyed without any respite. Another interpretation of verse 8 is that human beings are put to the test in this worldly life whether or not they accept the truth by making use of their own reason without having seen the Upper Realm with their eyes. One's belief in Allah and His Upper Realm is valued so long as it remains Unseen. As soon as it is viewed physically with one's eyes, the test is over, and no time will be left to believe in the Unseen. In this manner, the unbelievers will have to face the fate of their disbelief at once.

3) This is the second reason for not sending an angel. The verse says that it is not possible to send an angel in his true form, firstly because human beings are unable to see him in his original form, and secondly because after seeing the angel in his true form, there will remain no time for belief in the Unseen. It is necessary, therefore, that if an angel is sent, he should be in the form of a human being, in which case the same objection will again be raised that a messenger in human form cannot be accepted.

4) The Torah and Injil and other scriptures, held sacred by the Jews and the Christians, included texts that clearly explained the coming of the Last Prophet. The signs by which he was to be recognized were also mentioned in those scriptures. Based on this, many learned people of the two religions recognized the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the Last Prophet, but their personal interests prevented them from accepting it openly.

(To be continued, In sha Allah)



The Real Share in Wealth

By Mawlana Manzoor Nomani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

(183/43) It is related by Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم of Allah said: "The bondsman says, 'My property! My property!' though in the whole of his worldly possessions what is really his falls only into three categories: (i) what he has eaten and finished up; (ii) what he has worn and made old; and, (iii) whatever he has given away in charity and made a provision for himself in the Hereafter. Apart from these, whatever the bondmen possess is going to be left behind by him for others and he himself shall depart from the world one day."

Commentary: This hadith explains that out of the wealth a man earns or saves in this world, only that is really his, which he spends on his own needs like food and clothing or in the way of Allah ﷻ, and thus stores it up for use in the Hereafter. Whatever he possesses apart from it does not belong to him but to his successors into whose hands his wealth is going to pass after his death.

(1874/44) It is related by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم of Allah ﷻ (once) asked, "Who among you considers the wealth of his heirs dearer to him than his own wealth?" They replied, "O Allah's Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم! There is none among us but loves his own wealth more." The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said, "So his wealth is whatever he spends (in Allah's cause) during his life (on good deeds) while the wealth of his heirs is whatever he

leaves after his death."

(185/45) Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ related to us from the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, "When a person dies, the angels ask [him] what had he sent in advance for himself [i.e., goods he had done and how much had he deposited in the Treasury of Allah ﷻ for his use in the Hereafter]." The common people, on the other hand, inquire among as to the property he had left behind.

Slaves of Wealth remain Deprived of Allah's Mercy

(186/46) It is related by Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ that Allah's Messenger صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said: "Devoid of the mercy of the Lord be the slave of this world, and removed of the mercy of the Lord be the one who is a slave of dirham" (Tirmidhi).

Commentary: In this tradition, displeasure is expressed against the slaves who adore wealth, dinar and dirham. Allah's ﷻ anger befalls such people. Worshipping worldly possessions means to forget the injunctions of Allah ﷻ and to treat casually the distinctions between what is lawful and what is otherwise, in one's eagerness to amass wealth.



Practices to Benefit the Deceased

By Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Q.) It is a very common tradition to have Khatam-e-Qur'an and food on the 40th day after a person's death with the intention of Isal-e-sawab for the deceased. However, I am also told that such a thing is an innovation (bid'ah), and should not be done. What is the correct thing?

How best can we help the deceased's close family member (parents or wife/husband) in order to make him/her enter Jannah?

A.) Upon the death of a person, it is a common practice to make fateha. Contextually, fateha is the recitation of a few verses of the Qur'an, followed by a dua for the deceased.

There are innumerable number of ahadith expounding the virtues of reciting the Qur'an and making dua. There are also many ahadith on Isal-e-Sawab (sending reward to the deceased). Surely, the deceased eagerly waits for rewards from his beloved wife, parents and friends by them making dua for his forgiveness, and giving charity, etc. on his behalf.

However, in order for the deceased to benefit from the gifts of his beloved, they must be channeled to him in the correct way; the way of our beloved Prophet ﷺ. During the time of the Prophet ﷺ, many deaths occurred. It was his noble habit to comfort the bereaved families and widows. Many Sahaba, Radi-Allahu anhu, enquired from the Prophet ﷺ about Isal-e-Sawab. It is not proven on any one occasion that the Prophet himself practiced or ordered the customary practice of fateha (7 days, 40 days, and 100 days). Had the customary practice of fateha been of any significance, he surely would have at least practiced it or ordered its practice at least once in his lifetime.

To emphasize and carry out a particular practice not proven in Shari'ah, for example

fateha, leads to the distortion of deen. Many people may regard the practice as necessary and an integral part of deen as is the case among many unwary people today. Any practice that leads to a possible distortion of deen is prohibited and a major sin. Obviously, such a practice leading to sin invokes the anger of Allah ﷻ. How can such a practice benefit the deceased?

The only way to benefit the deceased is to send sawab to him by carrying out acts of virtue, for example, reciting the Qur'an, making dua for him, giving charity, etc. as advised by our beloved Rasul ﷺ. May Allah ﷻ bless all our deceased and grant them Jannatul Firdaus.

Isaal-e-Sawaab (to perform a virtuous act and grant the reward to any person, alive or deceased) is permissible.

On numerous occasions, Nabi ﷺ advised the Sahaba (Radhiyallaahu Anhum) to give charity on behalf of the deceased. One specific incident is of Syedna Abu Talha (Radhiyallaahu Anhu) when the verse, 'You cannot attain virtue until you spend what is beloved to you...' (Nisaa: 4) was revealed. Abu Talha gave his most valuable well and garden, Bi'r Haa as charity on behalf of his deceased mother. In fact, Rasulullahu ﷺ slaughtered 100 sheep during his farewell Hajj and made intention for himself and all those (alive, deceased and to come) who bring faith on his prophethood [Nasbur Raaya, Allama Zailee].

Syedna Anas ؓ, reports that Rasulullahu ﷺ said, 'Whosoever reads Yaseen at anybody's grave, Allah will decrease their punishment.' This proves that reading the Qur'an and conveying the rewards to the deceased, benefits the deceased [Umdatul Qaari; Ahsanul Fataawa vol.4 pg.206].

And Allah ﷻ knows best.

The Virus

By Maulana Abdul Sattar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

The Virus of Sin

Those who suffer from this virus will be tormented by it. The world is trying to get rid of various pandemics and viruses, but today, we Muslims are still reluctant to rid ourselves of the virus of committing sins. Whatever cosmetic, preventive measures we may take, the virus of sin will not be eradicated and the afflictions would keep on transpiring in various forms and shapes to impact our society, relationships, family, and mental state. No amount of affluence or wealth can end this sickness unless we cure its root cause.

(Getting Rid of the Virus of Sin)

Prophet ﷺ said, 'stop committing sin, you'll have peace, he further added, 'Allah has sent me with two deeds, if my ummah follows it they will have peace. The Quran tells us:

Translation: And Allah was not to send scourge upon them while you (O Prophet), were in their midst, nor would Allah send scourge upon them while they are seeking forgiveness (Al-Anfal: 33).

This revelation tells us that on one hand, Allah ﷻ will not send the scourge until the Prophet ﷺ is among us, while on the other hand, Allah ﷻ promises peace for the Ummah until they repent over their sins. How merciful and compassionate,

the Rehman and Rahim our Lord is, who not only identify our sickness but also tell us about its cure. So we know the sickness and also its remedy - is there anyone to remove this sickness that has engulfed us and our country?

Hazrat Abdullah Bin Abbas رضي الله عنه said that Allah ﷻ sends torment not only from above but also from beneath us. One form of this azaab is tyrant rulers, the defiant subordinates, who in turn make life miserable. This is also a kind of torment where disobedience spreads far and wide from a ruler to its subjects, from a father to his son, and a husband to his wife. Prophet ﷺ said:

'There is no man among a people who engage in disobedience, who are able to change him, yet they do not change except that God will afflict them with a torment before they die.'

If he sees evil and disregards it, and does not feel its weight on his heart, then Allah ﷻ will remove him from His obedience. In turn, he will be disobeyed and defied by his own offspring and subordinates; he will lose his status, and the importance of his word. Today parents lament their children defy them, but has anyone ever wondered how much have we submitted to the will of Allah ﷻ and how often we obeyed his commandments? When we have disobeyed the King of kings then how would those, who were made subservient to us, obey us? This is also a torment! Nothing in life is a coincidence, Allah ﷻ has planned out everything according to a code, and this life is bound to it.

(Causes of Affliction)

This age of sickness is due to the curse of our sins and misdeeds. Sometimes unknowingly, we become the source of this evil spread through our homes, children, and our day-to-day business, when we become the reason for this scourge, then afflictions will rain down on us in different forms. Allah ﷻ tells us in the Quran:

Translation: Say, "He is fully capable that He should send a punishment from above you or from beneath your feet, or to put you in confusion through divisions, and make some of you taste troubles through some others. See how We bring forth explaining verses from different angles, so that they may understand (*Al-An'am: 65*).

Commentators have explained different forms of 'azaab' and maintain that there can be thousand other ways that can afflict us from both above and from beneath us as also explained above. Allah ﷻ is all-Powerful and has His ways to shackle us for our transgressions; we may try to find the reasons for the current pandemic, which is another form of affliction, and yet no one tries to see the causes behind it. Allah ﷻ says in the Quran:

Translation: Why then, did they not supplicate in humility when a calamity from Us came upon them? Instead, their hearts were hardened and Satan adorned for them what they were doing. (*Al-An'am: 43*)

(The Need to return to Allah ﷻ)

Ideally, when an affliction hits us, we should turn to Allah ﷻ, but these days it is commonly observed that our hearts turn away from Him instead. The sins have absorbed us so much that we've lost Allah's ﷻ grace, and hence feel no remorse at our misdeeds. Yet, we are not at peace; there's a constant fear lurking around us amidst widespread killings; we have strayed too far away and still refuse to implore the King of kings. Allah ﷻ tells us:

Translation: Calamities have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned, so that He (Allah) makes them taste some of what they did, in order that they may return (to the right way) (*Ar-Rum: 41*).

Indeed the corruption we see both on land and sea is our own doing. Afflictions are for us to repent and not get firm on our wrongdoings, Allah ﷻ wants us to return to Him so we have a good ending to this life and hereafter. Even this affliction is a blessing in disguise for us to have - that one more chance, which will lead us on our road to eternal redemption.

(To be continued, insha'Allah)



A Dream Deferred?

By Naeema Akram

یہ داغ داغ احبالا یہ شب گزیدہ سحر
وہ انتظار بھتا جس کا، یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں
یہ وہ سحر تو نہیں جس کی آرزو لے کر
چلے تھے یار کہ مل جائے گی کہیں نہ کہیں
فلک کے دشت میں تاروں کی آہنری منزل
کہیں تو ہوگا شب ست موج کا ساحل
کہیں تو جا کے رکے گا سفینہ غم دل

(This blemished morn, this dawn devoured by night,
Is not what we awaited,
It's not the dawn in the yearning of which,
The friends had set out knowing that they'd
(surely) meet with it!

That final destination of stars in the sky's desert,
That shore where this dull night's wave would
find rest,

Where the aggrieved boat of heart's
sorrow would halt.)

- Faiz [translation mine]
The lines mentioned
above have been
excerpted from a
famous Urdu poet, Faiz
Ahmed Faiz's poem
titled, Subh-e
Aazaadi (1947)

[The Dawn of Freedom (1947)]. I am a little unsure if our ancestors shared Faiz's reaction to the long-awaited morn of independence. I do not know if they too found the subh-e aazaadi as bleak as Faiz did, because I have grown up with very positive notions of independence, which were imparted to us by the very people who reached Pakistan after crossing the river of blood and fire. The mental images of subh-e aazaadi that my mind has concocted since childhood have always shown me a brightly shining sun under which my ancestors bowed before the Almighty for blessing them with the Land of Pure. Yes, despite having crossed that river of blood and fire, which devoured their loved ones, they continued to sail through it towards Pakistan. Hence, on a personal level, I have never been able to relate to subh-e aazaadi being a dark phenomenon. On the contrary, I find Faiz's 'Subh-e aazaadi' relevant to the times we are living in – the present day Pakistan.

The present turbulent state we find ourselves in is not even near to the picture our elders perceived of the new country they had sacrificed so much for. Here, however, I



do not wish to give an account of the problems we face day in and day out. We all know about the various crises that have clutched us like an octopus in the present day Pakistan. Here I wish to write about a 'dream deferred' – a dream, which promised our elders a land where they would reside in peace primarily on the basis of their religion – the deen of Islam.

Pakistan came into being as an ideological state. It was the religious ideology that primarily steered the Pakistan Movement. It was the first ever country in the nation-state system that was created in the name of a religion; hence, many Muslim countries looked up to it as a 'bastion of faith'. Its formation was considered as no less than a miracle of God. This piece of land came into being with a purpose and for a purpose. It was the blurring of the vision of that purpose which has turned it into a dream deferred.

Why the vision got blurred obviously has numerous socio-political reasons. One reason, which often escapes our thought processes, but remains extremely deep rooted in our society is none other than our colonial mindset – a result of our overwhelmingly colonial educational training. We chant the slogans of Islam but in our hearts and minds we remain enslaved to the Western forms of knowledge.

It was our parting of ways with the tradition of Islam and letting the supremacy of Western knowledge control our hearts and minds, which has landed us into this state of confusion. An apt example of this is the current political turmoil, which the country is facing right now. We wish to uphold Islam and our Muslim identity but we have nothing to say against the system of Western democracy. We want change but we also wish to remain implicated in the systems infringed upon us by our colonial masters. This is just one example of what our Western educational system has done to us.

Whether we like it or not, but we have relegated our deen to having a superficial existence in our lives. A strange bifurcation between the concepts of deen and duniya has taken control of our minds – a result of our educational system which prepares us for leading a 'successful worldly' life. Duniya and akhirah could be two plausible opposing categories, but referring to deen against duniya says a lot about our current

mindset. This deen-duniya bifurcation – a culture based idea – and has nothing to do with the Islamic tradition. Deen was revealed to steer the duniya and it was never a separate category that has now been added as a supplement to it. At least that was how it was comprehended before we parted our ways with the traditional Islam. Deen has become an opposing category of duniya because we are indoctrinated with the idea that the success of the world lies in acquiring the knowledge from the superior West. The knowledge of the deen was meant to prepare us for the eternal life, whereas the knowledge we acquire today is meant to prepare us for the temporary world.

Pakistan, the bastion of faith, is a small scale representation of the entire Muslim Ummah. It is a small country but a very significant one for that matter. The present bleak times as described in the poem at the beginning will, insha'Allah, not last forever; but in order to make that happen, each one of us will have to play a part. In our current capacities we must focus on bringing about the individual change, because only that will lead to the collective one. Each one of us will have to think of ourselves as that shepherd who leads the way. There is no other alternative at present. Each one of us will have to equip ourselves with the knowledge of Islam not like the Mutazilites did, but the way Imam Ghazali waded through the darkness around him and was eventually guided towards the light.

Iqbal says in baal-e Jibreel,

میں کہ مری غزل میں ہے آتش رفتہ کا سراغ
میری تمام سرگزشت کھوئے ہوؤں کی جستجو

[My poem contains the flame of the past
My entire journey is a quest for the lost (ones)
(translation mine)]

The flame of the past that Iqbal mentions can only be rekindled by straightening our ideas about knowledge and education. We will have to look back in order to look forward. We will have to look back for we cannot afford to let this precious country – a gift of God – remain a dream deferred; and the dream, as it was envisioned, has its roots in the glorious Muslim past.



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A Trip around the World

Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb ولمست بركاتهم
Translation by Zawjah Zia

This scenic mountainous terrain from Santa Clara, all the way to the Pacific coast, is known as an air-conditioned land because of its perpetual cool breeze. So, the weather here is always pleasant, no matter how warm it is in the East just a few miles away from here.

Santa Clara is a city of highly educated and wealthy tradesmen with a considerable Muslim population. The local Muslims have a beautiful community center, constituting a Masjid, a convention center and facilities for hosting of other social activities as well. They had arranged a huge gathering in its auditorium after Maghrib that day. When I mounted the stage to speak about the Islamic Judicial System, the hall was already filled with the audience consisting of Pakistani, Indian, Arab and American Muslims. Naturally, I could address such an array of audience in English only. I spoke to them for around an hour and my speech revolved around the verse of the noble Quran where Allah ﷻ says:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ، وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِبِينَ حَصِيبًا

Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you 'O Prophet' in truth to judge between people by means of what Allah has shown you. So do not be an advocate for the deceitful. (An Nisa: 105)

I tried reiterating that the exalted verse provides foundational guidance for the basic institutions of a judicial system; Legislature, Judiciary and Bar. Through the course of the speech my focus remained on providing my

audience with enough food for thought about some general questions about an efficient judicial system; should the laws always be dynamic or should there be some laws that are timeless? If there should be some laws that defy change through all times, then what would be the basis to ascertain those? My audience listened with great interest and attention and followed through with extensive questions and discussions. *Alhamdulillah* all of this was greatly beneficial. The manager of this community center was an Arab. As I climbed down the stage, he received me with a kiss on the forehead and said, "We are extremely proud of you."

Isha was at ten. Long after, people kept approaching for individual interaction. A fairly encouraging common factor among all these US Muslims is their concern for safeguarding their *Deen* and religious identity. At times such pure and intense concern is hard to find even in Muslim countries. Whereas in the US, it was the seventh time I was visiting and every time this concern among the Muslims seemed to have grown stronger. People travel distances of hundreds of kilometers just to be a part of gatherings that might help them in this context. The sincerity of these people to their religion was amazing and inspiring.

That night I was to stay at the Holiday Inn Hotel in San Francisco. The next day, there was another gathering of all the local Islamic scholars, Imams and preachers in the same hotel. The local religious academia here has formed a Shari'a Council for the sake of mutual consultation and discussion of different issues at hand. My host for this trip, Mawlana Ubaid ur Rahman sahib is the

Ameer of this sharia council. So, the purpose of this particular gathering was actually to hold a meeting of the council to take my humble opinion on certain matters. Apart from providing them with whatever guidance I could manage, I was extremely pleased with the manner these gentlemen were operating. In some of the matters under discussion pertaining to the welfare of local Muslims, the members had clear difference of opinion. Yet, with their constructive approach and demeanors, they easily and positively reached fruitful conclusions because of the unity of their concern. This expansiveness in their hearts for each other despite having differences in thought was truly commendable.

A friend of mine Amir Akhtar sahib had traveled from Los Angeles to San Francisco in order to spend time with me. Upon his request, I accompanied him upon a sight-seeing trip around San Francisco after Zuh'r prayers alongside some other friends of his.

San Francisco lies at the western bay of US with the Pacific. So, from the western side, the Pacific waters interact with the land like a gulf, separating the land in two parts. The major portion of San Francisco lies in the southern division, while in the northern division lie some central localities of California. There are several world-renowned bridges connecting the southern and the northern sides of the gulf of Pacific. Among these, is the famous Golden Bridge. What's extraordinary about the bridge is that its pillars support it at both of its ends, only leaving a good distance of 1.5 kilometers of bridge literally suspended in the air. Though its design was later replicated in Istanbul and Tokyo, but this bridge still remains more famous due to its originality. The scenic beauty around it is splendidly unique and hence it is a famous tourist attraction too. Towards the West, you see endless open waters and it would be appropriate to call it the Western end of the world. This place receives frequent chilly breezes from the sea in the West. Towards the South lie the spectacular sky scrapers and lush green hills of San Francisco, while in the East lies the expansive gulf. The ocean waters here are chilly and reckless; it is not possible to have a dip in them without special gear. The local gentlemen accompanying us informed us that our enjoying this scenery in beautiful sunshine and a pleasant, light breeze was a pure stroke of luck. Otherwise, this place

remains mostly engulfed in thick fog and the weather is uncomfortably chilly. The extraordinary scenic beauty helped remove all the tiredness and fatigue from the mind and body.

Another bridge upon this gulf is at a place where the land is about seven miles apart. This bridge, holding perpetually heavy traffic flow, runs just a few feet above water throughout. This road-upon-water arrangement gives out a fascinating view from the airplane too.

There are a number of places worth visiting in San Francisco downtown. One of the interesting features is the 'most crooked street of the world'. Such crooked pathways and roads are common in mountainous regions but having such a street right in the middle of a bustling city-space is truly a sight to see. But sadly enough, the area around this street holds localities upon localities of the people who are a huge threat to humanity; the people who call themselves gay (homosexuals). They don't only boast upon their absurdity rather are shamelessly dwelling with their partners here and this area is famous for this reason. It was almost natural then, that upon learning this, I blurted out, 'Their crookedness has been symbolized here.'

From here, my friend took us to visit the 'Twin Peaks'. These are two green peaks and one can have a beautiful bird's eye view of the city from here. After that we also had a short drive upon the 'Marine Drive' which is a coastal highway running for hundreds of miles all the way from here to Los Angeles.

I had an address to make at an Islamic center in the San Francisco downtown the same evening. This center was located in the heart of the traders' hub of the city. It consists of a spacious Masjid, a library and Sunday Islamic school for kids. Here too, the Muslim population is highly educated consisting of Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshi, Arab and local Muslims. They had especially requested for me to visit them and enlighten them about the basics of the Islamic Financial System. There was a huge audience here as well, and the address was followed by question answers and discussions as usual.

This was my second night in San Francisco and the next day we had to move back to Stockton.

(To be continued insh'Allah)

Lack of Feeling Delight

Shaykh Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami رحمته الله

Not feeling Delight in One's Duties

Among the infamies of the soul is that it carries out religious duties while not finding delight therein. This is due to one's obedience being tainted with showing off, his lack of sympathy during obedience, or omitting one of the sunnas.

This condition is treated by demanding that the soul be sincere, by adhering to the sunnas in [one's] actions, and rectifying the initial stages of affairs so that their ending will be sound for him.

Expecting Good while Irritating Others

Among the infamies of the soul is that the individual expects good for himself by attending good places where good things happen even though, if he did attend it, those present would lose hope and [consider] his presence an evil omen. One of the Forebears [salaf] was asked: "What is your expectation for those who stood

[on 'Arafat]?" He replied, "I see people whom Allah would forgive if it were not for me being with them." This is what the People of Awareness [ahl-al-yaqaza] assume about themselves.

This condition is treated by the individual knowing that Allah- even if He had forgiven one all his sins- has seen him commit mistakes and violations. He thus shies away from assuming good about himself and [instead] assumes the worst concerning himself. It is as al-Fudayl ibn Iyad said, "How shameful of you- even if you are pardoned!"

This was because he realized Allah's knowledge of and His looking to him.

Excerpted from Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami's 'Uyub al-nafs wa adwiyatuha', translated by Musa Furber as 'Infamies of the Soul & their Treatments'

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Secret Zikr- An Invitation to Join in

By Murtaza Humayun Saeed

The way the light shimmers on the surface of a lake
 The way the graveyards call out
 "Don't be envious
 Don't be envious
 Be grateful for what you've been given
 That is the only way forward
 We only have our amaal (works)
 And the best of what we have is gratefulness for what
 we were given
 Hassad (envy) went against us
 Hassad went against us
 Whereas truth will prevail and falsehood is bound to
 perish
 So too the container that tries to cherishingly hold
 falsehood will perish
 So too the container that tries to cherishingly hold
 falsehood will perish"
 The way the birds do group istaghaaar (repentance)
 together in trees after Fajr
 The way flowers grow on cacti
 The way water satiates thirst and cleanses the body
 inside and outside
 The way our bodies function peacefully without any
 grinding noise or clamour
 just a beautiful heart beat
 Al-lah Al-lah Al-lah Al-lah
 The way our clothes cover us
 Everything is going about
 in remembrance
 A silent zikr
 A silent praising
 We just need to join the crowded congregation.

© Murtaza Humayun Saeed

Published poet and bookseller, some of Murtaza's poems
 appear in the anthology: *A Kaleidoscope of Stories:
 Muslim Voices in Contemporary Poetry* by Lote Tree Press.
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The Magic Within

By Dr Anum Fatima

To those living a difficult life
 Who wish to quit everyday
 Waiting for someone to come and help
 To cast a magical spell
 And make the hardship go away;
 My dear friend,
 Let go of these imaginary crutches
 Do not depend on them
 You are strong enough to stand straight
 Without any help from anyone
 Need is to believe in yourself
 To stay persistent and work hard
 You'll be surprised to see
 The magic you are hiding within

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Sunny Side Up

By Zawjah Zia

Zain was in deep thought. The book he had been reading, now rested on his chest. His wife, Fatima, brought in tea and snacks. She had instantly noticed the slight frown on her husband's face. Sitting beside him she asked, "Are you alright? You look worried!" Zain sighed heavily, sat up straight, and handed her the book to see what he had been reading. The lines he indicated were:

"This whole world is like a mountainous area and our life here like a hiking excursion. Panting and breathless, as we are about to approach some

particular 'summit' that seemed to be the highest when we started climbing, several more peaks are already presenting us with their daunting yet tempting sights..."

"Nice!" said Fatima "But what is there to worry about?"

"I am going to be promoted as the manager of my office very soon." Zain had said it so plainly that for a moment Fatima didn't know how to react. Wide-eyed she exclaimed, "Oh that is wonderful!" Upon that Zain said, "May be it is, but the words in this book have got me thinking,

I have been climbing ever since I remember. One degree after the other, next position after the earlier and I still want to keep on going because there's so much out there for me to accomplish. Am I going to spend my life just like that? In search of that 'one' accomplishment that makes me say 'This is it and I want no more!?' Is it ever going to happen?"

Clichéd as it may sound, but this is our story; the story of each one of us no matter at what level of 'accomplishment' we are. Ultimate contentment is what we seek. Our folly is only that we seek it in wrong places.

Allah ﷻ says in the Glorious Qur'an: "for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find satisfaction" (Ar-Ra'd:28).

Remembrance here would be a condition in which a believer's thoughts, emotions, intentions and actions are only for Allah ﷻ. This kind of remembrance of Allah ﷻ is an outcome of unconditional faith in, and obedience to Allah ﷻ. Logically then, satisfaction and contentment should come easily into a true believer's heart.

But the situation we are talking about here is sadly not as simple as that. When the case in point is a 'believer' whose faith in Allah ﷻ comprises too many words and too less action, and whose obedience to Allah ﷻ is conditional to his own comfort and convenience, then Allah's ﷻ remembrance is easier said than done. Moreover, this world is a tricky place. It sweetly disguises its tricks as 'the next best goal' for us and without fail we keep falling for the same old tricks again and again ... and yet again. This perpetual 'falling' keeps us so tied up that we are not left with any time for profound contemplation. So we keep running after those 'next best goals' as our tiny lives in this world flash past us.

But let us for a moment suppose that, just like Zain, one of us has been very briefly caught up in that rare moment of realisation; the moment that springs before his eyes out of nowhere, jolting out of sleep the conscience he wasn't even sure he possessed. It is these very brief yet epic moments that hold the hope of our lifetimes. Most of us would shun the 'foolish', 'emotional' thoughts out of our 'intellectual' schemes, get straight up and start running

again. We like to call it practical thinking. But whoever is fortunate enough to be able to seize that very moment and try taking a u-turn, is the bravest and wisest of us all.

'Trying to take a u-turn' demands its own tactics depending on the state of an individual's heart and imaan. It's here that the majority of us tend to err.

All starry-eyed upon our little encounter with our consciences, we look around for clues to proceed. Meanwhile, our peers, who are still engaged in the full throttle running, storm us with advice. One would say, "Balance is the key, dear! You see, Allah ﷻ does not encourage us to leave dunya and grab just the deen." Another would say, "Take it easy, pal! It is the purity of our hearts that Allah ﷻ requires. There is no need to go to the extremes. What is the point of sporting a beard if one's heart is impure?" And a few absurd ones would even say, "Get a life, partner! Times have changed. The world's progressing each second and here you are thinking of going back to the stone-age" (logically enough, someone who has even the tiniest speck of life left in his conscience, would not pay heed to such absurdity).

Stumbling and unsure, we take one of these advices of our 'well-wishers'. So instead of trying to get a hold of our deen with full force, we try to grab it with one hand while holding on to dunya with the other. We think that it would be alright if instead of completely stopping, we slow down a bit in our dunya and at the same time keep trying to 'prepare' our hearts for Allah's ﷻ obedience and with time this will automatically balance out our deen and dunya.

What we need to understand, however, at such a point in our lives is that here you and I are talking about a u-turn, a complete change of course, a revolt. How can one keep running in one direction and at the same time take a u-turn? Surely, it would not even be difficult but impossible.

If we look at the 'advices' of our 'well-wishers' that we just considered, in isolation they are perfectly reasonable indeed. Surely our deen demands balance in every aspect of our lives and surely our physical deeds lose their worth without the purity of our hearts. The only problem with

these advices is that you and I have been running blindly for too long now, and have come very far away from the place to where we all must return ultimately.

For example, the companions of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, upon hearing an injunction of Allah ﷻ, would say, "Sami'na wa Ataa'ana" (we hear and we obey). No 'ifs' and 'buts' about it. So the beautiful injunction of balancing would be for the further beautification of such believers. Now the question is, do we have the same attitudes today? Isn't there anything in our lives that we know is the right thing to do as per our deen, but we still choose to procrastinate due to our self-imposed reasons? If one's sincere answers to these questions are 'no' and 'yes' respectively, then he has already disturbed his balance to such an extent that 'taking it easy' won't work for him; regaining that balance for him would call for taking drastic measures.

For a start, he needs to stop. The first prerequisite for duly answering the call of one's conscience would be that one drags himself out of the 'running tracks' of this world, self-declares himself 'disqualified' from the 'race' and then completely turns his back towards it all (when I say 'drastic measures', I really meant it!). Acknowledging the magnanimity and worth of one's destination shall prepare him for the struggle ahead, Insha'Allah. After all, nothing worthwhile can ever be achieved in 'ten easy steps' and here we are talking about getting closer to Allah ﷻ and making Him happy.

Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (RH) has said that, "To wait for total settling of the mind, i.e. complete devotion to Allah ﷻ is futile. This is not possible while one is caught up in this world with its responsibilities and duties. To achieve this, even in a troubled and perplexed condition, set out to develop your connection with Allah ﷻ. Gradually single-minded devotion will follow. Otherwise life will come to an end waiting, and complete devotion will not be achieved."

So that tells you and me to start right now and not to let time pass in futile 'preparations'. Here, the acknowledgement that our deen is a packaged deal would play an important role too. There is no way we can split our deen into 'this now', 'that later', 'this can-do' and 'that cannot-do'.

Breaking down one's ego would then be the next vital step. For that, one would have to replace 'I am so and so' with 'I am just someone'. A useful tool would be to deliberately ignore the physical aspects of one's personality that one thinks put him apart from the crowd. It may be one's sense of dressing, one's impressive possessions, one's immaculate and intellectual speech, one's aesthetics, one's strength or stamina, etc. Purposely trying to be 'not praiseworthy' and 'ordinary' might be difficult but it works wonders in humbling one's outrageous nafs. When we take being unnoticeable and being ignored by people as a blessing from Allah ﷻ, then only it reaps the desired effect on us.

Here again, one's 'well-wishers' might chip in saying, "You are setting a miserable example. Where does Islam ask you to look pathetic and act dumb? A Muslim should be an inspiring example for the people around him." When that happens, the right thing to do would be to smile, nod and ignore them, knowing deep inside that 'it's for my own good', 'let me first groom my own self so that the 'setting an example' part could follow, Insha'Allah' and 'it is temporary, it is not as if I have lost my qualities, I still have them Alhamdulillah' (please note that here, this could be done only as a consolation tool against the discouraging remarks that one might receive from his peers; meanwhile, one would have to be extra cautious that thinking of one's 'concealed qualities' must not be a source of pride). In fact, it would be vital to keep one's pride at bay at all costs. When the Shaytaan comes saying, 'You have done enough. You can relax now. Look around! How many people are trying as hard as you are?' then recite ta'awwuz and move on, don't let him ruin your efforts.

Once one succeeds with the tawfeeq of Allah ﷻ in learning to keep a strict check on his nafs, to keep the Shaytaan at bay, and to be steadfast in the obedience to Allah's ﷻ orders, only then can one start to think about achieving the desired balance in his life. But jumping to attain the balance before that would be like trying to get a post-graduate degree before matriculation.

Keeping these things in mind and making sincere and humble du'a to Allah ﷻ shall make one's return towards Allah ﷻ easy as well as durable, Insha'Allah!

The Saint in the Mountain

From the Mathnavi of Maulana Rumi ﷺ

A certain dervish once went up a mountain pass and there made a promise to Allah ﷻ:

"I am turning my back on all worldly connections. Now I shall remain here in solitude busy worshipping You. When I feel hungry, I shall wait for sustenance from Your side. I will not ask anything from any person. I will not pick any fruit of the trees of this mountain. But in the wind if any fruit falls from the trees, that I shall eat".

For some time he remained steadfast on this promise to the tests that came from Allah's side. The tests came along because in his vow, the dervish never said, 'Insha'Allah' - if Allah so pleases. This omission of insha'Allah was a sign of the dervish's pride, arrogance and over-confidence in his own courage and ability. For this reason, the punishment for his deed involved him in a great test and the spirituality in his heart waned, so much so that the ability to bear the difficulties of hunger became lost. Allah ﷻ ordered the wind not to blow in that part of the mountain. For five days, the wind failed to blow, as a result of which no fruit fell from the trees. The dervish suffered unbearable hunger. He could no more have patience and the hunger made him feel weak. He was now forced

to break his promise to Allah ﷻ. He began picking the fruit from the tree to eat. When that happened, Allah ﷻ punished him, because it is a command of His:

"Carry out your promise."

One day group of thieves came to hide along the foot of the mountain. Someone informed the Chief Police Officer of the town that a group of thieves were hiding in the mountain. Before the police officer could arrest the actual thieves, he saw the dervish and thought that he was one of them. Hence he immediately arrested him. The dervish raised hue and cry in protest proclaiming his innocence but the police officer and the other soldiers did not listen to him. The punishment was that they cut off his right hand and his left foot.

By chance, a traveler was passing from there and when he saw what had happened, he scolded the Police Officer and the soldiers:

"Woe betide you! What have you done to this holy and saintly dervish? He is a saint, an abdaal of our era. He has broken away from the world to settle in solitude in the mountain."

When the police officer heard this, he began trembling with fear. In fear and with great grief and sorrow he came to the dervish with his bare head and feet, crying bitterly over the mistake that he had made, saying:

"I swear I did not know that you were a saintly man. I made a mistake and considered you as one of the thieves. For Allah's sake, forgive me, otherwise I will become a victim of Allah's anger and will be destroyed. "

The dervish replied: "Brother, it is not your fault. I am the guilty one. I broke my promise to my Lord and for that I have been given this punishment."

"I know the cause of this and my inner self is aware thereof

That for which sin of mine, this misfortune befell me.

I broke my agreement with Allah and as a result

The punishment for my deeds was the severing of my hand and foot.

The sincere ones are at all times in danger, In Allah's path, there are great tests awaiting them.

Such promises and vows should not be made which you cannot fulfill.

And sit not in places of danger where you are bound to be tested with trials."

[Firstly a person should never take an oath for anything which is against the Shariat e.g. "I will not eat" or "I will not drink water," etc. The oath of the dervish was of this type. Secondly, a person should never depend upon his own courage and strength. In all matters one should depend upon

Allah and seek His help. If one intends on doing anything, then one should always say, 'Insha-Allah'. If, for some reason, one forgets to say so, then the moment he recalls it he should say, 'Insha-Allah'. One must remember at all times that without Allah's ﷻ power nothing can take place.

"Allah's one atom of favour is much better Than a thousand efforts from the obedient ones. Humility in the path of Allah and indigence Is better than to be proud of our devotion and obedience."

One should, with steadfastness on the deen, pray to Allah ﷻ at all times, "O My Lord, do not leave me to my nafs even for one moment. Rectify my condition in such a manner that at all times it is in accordance with Your pleasure, till You make my ending upon Imaan. Aameen.]

- *Adapted from the 'Mathnavi' of Maulana Rumi ﷺ*

'Abdullah bin Mas'ood

رضي الله عنه

Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha
Translation by Umm Husain

"Whoever wishes to recite the Quran with the freshness it was revealed should recite it according to the recitation of Ibn Umm 'Abd." - Muhammad, Messenger of Allah ﷺ

He was a young boy, below the age of puberty, who lived in a remote valley of Mecca. He tended the sheep of 'Uqba bin Mu'ayt, one of the nobles of Quraish. Although his name was 'Abdullah ﷺ, people used to call him Ibn Umm 'Abd.

'Abdullah ﷺ had heard about the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, who had caused such a stir in Mecca, but he was too young to go and meet him. His days and nights were fully occupied in taking care of 'Uqba's flock. One day he saw two worn out travelers coming from afar. Their throats and lips were parched with thirst. They stopped when they saw him, greeted him and asked, "O boy, could you milk this goat so we may quench our thirst."

The boy responded, "I cannot do so, as the goats do not belong to me, and I have been entrusted with them." Upon hearing this candid reply, the strangers looked approvingly at him. One man said, "Take me to a virgin goat." The boy gestured to a nearby goat. The stranger untied the goat, and began stroking its udder with his hand, while repeating the name of Allah ﷻ. The boy gazed at him in wide eyed astonishment, and asked himself, "Since when has a virgin goat been able to give milk?"

In the words of 'Abdullah ﷺ, "Lo and behold, the udder of the goat began to swell up, and

suddenly, an abundance of milk gushed out. The second man took a hollowed rock from the ground, filled it with milk, and both drank from it, and gave it to me as well, while I could scarcely believe my eyes."

"Once we were all refreshed, the Blessed man addressed the goat's udder, "Shrink!" Whereupon the udder began to shrink until it returned to its natural size.

I exclaimed, "Teach me the word that you said."

He replied, "You are a learned child."

This was the first encounter of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ﷺ with Islam, for the blessed stranger was the Prophet ﷺ and his Companion was Abu Bakr As-Siddiq ﷺ. Due to the Quraish's boycott of the Muslims, both men were starving and had come to the valley in search of food. Just as 'Abdullah ﷺ indistinctively adored the Prophet ﷺ, and Abu Bakr ﷺ, so too did they love him for his integrity.

Shortly afterwards, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ﷺ accepted Islam, and presented himself in the service of Rasul Allah ﷺ. This fortunate young boy was granted the felicity of serving the Master of mankind. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ﷺ devoted himself solely to Rasul Allah ﷺ, and soon became his faithful shadow. He would awaken the Blessed Prophet ﷺ from his sleep, shield him when he bathed, help him to wear his shoes when he intended to go out, and take them off upon his return, carry his staff, and follow him wherever he

went. It was a well-known fact that the Prophet ﷺ allowed him to enter his presence at all times. He was known as the trusted confidante of Prophet ﷺ for he had access to the Prophetic secrets and other undisclosed matters.

Thus 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ was brought up in the house of Rasul Allah ﷺ, and followed the Prophet's guidance implicitly, and he fully cultivated the prophetic traits within himself, till it was said of him: "He is the one who most closely resembles Rasul Allah ﷺ in appearance and conduct."

'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ acquired knowledge in the Madrassah of Rasul Allah ﷺ; he was the most learned of the Companions regarding the Quran, the most perceptive in interpreting its verses, and the most knowledgeable regarding the laws of Allah ﷻ.

A man, who was known for his learning once came to 'Umar bin Al-Khattaab ؓ and said to him, "O Ameer-ul-Momineen, I have come from Kufa where I met a man who was making copies of the Quran from memory."

Upon hearing those words, 'Umar ؓ flared up, and roared, "Who is this man?"

The man answered, "Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ."

Instantly, Umar's rage subsided, and he replied calmly, "Woe betide you! By Allah, I do not know of any man who is more deserving to do so and I shall prove it to you."

"One night, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was walking beside Abu Bakr ؓ, while they were discussing the affairs of the Muslims. I was accompanying them. As we went out together, we saw an unknown man praying in the masjid.

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ paused, listening attentively to him, then he turned to us saying, "Whoever wishes to recite the Quran with the freshness it was revealed should recite it according to the recitation of Ibn Umm 'Abd."

Then 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ began supplicating to Allah ﷻ, while the Blessed Prophet ﷺ was addressing him, "Ask, and you shall be given... ask and you shall be given."

I thought to myself, "by Allah, I shall go to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ tomorrow and tell him that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said 'Ameen' to his

invocation."

Yet, when I went to him, I found that Abu Bakr ؓ had already preceded me in giving him the glad tidings. I swear by Allah, I could never outdo Abu Bakr ؓ in any act of goodness for he invariably surpassed me."

The knowledge of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ reached such glorious heights that he used to say, "I know each Quranic verse, as to when it was revealed, regarding what it was revealed, and if I knew of a man who had more knowledge of the book of Allah than myself, I would be zealous to meet him."

'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ words were no exaggeration. Once Umar bin Al-Khattaab ؓ was receiving some late travelers on a dark cloudy night. The darkness obscured the faces of the travelers, and out of caution, 'Umar ؓ commanded one of his men to make inquiries. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ood ؓ was also in the caravan.

When the questioner asked, "From where have you come," 'Abdullah ؓ answered, in the words of the Quran, "From the deep valley."

'Umar ؓ asked, "Where do you wish to go?"

Once again 'Abdullah ؓ answered, in the words of Quran, "The Ancient House."

'Umar ؓ exclaimed, "There is a scholar in their midst."

Upon his instigation, the man proceeded to ask the following questions,

"Which Quranic verse is the most sublime?"

'Abdullah ؓ answered, "Allah; there is no god but He, the Ever Living, the All Subsisting, neither drowsiness nor slumber overtakes Him....." (2:255)

'Umar ؓ asked, "Which is the most comprehensive verse in the Quran?"

'Abdullah ؓ replied, "Indeed Allah enjoins justice and benevolence and giving to relatives and He forbids from indecency and doing wrong and oppression, He admonishes you so you may take head." (16:90)

Then 'Umar ؓ asked, "Which Quranic verse is the most terrifying?"

And 'Abdullah ؓ responded, "It will not be according to your hopes or the hopes of the

People of the Book; whoever does evil shall be requited for it and he will not find besides Allah any protecting friend or helper.”(4:123)

‘Umar’s ﷺ next question was, “Which Quranic verse is the most full of hope?”

‘Abdullah ﷺ responded, “Say, O My slaves who have transgressed against themselves, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the Most forgiving, the Most Merciful.” (39:53)

Finally ‘Umar ﷺ asked them, “Is ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ood ﷺ in your midst?”

They affirmed, “Yes, by Allah.”

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ood ﷺ was not only a great scholar, for he was also a formidable warrior. In fact, he was the first Muslim on the face of this earth to openly recite the Quran, after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

Once the Companions had gathered together in Mecca, during the days when the Muslims were a weak and oppressed minority. They said, “By Allah, Quraish has never heard the Quran being openly recited. Is there any among us who can do this?”

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ood ﷺ promptly responded, “I will recite it to them.”

The Companions demurred saying, “We fear for your safety. Surely it would be better if it were a man from an influential clan who can protect him from Quraish.”

But ‘Abdullah ﷺ resolutely maintained, “Let me be, for Allah will protect me.”

Then he went to the Masjid at noon, and approached the ‘Maqaam e Ibrahim’ while the Quraish were seated around the Ka’ba and began to boldly recite,

“The Most Merciful. He taught the Quran. He created Man. He taught him the power of speech.” (55:1-4)

Quraish looked up in stunned disbelief and began muttering, “What is he saying?” Their muttering rose to a furious roar, as they realized what he was saying, and said, “May he be destroyed, surely he is reciting what Muhammad has brought.”

As an enraged mob began striking him, he kept

calmly reciting, till he reached the final verse which Allah ﷻ intended him to reach. By the time he rejoined the Companions, his face was overflowing with blood. Sorrowfully, they said, “This is what we dreaded would happen!”

He replied dauntlessly, “By Allah, never have the enemies of Islam been more despicable in my sight than today, and if you wish I can go back and repeat this tomorrow.”

They said, “No, you have done enough, for you have made them hear for what they detest.”

‘Abdullah bin Mas’ood ﷺ lived a long life, till the Caliphate of ‘Uthman ﷺ. As he lay on his deathbed, ‘Uthman ﷺ came to meet him, and asked, “What do you lament?”

‘Abdullah ﷺ replied, “My sins.”

‘Uthman ﷺ replied, “What do you hope for?”

‘Abdullah ﷺ responded, “The mercy of my Lord.”

‘Uthman ﷺ asked in concern, “Should I resume the payment of your stipend that you have declined since so many prayers?”

‘Abdullah ﷺ replied, “I have no need of it.”

‘Uthman ﷺ replied, “It would belong to your daughters after you.”

‘Abdullah ﷺ replied, “Do you fear poverty for my daughters? I have commanded them to recite Surah Al- Waqi’a every night, for I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, “Whoever recites Surah Al-Waqi’a at night, poverty will never touch him.”

When the shades of night fell, ‘Abdullah bin Mas’ood ﷺ was united with his Lord, the Most Sublime Companion, while his tongue was still moist with the remembrance of Allah ﷻ, and recital of the Quran.

- Excerpted here with permission, from ‘Stories from the Lives of the Sahaba’ (Vol 1) by Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha; Trans. by Umm Husain



The Battle for Hearts and Minds

By Dr. Asad Zaman

Capitalism is a system which generates extreme inequalities in wealth, and repeated economic crises which cause misery for millions but leave the top echelon unaffected. Polanyi makes an argument that suggests that capitalism cannot survive without a massive propaganda effort to make it appear good, and to hide its defects. This propaganda is amazingly powerful and effective. Even the unemployed and the ones hurt by capitalist medical industry have an unthinking allergy to the idea of socialized medicine and government provision of a living wage for everyone. It is a wonder how propaganda trumps even self-interest!

In this context, introducing alternative views with effective arguments is an essential part of the battle to win hearts and minds, in an effort to create a better world for humanity than the one currently created by capitalism — where a handful of rich people own more resources than the bottom billion.

Because the message is aligned with the self-interest of the masses, reaching them with the news of good alternatives to capitalism should be easy. However, the dominant media sources have been purchased by the wealthy, so that dissenting voices cannot easily be heard. The top twenty journals do not publish articles critical of orthodoxy, and similarly a very small cluster of billionaires owns the leading newspapers.

Nonetheless, especially in this electronic age, there is room for manoeuvre. For example, I once wrote a newspaper article with the title “The Crisis in Economic Theory”; this was published with the title changed to “Waiting for Keynes” in one of the leading newspapers in Pakistan. In writing for popular media, one has to assess how much the public can accept — this article of mine was merely meant to sow seeds of doubt into the minds of an audience which idealizes capitalism

as a nearly perfect system. In the comments on the article, one of the readers referred me to “Why Capitalism?” a book defending capitalism by Meltzers. Accordingly, I also wrote a review of this book and posted it on Amazon.

To sympathetic readers, I would suggest a few strategies that are essential in engaging in this battle for hearts and minds. Firstly, we should not be discouraged by the overwhelming odds against us — the billions of dollars being spent on glorifying capitalism. The ‘Truth’ is a powerful weapon, and in any case, fighting an honorable battle for a good cause is worthwhile for itself, whether or not we win or lose.

Secondly, we should start with easy tasks. Use uncontested forums of low visibility — publish in the lower ranked journals instead of aiming for the top twenty. Focus on getting the message across to a sympathetic audience, rather than trying to convert Wall Street. In this connection, we should make an effort to use the opportunities available, by publishing comments, as well as creating pointers to useful materials. This involves posting links to interesting articles on social media, up-voting useful articles debunking common myths, posting comments where useful, and otherwise doing our little bit in spreading the light to fight the darkness which surrounds us.

The third element in a coherent strategy is to attempt to create unity within diversity. One important weakness of the heterodoxy is that each dissenter has his own different point of view, while the orthodoxy is united. So, a rainbow coalition which focuses on commonalities and treats differences as a strength rather than a source of division is essential.

We should take our inspiration and courage from the many examples where the few have prevailed against overwhelming odds.

The Power of History

By Sohaib Baig



For many of us, history is simply a series of events, facts, names, and information that belongs to the past. In other words, everything in history originates in the past, and it dies there. It can do no more than provide interesting information, satisfy idle curiosities, or at best help document and archive the various tales of humankind.

Unfortunately, this is a very limited understanding of history. It would be like getting married just to cross it out on your list of goals for life instead of marrying out of the desire to produce a family or any kind of real change in your present life. It'd be like buying food just to stock it up in your kitchen instead of actually consuming and benefiting from it. In reality, the most powerful and nutritious use of history is to go ahead and take that bite, to make it part of you and your present.

Interestingly, all of us already take bites out of history in varying degrees. For example, when we say we believe in the Prophets and in following their examples, we take a big bite out of the past, and we make it a part of us. We do not let the stories corrode away as interesting information, but we give them the very real power to illumine and shape our life in the present.

The complications, however, arise in the ways we allow it to affect us in the present. For example: sometimes people think that only western societies have given science its "true" right. This makes them loftier than other civilizations, including Muslim civilizations, because science is supposed to be a noble and necessary pursuit that all humans should aspire towards. For many of us,

this is a serious concern that affects how we act and what we believe. The way most Muslims these days would react is to show how science used to flourish centuries ago in Muslim civilizations. By doing this, they would be reassuring themselves that nothing is wrong with Islam, and that Muslims certainly do have the potential to go ahead and develop new scientific innovations. Others may try to point out (with some truth) that modern science isn't all that angelic and that it is directly responsible for many of the problems in today's world. Thus, Muslims need not feel that they are missing out.

Although both of these approaches utilize history, they would still be very limited in responding to and in capitalizing on the criticism. And this is one of the key problems we have in dealing with the past.

What would be a more useful way of responding to the criticism that modern science doesn't mesh well with Muslims and Muslim civilizations?

Well, we could begin by attempting to contextualize the critique itself. Since when did modern science become a standard by which to judge a religion and its contributions to mankind? This is a historical question, trying to draw attention to the historical emergence of this critique itself. Indeed, this "standard" has not existed forever. The Qur'an doesn't tell us that we need to believe because belief will lead to scientific development and technological innovation. Rather, it calls itself "The *Furqan*", which means "The Criterion": the ultimate arbiter of truth and falsehood – a position that is falsely claimed by

modern science, and accepted even by many who assert belief in the Qur'anic claim as well.

When we ask "since when," we effectively have a completely different perspective of the question itself. That's when we can see that this emphasis on modern science that is implicit in the question is a very modern development indeed— it simply revolves around a newfound belief in science that is particular to a European modernity. It is not timeless or transcending, even if it may appear to be so to us now (people a few centuries ago didn't grapple with this question as the ultimate life mystery). Ultimately, it's connected to a certain worldview that was brought about by its particular circumstances and forces.

After showing how recent and particular the critique itself is, we could further use history to address another concern implicit in the original critique: is a life lived according to the dictates of modern science even the best way to live life? Now, relax: this isn't to doubt the usefulness of modern science. This is just to ask whether modern science is the most important thing in the world that humanity has always been striving for.

The answer isn't exactly an emphatic yes when we turn to history. In fact, modern science begins to look surprisingly insignificant in the larger scheme of history. Billions of human beings lived without modern science before the modern age. Obviously, each life differs, but you could argue that the people historically did not see themselves as suffering from a lack of modern science. They lived complete lives. Of course, it's hard to miss something you never knew existed — however, that in of itself shows that despite popular conceptions today, modern science isn't the absolutely necessary and ultimate goal that humankind has always been striving and aching for since the descent of Adam ﷺ onto this earth.

In the previous flawed attempts to answer the original critique (that Muslims were great scientists too!), we can also come across a delicate distortion of history. Even if Muslims had been developing science for centuries, their science could not have been exactly classified as modern: their practice was fused with a spiritual and religious understanding of the world, of man's position as the vicegerent of God on earth. They didn't share in the later European conceptions of nature as a raw

force to be conquered and endlessly exploited to serve man's needs. Besides, Muslim scientists historically didn't occupy the same position in society as their modern counterparts do today. They weren't connected to the giant networks of multinational corporations, drug companies, insurance agencies, marketing departments, political lobbying groups, banks and finance companies, public education, and so on.

Thus, by looking back at history in a proper manner, we can learn many things. We learn how recent and modern the critique is, and how it is not a fundamental mystery of life. We also learn about the plurality of ways of living, of how modern science isn't absolutely a fair way of judging the quality of life in the world, throughout history. And finally, it also points us to the plurality of ways of doing what we call science — through history, for example, we can learn how Muslims themselves approached their own version of scientific enterprises, of how these were intrinsically connected to their deeply God-conscious worldview.

This is the power of history — by raising powerful historical questions like "since when," about our most dearly held views and taken for granted "facts", our perceptions of the world and our ideals can be turned completely upside down. It is thus inextricably intertwined with our beliefs regarding ourselves, our faith, and other ideas, whether we perceive it or not. It is our non-contemporaneous present. That is why, at the end of the day, venturing in history requires an immense amount of soul-searching, immense reevaluations of the ideas we may currently worship. It forces us to view the latest man-made fads that may be touted as the "best ideas or accomplishments in the world" as they actually are. It broadens our horizons and reveals the limitations of our delusions of success and ownership. It shows, ultimately, that God truly is the Greatest Being and Force.

We can benefit deeply from nurturing a deep and proper relationship with the past. Through history, we can begin to discover the world, and our souls, for ourselves.

(Courtesy: Albalagh.net; Originally posted at SalaamCal.com)

The Art of being Happy

By Tanzeela Ahmed

Are you happy? This is the question that everyone has to face quite often in their lives, and sometimes the answer to this important question is, no.

What exactly is happiness? The answer to this question is relative for everyone. In fact, the source and reason of happiness may be different for all but there is no doubt that sentiments of happiness give the same strength and pleasure to each person out there irrespective of race, color and origin. It's the universal truth that in this mortal world everyone always wants to be happy. What do we do for the sake of acquiring happiness? Everything, could probably be the best answer to this query.

Since 2012, the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network is compiling the annual World Happiness Report. The global report ranks each country according to the happiness level of its inhabitants. This ranking depends on the answers to the questions asked in the survey based on public welfare, including citizens' personal income, expected healthy age, lifestyle, freedom of expression, social values, general attitudes of people, relationships with each other, etc.

As per the World Happiness Report 2022, Pakistan is ranked at 121 in the list among all countries. Finland, however, tops the list again, and it is the fifth time that it has ranked at the top.

According to the World Happiness Report 2021, Pakistan was ranked at 105 in the list of 149 countries. This decline of 16 degrees in the happiness level of the Pakistani citizens over a period of just one year is a disturbing fact. This fall depicts that perhaps the Pakistani nation is gradually overlooking the art of being happy in domestic and social affairs.

Standard of happiness for those who suffer from injustice, partiality, oppression and poverty will certainly be fairness, provisions and a peaceful life. However, there is no denying that even those who already have all these can and do feel unhappy. Have we ever taken into account that how many people in this world are wandering around unhappy in the quest of happiness and trying hard to be happy?

Everything we possess to make life easier and comfortable makes us happy. Let's look around and try to identify happy people and their general behaviors. I believe that the real happiness has a lot to do with the sense of contentment when it comes to Allah's ﷻ division. To be satisfied with all sorts of circumstances is a real task. No matter how little and much we have, the act of being grateful for everything not only saves us from the

lust for more, but also keeps our hearts at ease. Undoubtedly, thankfulness is a great blessing in itself. Moreover, being grateful to Allah ﷻ lets us learn and fully understand the point that everything we have is a blessing of Allah ﷻ and his decisions are always the best.

At times, despite all the sincere efforts and hard work, fate does not help leaving us heart broken and dejected. However, we ought to bravely deal with such bad times with gratitude and a strong belief that Allah's decisions are always right. Life is easier for grateful people as they are content with whatever they have.

"If you express gratitude, I shall certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, then my punishment is severe" (Quran, 14:7).

Health is closely linked with happiness. The slightest signs of illness such as fever, cough or cold can make a person not to enjoy life at its fullest. Mentally and physically fit people can happily value the blessings of life. Individuals who have positive thinking and attitude will find good in every happening. Such people are easy-going, compassionate, kind, humane and grateful. Happy people tend to make others happy as well with their good manners and positive attitude. Happy men and women are proved to be active members of society.

Our relationships are also a source of contentment. This is why family, blood and extended relations and friends are always at the top of many people's priorities. It nearly seems impossible to imagine living a happy life without our loved ones. Respect, security, dignity and peace at homes promote a sense of happiness among family members.

Another important reason of happiness is one's success and achievements. Success, bright future, and progress can make anyone feel accomplished and happy.

Apart from materialistic gains, however, nature is also something that has a great potential to make us happy like the lush green surroundings, the drizzle of rain, the smooth flow of cold breeze and much more... nature, indeed, is an important source of happiness. Have you ever noticed that the thriving sound of the waves crashing against

the rocks reduces the sensation of soreness hidden in our heart? The sweet whispers of the wind, the crushing of autumn leaves under our feet, the melodious chirping of birds and the pleasant recitation of the Holy Quran can play wonders...

Contentment is the most precious product of the nature and of course we all want to be happy. And we can treasure this heavenly feeling by incorporating gratefulness in our life.

Still many people seem unhappy with their lives, social affairs, relationships and even themselves. In my opinion, the main reason for unhappiness is negative thoughts, attitudes and circumstances. Distress is actually not the outcome of circumstances but negative thoughts. The presence of anxiety always leads to unhappiness and restlessness. Grateful, good natured and positive thinkers know how to be happy in all situations. Whereas ungratefulness, endless desires, greed and extremism in attitudes are big obstacles in the way of happiness.

Good looks, intelligence, lineage etc. are the blessings of Allah ﷻ. Dissatisfaction with the distribution of blessings of Allah ﷻ makes people unsatisfied and unthankful for whatever they have. Destructive feelings such as jealousy and envy have the potential to burn one's sense of gratification in no time. Negative people are not happy themselves and do not let others remain happy.

Happiness needs to be extracted from whatever we have. We seek pleasure in objects, people, luxuries and our favorite things in life but it lies within our nature somewhere in the depths of our heart. Happiness is hidden in fulfilling the rights of mankind in good faith.

Indeed, Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others, and giving like kindred, and forbids indecency, and manifest evil, and wrongful transgression. He admonished you that you may take heed." (Quran, 16:91)

To be happy in mortal life and to keep others happy may sound challenging but it is not totally impossible. Be happy and share happiness with others as this life is beautiful for those who know the art of being happy and grateful.



The Responsibilities of Muslims in the West

By Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi ﷺ

Following is an excerpt from a speech which the respected Shaykh delivered in the United Kingdom years ago. Although it addresses the minorities living in the West, it is equally relevant and applicable to all the Muslims in the contemporary world.

Muslims shoulder a momentous responsibility in a country where Islam is not the dominant religion, where Western values and an un-Islamic way of life hold the upper hand and in which personal and partisan interests are top of the agenda and self-gratification is the goal of life. In such cases, Muslims, particularly when they are in the minority, face a difficult situation.

What is imperative is that they should have unshakeable faith, a conduct marked by boldness and thoughtfulness, and absolute conviction in the message with which Allah ﷻ has endowed them. They should live by a high standard and not suffer from any inferiority complex. If they do not do so, they will simply be seen as imitators of Western civilization and will not gain any respect. And in this eventuality, they will not be able to

play an effective and significant role, which may draw others' attention and bring about any change.

A Muslim in the Persian Court

Let me relate an incident, which illustrates this point well. It demonstrates a devoted Muslim's conduct, a man who had full confidence in his message. For him, all the outward forms of glory and luxury had no significance whatsoever. Rather he felt pity for those given to a life of indulgence and luxury. This incident dates back to the early days of Islamic history. What prompts me to relate it to you is that this incident contains abundant lessons and is full of insight and advice.

The commander-in-chief of the Persian army, Rustum, who was next only to the Persian Emperor in his glory and power, asked the commander of the Muslim army, S'ad bin Abi Waqqas, ﷺ to send to him someone who could explain to them why the Arabian nomads and bedouins had come to Persian centers of civilization and great military power. For they bore no correspondence to Arabia.

One can well visualize what opinion Rustum had of the Arab bedouins whose lifestyle was certainly inferior to Rustum's. For the Arabs lived in tents, and their staple diet was dates and camel's meat. Rustum had utter contempt for the Arabs. He, however, summoned someone who may be able to explain to him the Arab's purpose and motives in engaging in a battle with the Persians.

An Ordinary Muslim, an Extraordinary Human Being

It is one of the miracles of Islam that it elevated all Arabs to a lofty and high standard in that they took pride in their faith, in Allah ﷻ, and in Islam, and lived by the message of Islam. Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas ﷺ selected Rab'i bin 'Amir ﷺ for this purpose. Rab'i bin 'Amir is a somewhat obscure figure in Islamic history. He did not have much to his credit. I am not relating this incident for its own sake or for its sheer interest or because it affords some gratification to our nationalistic pride; the reason why I narrate it to you is to give you some idea of Rab'i's tremendous faith and confidence, which he displayed before the commander-in-chief of the Persian Empire. This enabled him to speak freely and boldly before Rustum. This may help you compare and contrast his response with your own conduct, conviction, power of faith and your attitude towards Western culture, civilization and its hegemony. This may also serve as a vantage point for observing how we have been discharging our responsibilities and how we respond to the prevailing Western civilization, which holds general currency in the contemporary world and a position of leadership and superiority.

Rab'i bin 'Amir appeared in Rustum's court. His dress was marred with patches and darning marks. He was carrying an ordinary sword and shield. He entered the Persian camp riding an ordinary horse. Dressed in his unimpressive outfit he entered the court, crushing its plush carpets. He tied his horse and approached Rustum. As he was armed with his shield and sword, guards at the entrance objected and asked him to lay down his weapons. Rab'i bin 'Amir refused, saying that he had not approached Rustum on his own,

rather Rustum had invited him. If the guards did not let him enter in his armed state, he would return to his camp. Rustum allowed him to retain his arms.

From Narrowness to Spaciousness

Underwhelmed by the sumptuous setting of the court, Rab'i approached Rustum with great confidence. Rustum asked him what had brought the Arabs to Persia? With his indomitable courage and conviction, which owed its origin to the divine scripture and the Prophet's ﷺ message he elegantly said:

“Allah (the Almighty) has sent us so that we may liberate fellow human beings from subservience to other fellow human beings and bring them to obedience to the One True God. We are here to take them from the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness. Our aim is to free them of the persecution perpetrated against them by other religions. We want to bless them with the justice and equity of Islam.”

What Rab'i said about Islam's message and its primary goal with full conviction and what he said about releasing men from the yoke of other religions' injustices and to bring them under Islam's justice and equity is not all surprising. For this was his very faith. However, part of his utterance, that in which he says they had been sent to free the Persians from the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness, amazes me. Had he referred to the narrowness of this world and spaciousness of the Hereafter, it would not have perplexed me in the least. For every Muslim believes in this truism and Rab'i belonged to the early days of Islamic history when Muslims were full of conviction.

However, as I pointed out, I am amazed by his utterance that the Muslims were to liberate fellow human beings from the narrowness of this world and to take them to its spaciousness. In other words, Rab'i told Rustum that the Muslims had not come out of Arabia attracted by booty or any material considerations, which would accrue to them. Rather, they felt pity for their fellow human beings. They intended to free them from their narrow and dark cells. For the Persians and non-Muslims appeared to them as caged animals

leading only an animal-like existence. For the Persians were slaves to their own desires and fashions of the day. They were so much bound by their own traditions and customs that they could not do anything on their own. They needed help and support at every step.

The Lifestyles of Rich, Famous, and Ignorant

It is borne out by history that when the Persian emperor Yazdgar escaped from his palace, he felt thirsty on his way. He entered a house and was offered water in an ordinary glass. He refused to drink it in such an ordinary glass, for he was used to taking water in gold and silver vessels. If a Persian wore a crown worth less than one hundred thousand dirham or if he did not have a palace with fountains and an orchard, he did not enjoy any respect in that society.

In other words, Rab'i pointed out to him that they were the slaves of their slaves; for they depended totally on others. The Muslims, however, wanted to liberate them. The Muslims had not come to Persia for their own interests. Rather they had taken this long, arduous journey for the sake of the Persians themselves. They did not lack anything in their own homeland, for the Arabian peninsula is vast enough. However, they felt concerned about the unnatural way of life to which the Persians were addicted. The Muslims were not slaves to their own desires. Nor were they addicted to good dresses and food and to a train of slaves. They led a life of absolute freedom in the desert and thanked Allah ﷻ for whatever they received.

Allah ﷻ had sent them to liberate those whom He wills from subservience to fellow human beings and to bring them to the obedience of Allah ﷻ, to free them from the narrowness of this world, to bring them to its spaciousness and to enable them to benefit from Islam's justice and equity by freeing them of the oppression of other religions. For the Persians had been a target of other religions' persecution, and had led a contemptible life. They did not enjoy any real peace or happiness.

Bring Them What They Are Missing

Let me once again emphasize that you should play an independent, effective and fundamental

role in society. Your life should be an ideal one which may draw the attention of others. It should excite the minds of the local people who may be compelled to contrast their own life with yours. Your life should make them curious for gaining sound information about Islam. However, if you slavishly imitate the Western lifestyle and degrade yourselves, there will not be and cannot be any distinction between you and the local people. In this case, they will not feel any attraction towards you. Nor will it make them reflect on you or hold you in esteem. They will not consider you a model to emulate.

However, when you present before them a unique way of life, it will make them curious. They will be forced to approach you, seeking the source of your worldview. They will naturally ask you where you learnt these high values and noble ideals from. They will be keen to have literature about Islam and the biography of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

You should, thus, explain to them what made you different and what helped you attain your noble character. This will make them respectful towards you, Insha'Allah. You must present a model and an ideal way of life, which may make them interested in studying Islam and eager to know the source of your guidance, which enabled you to follow a particular way of life and worldview.

No Inferiority Complex, No Imitation

This is the only way in which you can play an effective role in non-Islamic societies. However, if you assimilate yourself fully into their society and take to their way of life, as a result of either some inferiority complex or out of sheer imitation whether in the U.K., or in India or in Africa or in any part of the world, you can never influence them nor can you ever bring about any change in them, even if you live in their midst for centuries.



The Advent of Islam

By Ukasha Niazi



The Life of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

As the world was on the verge of disorder and chaos, it really became essential that someone brings about a much-needed revolution. And finally, 'Now, at the time when mankind and civilization were on the edge of destruction, Allah ﷻ caused a man to be born in Arabia, who was entrusted the most difficult task: not only to rescue mankind from imminent destruction but also raise it to sublime heights, beyond the knowledge of historians and the imagination of poets.... This man was Muhammad (peace be upon him).'" (Mankind's Debt to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ – Maulana S. Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi).

A Short Biography of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was born on Monday, in month of Rabi-ul-Awwal and the year of Elephant (570 C.E.); (The Prophet ﷺ was asked regarding the fast of Monday. He replied, 'It is the day I was born and the day when the first revelation was sent upon me.' (Sahih Muslim; The Book of Fasting)

When Prophet's ﷺ mother Bibi Amina reported the news of the birth to his grandfather, Abdul Mutalib, he felt overjoyed, took his grandson out to the Ka'ba, and praised Allah ﷻ. He named him Muhammad – 'the praised one.'

It was a custom in Arabia that babies were placed

in custody of a foster mothers who lived in the countryside, so that the baby received a healthy outdoor environment. The foster mother for Muhammad ﷺ, a fatherless baby, was Halima Sadiyya ﷺ who looked after him until he was weaned and then returned to his mother and grandfather.

When Prophet Muhammad ﷺ reached the tender age of six, his mother passed away and after two years when he was no more than eight years old, his beloved grandfather withdrew from this mortal world. Soon after the demise of Abdul Mutalib, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came under a guardianship of his uncle, Abu-Talib. Abu-Talib loved him from the core of his heart and showed affection towards him more than which he showed to even his own sons.

Over the course of time, he ﷺ grew young and he used to flock goats.

Despite being in a society that was going through an era of ignorance, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was stayed away and remain protected from obscenities and other evil activities prevalent in the Arabian culture at the time. In his teenage years he continued to help his uncle in trading and due to his excellent values and trustworthy dealings in transactions, soon came to be known as 'Al-Sadiq' (the truthful) and 'Al-Amin' (the trustworthy). Following his habit of honesty,

Sayyida Khadija رضي الله عنها who was a woman of excellent character, fine intellect, and great wealth, sent him a proposal of marriage. Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was twenty-five and Sayyidah Khadija رضي الله عنها was forty when they got married.

Intimations of Prophet hood:

As he received a financial relaxation after his marriage with Sayyidah Khadija رضي الله عنها, Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم isolated himself for the worship of Allah تعالى. He would go towards the 'cave of Hira' and spend time in seclusion. 'One day when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was in the Cave of Hira, an angel Jibrael عليه السلام appeared to him. He told him, "Read." The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied, "I am unlettered." Upon it, Jibrael عليه السلام took him within the fold of his arms and embraced him so hard that he felt exhausted. The angel left him then and said again, "Read." The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم replied again, "I cannot read." He took him again in his arms, held him tight with a great force, and then released. The third time he asked him, "Read." The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم gave him the same reply. The angel then recited these verses (which now form a part of a chapter in the Qur'an):

(In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) "Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. [the one] Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not." [Al- 'Alaq: 1-5]' (Muhammad-The Last Prophet by Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, page 26)

A visit to Warqah:

Naturally, Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم was alarmed by the first revelation and felt shocked at this new experience. However, he was soon consoled by his wife, Khadija رضي الله عنها, who took him to her cousin, the scholar Waraqah bin Nawfal. Waraqah listened to his account with all ears and at the end verified his prophet hood.

The First(s) in Islam:

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم now began to preach Islam. Khadija رضي الله عنها, his wife, Ali رضي الله عنه, his cousin aged eight, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, his friend, and Zayd bin Haritha رضي الله عنه, his slave, accepted Islam the very first day. Nevertheless, his beloved uncle, Abu Talib did not accept Islam, but he told them that

'although he was not willing to embrace that religion, they* had his full support to follow it. He also assured the Prophet (P.B.U.H) that nobody would dare to oppose him. (Seerat-un-Nabi, vol. 1, p. 206); (*the use of 'they' refers to an incident: Once when the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was saying his Salah in with Hazrat Ali رضي الله عنه, Abu Talib, his uncle, accidentally came upon them. Thereupon, he permitted both his nephew and son to follow the religion).'

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم preached Islam in secret for three years. Then Allah تعالى commanded him to announce his religion openly.

Social Boycott:

When the people of Makkah Al-Mukarramah realized that Islam was spreading speedily in its residents and no amount of pressure could dissuade the Muslims from following their religion, they thought of a new way of hindering the development of Islam. Therefore, they decided to socially boycott the entire tribe of Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم so that Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should be hurt socially and consequently he may stop preaching Islam. In this regard, all tribes prepared a document, mentioning that none of the tribes and families would keep a relationship with the people of Bani Hashim, until they handed over the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to them. According to the document, trade and other social interactions were also banned with Banu Hashim. The document was displayed at the door of Kaaba (Zadul Ma'ad, 3: 29) and hence the boycott began. Abu Talib, the head of the tribe, took the others of Banu Hashim along and took shelter in a valley. The people of Banu Hashim were thus isolated in this valley, where food items hardly reached them, and they had to starve for several days. Some tried unsuccessfully to satisfy their hunger by chewing the leaves of trees. This tough situation lasted for three years, which was a difficult period for the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and his tribe. As time went by, some disbelievers began to repent about this boycott and started taking an initiative to reject the boycott. Accordingly, they talked to others for ending it (Al-Rawzul Anaf, 1: 220) Finally, there results bore fruit and many people agreed to lift the boycott. Also, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had told Abu

Talib that termites had eaten up the boycott document. When people checked, it was so: only the words Bismil-Allah (In your name, O Allah!) were spared (Zadul Ma'ad, 3: 30). This tyranny was finally over.

Migrations to Abyssinia:

Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ followers were initially few in number, and hence experienced immense resentment and hostility from Meccan polytheists. 'When the sufferings of Muslims crossed all limits, the Prophet ﷺ allowed them to immigrate to Abyssinia (Habsha) for the safeguard of their lives and faith. Thus, eleven men and four women formed a small group and set out to Abyssinia in the dead of the night.' (Fathul Bari ibn al Hajar, 7:188-89)

After this migration, a second migration to Abyssinia was also made which included eighty-three men and eighteen women.

The death of wife and uncle:

'In the tenth year of the prophet hood, Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, breathed his last. With the difference of three days the Prophet's ﷺ dear wife, Hazrat Khadija ؓ, passed away.' (Fath ul Bari 7:194) Prophet ﷺ was very aggrieved at her demise. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Kitab ul Manaqib il Ansaar, Bab tazawajun Nabi Khadija wa Fazlaha. Musnad Ahmad, 6: 118)

After the demise of a caring wife and a helpful uncle, the Quraysh felt courageous in blatantly oppressing the Prophet ﷺ and his followers.

Journey to Tai'f:

In this hard time, when the Meccans were not responding to his call, he planned to move somewhere else to preach Islam. The location he chose was Taif, which was a few miles away from Makkah. Upon arriving there, he met the nobles of city and talked to them regarding Islam, but they all ridiculed him and refused listening to him. In fact, 'they instigated their slaves and city urchins to go after him...they pelted him with stones, causing him severe injuries; blood trickled down to his shoes and clotted there, making it difficult for him to take out his shoes for ablution (Wudu).' (Muhammad – The Last Prophet by Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi Page 59) (Once when Prophet ﷺ

was preaching in Taif, he received such serious injuries that he fell unconscious. Zayd ؓ, his companion, carried him on his back out of the city where he sprinkled water on his face and helped him regain consciousness).

Although not a single person accepted Islam in Taif despite so much suffering, the Prophet's ﷺ heart remained charged with faith in Allah's ﷻ grandeur and His love. (Ibid pg. 60). At that difficult period, Allah ﷻ sent Jibrael ؑ along with the Angel of Mountains. He was asked that if he wished, Allah ﷻ would order the Angel of Mountains to crush the entire valley of Taif between two mountains. 'Prophet ﷺ however said that he would never curse the people of Taif, for if they did not accept Allah's ﷻ Oneness, he hoped that their progeny would bear faith in Him.' (Sahih Bukhari. Also see As-Seerat un Nabawiya by Imam Zahabi, Seerat ibn-Hisham, Majma'uz Zawaed). Finally, he was forced to return to Makkah, where the Meccans were once again ready to oppress and mock him.

Miraj; an Ascension to the Heavens:

During this period of hostility, the Prophet ﷺ experienced an event which is known as Miraj. He ascended to the heavens by the will of Allah ﷻ and witnessed many signs of Allah, the Almighty and met the earlier Prophets ﷺ as well. He was provided with hospitality and compensation by Allah Almighty for the distress he had come across in the preaching of Islam especially during the journey of Taif.

Migration to Medina:

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ increased the speed of his mission and began inviting other Arab tribes towards Islam. (These tribes would gather in Makkah for performing Hajj (pilgrimage) around the Kabbah) In the eleventh year of prophet hood, in the Hajj season, six people from Medina met Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and carried back his teachings with them. As a result, the 'next year (in the twelfth year of the prophet hood) {some} people of Medina came to Makkah and stealthily accepted Islam. When they wanted to return, the Prophet ﷺ sent Musab bin 'Umair ؓ with them to teach them Islam' (Muhammad-The Last Prophet by Sayyid Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, page

68) Due to the efforts made by Musab bin 'Umair رضي الله عنه, in the next year, seventy-three men and two women came to Makkah for embracing Islam. Along with accepting Islam, they also requested Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to immigrate to their city, where they would welcome him whole-heartedly. Subsequently, 'the Prophet ﷺ allowed those Muslims to immigrate to Medina who were undergoing such severe persecution at Makkah that living there had become impossible. (Zadul Ma'ad, 3: 49, Rahmatullil 'Aalameen, 1: 82).

When the people of Quraysh observed that Muslims were settling down in Madina Al-Munawwarah and Islam was gaining power, they planned the assassination of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, so that he could be stopped from entering Medina and hence the fostering of Islam would come to a halt. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was however informed about their plan by Allah ﷻ. Thus, he was commanded by Allah ﷻ to migrate (as the narration in Bukhari shows; Kitab ul Manaqib, Bab Hijrat un Nabi wa Sahaba lil Madina) on the night, people had planned to assassinate him. Though, the Meccans had besieged his house, but Allah ﷻ placed a cover on their eyes after which they could not notice the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ exiting the house. 'This incident occurred on the 27th of Safar, in the thirteenth year of prophet hood on Thursday (12th September, 621 AD)' (Seeratun Nabi, 1:270, Rahmatullil 'Aalameen, 1:85)

The news of the Prophet's imminent arrival had already reached Medina and the whole city was impatiently awaiting him. Upon reaching the blessed city, the first thing he did there was to construct a Masjid (mosque). (This first mosque of Islam was Masjid e Q'uba).

After Masjid e Quba, the second mosque to be built there was Masjid e Nabawi. In Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ united different tribes and people of different religions such as Jews under the Constitution of Medina. He also ordered for a fellowship and a brotherhood between emigrants from Makkah (Muhajireen) and the residents of Medina (Ansar).

Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi رحمته الله has beautifully depicted this union in his book.

'The Muhajireen had come to Medina without any preparation. There were some rich persons also among them, but they had immigrated in unfavourable circumstances and had not been able to bring anything with them. Although the Ansar (the Muslims in Medina) eagerly extended all help to them, there was the need of a permanent arrangement for them. The Muhajireen did not like to live on charity; they were used to earning their livelihood themselves. But because they were badly short of means, the Prophet ﷺ decided to establish the bond of brotherhood among them (based on Islam). When the construction of the Masjid {e- Nabawi} was complete, he ﷺ called the Ansar. They gathered at the house of Hazrat Anas bin Maalik رضي الله عنه, who was ten years of age at the time. The Muhajireen were forty-five in number. Pointing to the Muhajireen, the Prophet ﷺ told the Ansar, "These are your brothers." Then he called one from the Muhajireen and one from the Ansar and said, "You two are brothers." And thus, all the Muhajireen and the same number of Ansar were tied into a new bond of brotherhood. The Ansar fulfilled the obligation of this relationship in the best way possible. Each Ansari took his Muhajir brother home, showed him his property, and gave him half of it. (Muhammad-The Last Prophet by Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Hasani Nadwi, page 94)

Islam spread throughout Medina and a number of Jews and other non-Muslims accepted Islam. In the meantime, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ began to send delegations to visit other tribes and districts. This new mode for the fostering of Islam worried idol worshippers. The Meccans were still waiting for some chance to mitigate the Muslims' power. Although, there were skirmishes that took place between Muslims and non-Muslims from time to time, but there no decisive battle had yet been fought which would turn the pages of history.

(To be continued, inshAllah)



Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani ولامت برکاتہم

Translation by Kaiser Nizamani

Association for the Reformation of Children

Bab ul-Islam was a Masjid located near our house, mention of which has been made previously. Hadhrat Haji Muhammad Ayyub Sahib (may Allah's mercy be upon him) used to live in a house near that Masjid. He had many sons, among whom respected Muhammad Kaleem Sahib (may Allah keep him in peace and good health for a long time) was almost the same age as me. We became friends during our meetings at the Masjid for prayers, and, Alhamdulillah, this friendship continues till today. MashaAllah, his household was a religious household. I did not get much chance to play with him, but he proposed to form an association comprising children, the aim of which was to raise religious awareness among children. Accordingly, mainly due to his efforts, a (perhaps weekly) children's gathering began to take place in the Masjid. Even though Kaleem Sahib studied in a secular school (perhaps in Grade seven or eight), due to the excellent upbringing he had received at home he was very knowledgeable about religious matters even at that young age. Also, he was more adept at speaking than me. Thus, as far as I remember, he eloquently narrated the story of the acceptance of Islam by Umar رضی اللہ عنہ in the first meeting, which the children liked very much. I have mentioned before that I would falter a lot while speaking. As a result, I found it very difficult to speak fluently like Kaleem Sahib. But when this children's gathering began taking place regularly, I also had to speak sometimes. For this, as far as I can remember, I would memorize some stories of a Companion from "Hikayat-e-Sahaba" and narrate it during the gathering. My nephew Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahib (may Allah's mercy be upon him), despite staying very far from

us at Bandar Road, would regularly attend this children's gathering. This gathering became such a regular thing that we thought of giving it a name. When we could not think up any suitable name, we began calling it "Department for the Propagation of Islam" and also began recording its minutes, etc. in a notebook. One day our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) chanced upon this notebook and asked me: "What is this?" I told him everything, at which Hadhrat stated: "This name is not suitable. Name it 'Association for the Reformation of Children'". Subsequently, we even had a stamp made with that name. This program finally ended when we moved out from our house at Burns Road.

Arabic Language Teaching Centers

The ambassador of Syria in Pakistan, respected Jawwad Al-Murabit Sahib, despite adopting a Western outlook was a devout and religious person and would visit our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) with great love and respect. That same year, he proposed to our respected father that the Syrian Embassy, in collaboration with Darul Uloom, could help establish centers for teaching Arabic language through the Direct Method in various parts of Karachi. Our respected father liked this idea and agreed to it. Accordingly, with Darul Uloom being considered the base, such centers were established in several institutes throughout Karachi. Ustadh Muhammad Ameen Al-Misri was working as Cultural Attaché in the Syrian Embassy at that time. He not only took up the responsibility of overseeing the centers and drafting their curriculum, but also got ready to personally teach Arabic.

He began his classes in Darul Uloom. He would bring a prepared lesson every day and would

deliver it in Arabic. His method of teaching was that for each word he would practically demonstrate its meaning and thereafter would make each student say that word, and would especially focus on accent and pronunciation. He first taught the word "Kitab" (book). Even though he knew that the word "Kitab" is also used in Urdu with the same meaning and all students understood its meaning, but I remember that he must have repeated the word "Kitab", with a book in hand, at least fifty times. Thereafter, he made the students say the word the same number of times, so that they could pronounce it in the correct Arabic accent. Likewise, he would come with a prepared lesson every day and would make us practice it in class. Later, his lessons were compiled into a book and were published as Tareeqah Jadeedah Li Ta'leemil 'Arabiyyah (A Modern Method for Teaching Arabic).

For the first few days, our class also attended the lessons of Ustadh Ameen Misri (may Allah's mercy be upon him). Since he would prepare each day's lesson daily, he would sometimes make a student stand beside him to demonstrate something. He would randomly pick some students for this and I would often be picked, perhaps because I was the youngest student in the class. As a result, my name also appears in the book, 'Tareeqah Jadeedah'.

After some days Ustadh Ameen Misri (may Allah's mercy be upon him) felt that there were students of varying abilities in the class, and to teach all of them at the level of "Tareeqah Jadeedah" was not suitable. He therefore divided the students into three levels according to their abilities and we were put in Level 2. For this purpose the services of three additional Syrian teachers were acquired - Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad, Ustadh Abdul Hameed Hashimi and Ustadh Yaseen Al-Hilu. We did not get the opportunity to benefit from Ustadh Yaseen Al-Hilu as he taught the higher-level class, but we benefited greatly from the lessons of Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad and Ustadh Abdul Hameed Al-Hashimi.

Ustadh Ahmadul Ahmad would remain serious all the time. Once, when a special guest was to visit Darul Uloom, he told me to deliver a speech in Arabic on that occasion. He also instructed me to prepare the speech myself. I concocted something by putting together whatever words I could muster and showed it to him. My speech began with a mention of my lack of knowledge and ability, reading which he interjected: "Avoid these kind of words as they cause the speaker to lose morale and make his speech insipid."

Thereafter, he wrote a speech himself and told me to memorize it. When I had memorized it, he said: "Now demonstrate to me how you will deliver the speech." I began reciting the memorized speech in our Desi style. "This is not how a speech is delivered," he interjected. "Come, stand next to me," he instructed. Thereafter, he put his right foot slightly ahead of his left foot and said: "Stand like this. This will create self-confidence." He, thereafter, made me read each sentence and would correct me with, "Not like this, rather say it like this," and would go on to deliver the same sentence in a relatively thunderous voice, and would make me repeat it until my voice acquired the required level of clarity and thunder. He made me practice the entire speech in this manner. On the day of the occasion, he showered me with accolades when I made the speech according to how he had instructed.

In contrast, Ustadh Abdul Hameed Hashimi was a very handsome, jovial and fashionable young man. He would not come with any written lesson, but would rather teach children Arabic through joking and having fun with them. Sometimes he would write a verse of the Quran, or a Hadith, or a literary text, and would elucidate its literary subtleties; at other times he would explain a couplet. He would also make us practice speaking with an Arabic accent. During class, he would make some student stand beside him and would ask questions related to what was written on the black board. At the same time, he would tell various jokes, or sometimes play pranks with the student standing next to him.

One day, he was probably teaching about "Tanaafur-e-Huroof" (separation of letters), i.e. similar sounding letters should not be combined in a sentence in such a way that they become difficult to pronounce. He related a story of a village fisherman to illustrate this. A small boat was called "kakak" in his native language, which comprises of three "ka" sounds. One day he went out fishing in his boat when he saw another man in a similar boat throwing a net in the river to catch fish. At this, he recited two couplets addressing the other man:

ياراكبا في كلكك
كلكك كلككي
وصانداني ثركك
وكلي كلكك

Transliteration:

Yaa Raakiban Fee Kakakika WaSaa'idan Fee

Sharakika

KakakukaKakakakee WakakakeeKakakakika

Translation:

O the one riding in your boat/and catching fish with your net,

Your boat is similar to mine/and my boat is similar to yours

He wrote this poem comprising of sixteen "ka" sounds on the black board and invited students to read it. The students kept faltering in reading the poem and the rest of the class convulsed with laughter.

In short, his lessons were very engaging and stimulating and we would eagerly await them. One day he clenched his fist and challenged the class: "I will give a prize to whoever is able to unclench my fist." We had several tall and heavily built students in the class; all of them took turns to try to pry open his fist with all their might, but all failed. The last student to try was our classmate Maulana Abdur Razzaq Muradabadi (who later migrated to Madinah Munawwarah and passed away there), who was a tall, heavy-set young man and 'defeat' was not a word in his dictionary. He swaggered forward with an air of bold confidence and began exerting all his might. The determined faces of both teacher and student reddened with exertion (and the teacher appeared even more handsome in this red complexion) but he also could not unclench the fist. At long last the teacher announced: "Alright. Let me help you a little." He then loosened his fist such that a gap formed in the middle, so that someone could put a finger in the middle of his hand. He told Abdur Razzaq Sahib: "If you were to insert a finger in my fist, perhaps that could help you pry it open." Abdur Razaq Sahib at once inserted his finger, but as soon as the finger entered the fist, the teacher tightened his fist and the finger became stuck in the middle. Now, let alone forcing open the teacher's fist, Abdur Razaq Sahib himself got stuck with his finger in the teacher's fist. He now began exerting all his might to get his finger released, while the entire class doubled over with laughter. At long last, Maulana Abdur Razzaq Sahib had to concede defeat and the teacher liberated his finger. In short, he would to teach us Arabic phrases, idioms and conversations related to different situations, while making students have fun.

May Allah ﷻ recompense both those teachers the best reward. They played an unforgettable part in fostering a taste for Arabic language in our class. Today, when I have to communicate in Arab countries by conversation, speech or writing, people often ask if I studied in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. And they are astonished when I tell them that my entire Arabic and religious education took place only in Darul Uloom Karachi. But the reality is that whatever interest and ability for Arabic writing and speech Allah ﷻ bestowed, the first reason for it was the teaching and training of our respected teacher Shaykhul Hadith Hadhrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahib (may Allah's mercy be upon him); he not only taught us Arabic grammar, but he also emphasised upon practicing Arabic composition. The other reason were those two Syrian teachers who would speak on some literary aspect of some text, and based on that would make us practice Arabic speaking and composition.

At first their classes took place in a hall in Darul Uloom Nanak Warah. Later, they were moved to a school in front of Civil Hospital, and we would attend their lesson for around one hour after Asr.

That year, the following were my results which are recorded in the Gazette of Darul Uloom dated Ramadan 1373H to Sha'ban 1374H, equivalent to May 1954 to April 1955:

Subject	Marks
Qudoori	47
Kaafiya	50
Nafhatul Arab	53
Tayseer ul Mantiq	45
Albalaaghah Al-Waadiahah	50
An-Nahwul Wadih	50
Mirqat	45

Average: 48, Overall Grade: First class, and 1st position in Nafhatul Arab.

To be continued, insha'Allah

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اگر 9 ذی الحجہ 9 بجے تک اطلاع نہیں کی تو ادارہ اس کو بطور عطیہ شرعی ضابطوں کے مطابق کسی بھی فلاحی کام میں استعمال کر سکتا ہے۔

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