

# The Intellect

Al Quran  
Surah al-An'am - Part 11

Al Hadith  
Like a Traveller  
Maulana Manzoor Naumani كلمة

The Awakening  
Reflections  
Maulana Abdus Sattar حفظ الله

## *The Blind Girl*

A journey from self-absorption to self-discovery



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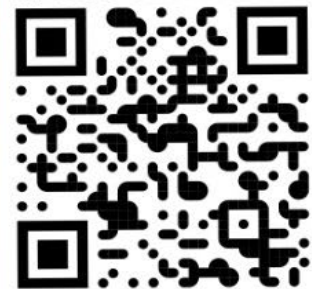
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# Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

*“You will find most of them to be ungrateful...”*

So said Iblis (Al-Qur’an 7:17).

Time and again, we fail to defy this prophecy of the accursed Satan – we only realize the significance of our blessings once we are tested by being deprived of them.

The *Cover Story* featured in this issue of *The Intellect* reminds us, in a very heartwarming manner, of this tendency of ours to be forever unappreciative of what we have and yearning for what we don’t. It also points to the pitfalls of adopting such a superfluous attitude.

In *The Poison of Positivism*, Dr. Asad Zaman discusses in detail a falsifiable theory upon which the entire edifice of western education has been erected: Logical Positivism.

The esteemed author elucidates:

*This philosophy says that all the knowledge that we have comes from our senses and logic. Importantly, it denies the value of tradition and of faith as sources of knowledge. Any traditional knowledge, or Quranic teaching, must be tested empirically, and must accord with our observations and logic, if it is to be counted as knowledge. Positivism has very disturbing implications. Morality is just meaningless noise...*

Turn to our *UlulAlbab* section to learn more about the banes of this decadent philosophy.

\*\*\*\*\*

As we see the tentacles of the genocidal Israeli war machine extend to other Muslim nations in the Middle East, the nightmare of ‘Greater Israel’ apparently seems to proceed towards its fruition; but, one must bear in mind that there is a Supreme Designer in the Heavens, Who will take to task each person (and nation) who wrongs, kills and maims another unjustly and Who has a plan, (to the hikmah of which we mere mortals may be blind at present), which will always be a perfect one.

A Muslim never despairs of the mercy of Allah ﷻ ; we too will remain hopeful. Especially since we have been foretold about the virtues and blessings of Ash-Shaam, (which historically included not just present-day Syria, but also Palestine, Jordon and Lebanon).

A Hadith (in Sunan Abu Dawud 2483) describes regarding the latter days, narrated Ibn Hawlah رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said: it will turn out that you will be armed troops, one in Syria, one in Yemen and one in Iraq. Ibn Hawlah said: choose for me, Messenger of Allah, if I reach that time. He replied: Go to Syria, for it is Allah’s chosen land, to which His best servants will be gathered...



Relish some engaging verses about Ash Shaam and our beloved Filisteen in our Poets' Panorama series.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nothing can be more unwise than to delay the accumulation of our good deeds to the advanced stages of our life; after all, do we have any guarantees about being around till a 'later stage'?

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اغْتَنِمِ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ وَصِحَّتَكَ قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ  
وَعِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَمْرِكَ وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ شُغْلِكَ وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ

Ibn Abbas reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your busyness, and your life before your death.*

The Muslim youth in yesteryears took the advice of this *Hadith-e-Mubarika* very seriously. In *The Fountain of Youth* (featured in our *Education 101* section) we get to see a glimpse of the astounding achievements made by very young members of the *Ummah* in fields as varied as poetry, exegesis, Arabic morphology, logic, sociology, historiography, economics and philosophy; additionally, a number of them were polymaths.

This phenomenon, and the downsides of adopting a contrasting philosophy as a way of life, cannot be described in better words than the author of the piece itself:

*Youth is the spring of life. It can either be a time of hedonistic enjoyment and self-satisfying fulfilment or it can be a time of self-discovery, growing enlightenment and increasing perfection.*

We hope and pray that we too can use the minutes, hours and days of our life in fruitful ways that at least attempt to mimic, albeit imperfectly, the wonderful feats of our pious predecessors.

With request for continuation of special du'as for our brethren across the Muslim world, especially Gaza,

Zawjah Farid

Surah  
Al-An'am  
Part 11

The  
Meanings of the  
**Quran**  
(The Cattle)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَّعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ سَوْلاً تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

He is the One who has created gardens, trellised and untrellised, and date-palms and crops with a variety of edibles and the olive and the pomegranate, (some) similar to one another, and (some) dissimilar. Eat of its fruit when it bears fruits, and pay its due on the day of harvest, and do not be extravagant. Surely, Allah does not like the extravagant [141]

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاءٌ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾

Among cattle (He has created) those fit for loading and those fit for laying on the floor 39. Eat of what Allah has provided you, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is an open enemy to you. [142]

ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامٌ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ نَبِّئُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

(Allah has created) eight pairs: two of sheep and two of goats. Say, "Is it the two males that He has prohibited or the two females, or whatever the wombs of the two females contain? Tell me on the basis of knowledge if you are true". [143]

وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ آلذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّاكُمُ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا فَمَن أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

And (He has created) two of Camels and two of oxen. Say, "Is it the two males that He has prohibited or the two females or whatever the wombs of the two females contain. Or were you present when Allah has advised you of this?" 40 So, who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah in order to misguide people without knowledge? Surely, Allah gives no guidance to an unjust people [144]

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَّسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رَجَسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾

Say, "I do not find, in what has been revealed to me, anything (out of the cattle under discussion) prohibited for anyone who eats it, unless it be carrion or blood that pours forth, or flesh of swine - because it is impure - or there be an animal slaughtered sinfully by invoking on it the name of someone other than Allah. However, if anyone is compelled by necessity, neither seeking pleasure nor crossing the limit, then you Lord is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful 41 [145]

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا أَوْ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ بِبَغْيِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

For those who are Jews We prohibited all that has claws. Of cows and goats, We prohibited for them their fats, except that which is borne by their backs or their entrails, or what is attached to a bone. 42 Thus we recompensed them for their transgression. We are definitely truthful. [146]

فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَاسِعَةٍ وَلَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

Then, if they gave the lie to you, say, "Your Lord is the Lord of all-embracing mercy, and His punishment cannot be averted from the sinning people." [147]

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لِنَلَايَن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

Those who associate partners with Allah will say, "Had Allah willed, we would not have associated (partners with Him), nor our fathers, nor would we have made anything prohibited." In the same way those who went before them gave the lie to (the truth) until they tasted Our punishment. Say, "Do you have any sure knowledge that you may produce to us? You follow nothing but whims, and do nothing but make conjectures." [148]

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

Say, "Then Allah's is the conclusive proof. So, had He willed, He would have brought all of you on the right path". 43 [149]

قُلْ هَلُمَّ شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا فإِن شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

Say, "Bring your witnesses who testify that Allah has prohibited this." Then, if the testify, (O Prophet), do not be a witness to them, and do not follow the desires of those who have given the lie to Our signs and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and who equate others with their Lord. [150]

قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنُلِّ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا تَشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا سَوَاءٌ بِالْوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا سَوَاءٌ تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ سَوَاءٌ تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ سَوَاءٌ تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَمْ وَصَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

Say (O Prophet to the infidels), "Come, and I shall recite what your Lord has prohibited for you: Do not associate anything with Him (as His partner); and be good to parents, and do not kill your children because of poverty – We will give provision to you, and to them as well - and

do not go near shameful acts, whether they are open or secret; and do not kill a person whom Allah has given sanctity, except rightfully. This He has enjoined upon you, so that you may understand. [151]

## Explanatory Notes

- 39) This refers to the smaller animals like goats and sheep that are used either as food after being slaughtered, or their skins are used as carpets. The words 'laying on the floor' include both ways of their utilization.
- 40) This verse condemns in detail the pagan practice of holding certain cattle as prohibited. They had no uniform principle for prohibition. At times they declared the males unlawful, and at some other times they chose females to be declared as prohibited. The verse says all these pairs are created by Allah, and He has neither prohibited males nor females. Nor is there any instruction to the effect that whatever is born from the womb of the female, whether male or female, should be held as unlawful.
- 41) This exception relates to all prohibited things. See notes on 2:173 and 5:3.
- 42) The reference of this prohibition was given earlier in 4:160. Both verses describe that this prohibition was imposed on the Jews as a punishment for some of their misdeeds. This should not be confused with the prohibition of camel referred to in 3:93, which was made unlawful by Yaqub عليه السلام himself due to his vow. See note on 3:93
- 43) As mentioned several times before, it means that Allah had the power to make all the infidels believe in the truth by force, but it was the requirement of the test for which man is sent to this world that he should accept the truth on his own volition on the basis of the proofs explained to him.

*(To be continued In sha' Allah...)*



# Like A Traveller...

209/69) Narrates Umar رضي الله عنه "I went to the Prophet ﷺ and saw that he was lying on a mat made of the leaves of the date-palm, and there was no bedding between him and the mat, and the texture of the mat had left deep marks on his body, and under his head was placed a leather

pillow stuffed with the bark of the date-tree. On seeing it, I said, Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah to grant prosperity to your followers. He has bestowed riches upon the people of Rome and Persia even though they are not believers." The Prophet ﷺ replied, "O son of Khattab! Do you also think like that? They are the people [who have been deprived of the blessings of the Hereafter owing to their heathenish and ungodly ways], and, hence, the comforts [Allah ﷻ wanted to confer upon them] have been granted to them in this world." [In another version of the same tradition it is said that the Prophet ﷺ replied, "O Umar! Do you not prefer that they took the joys of this world and we of the Hereafter]?"

(Bukhari and Muslim)

**Commentary:** It hurt Sayyidina Umar ؓ to see the Prophet ﷺ spending his days in condition of suffering and poverty, and he, naturally, wished that Allah ﷻ granted him prosperity so that he did not have to bear all that hardship. But since he knew that the Prophet ﷺ would not pray for wealth and worldly possessions for himself, he requested him to supplicate to Allah ﷻ for his followers, and, at the same time, suggested that worldly riches were such an ordinary thing that Allah ﷻ had bestowed them even upon infidels like the Romans and Persians. Why would he, then not grant them to the Prophet's ﷺ followers if he prayed? The Prophet ﷺ expressed surprise at it, and, by way of an admonition, said to Sayyidina Umar ؓ, "Are you still so unaware as to talk like that? With the pagans and the unbelievers like Romans and Persians the matter is that they have no share in the life of the Hereafter which is what really counts. So, the joys and comforts Allah ﷻ wanted to bestow upon them have been granted to

them in their present existence. To be envious of their material pleasures is, therefore, unworthy of one who has realised the truth. You ought to be eager only for the Hereafter where you have to live forever. This world is but a temporary resting-place. Comfort or discomfort here has no meaning."

### Sleeping on a Mat like a Traveller

(210/70) Abdullah ibn Mas'ood related to us that the Prophet ﷺ [once] slept on a mat of date-palm leaves, [and] when he got up the marks of the mat could be seen on his body.

Upon it, he said, "Messenger of Allah! If you allow, I can arrange for a bed. The Prophet ﷺ replied, "What have I to do with the comforts of this world? I am not connected with the world more than the traveller who sits, for a short while, under the shade of a tree, and, then, gets up and leaves for his destination."

(Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

**Commentary:** The substance of the above saying is that the position of the Prophet ﷺ as regards the world was like that of the traveller who did not deem it necessary to make arrangements for his comfort during the brief halt he made under the shade of a tree and had no other worry than to reach his destination. In fact, the condition of anyone to whom the reality of this world and of the Hereafter becomes evident cannot be different. To plan and prepare, on a larger scale, for bodily ease and enjoyment for the temporary stay here in this world will appear to him to be utterly foolish and purposeless.

Excerpted from Maulana Manzoor Naumani's ﷺ "Ma'arif ul Hadith"

# Tasks and Secrets Associated With Fasting

By Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi and Ibn al-Jawzi  
Translated by Shaykh Musa Furber

Know that fasting contains a distinctive characteristic not found elsewhere. It is being ascribed to Allah Mighty and Majestic, where He (Transcendent is He) says, "Fasting is Mine, and I give reward for it." This ascription suffices as honor, just as the Ka'ba is ascribed to Allah Most High when He says, "And purify My house" (al-Hajj, 26).

Fasting has superiority because of two concepts. The first is that fasting is a secret and an internal action that no one sees, so showing-off does not enter it.

The second is that fasting subdues the enemies of Allah since the means that the enemies of Allah use is lusts, and lusts are strengthened through eating and drinking. As long as the ground of lusts remains fertile, Devils will frequent its pasture; by abandoning lusts one constricts for them those paths.

There are many reports concerning the merit of fasting, and they are well known.

## Recommended Measures Associated With Fasting

It is desirable to eat before beginning the fast, and that it be delayed [until close to beginning the fast]; that one hasten to break the fast, and that it be done with ripe date.

During Ramadan, it is desirable to be generous, do good works, and give much charity – out of following the Prophet ﷺ.

It is desirable to study the Quran, to make a [spiritual] retreat during Ramadan – especially during the last ten days – and to increase one's efforts.

Bukhari and Muslim included [a] narration from 'A'ishah (Allah be pleased with her)

wherein she said, "When the [last] ten [days] entered, the Prophet ﷺ would tighten his waist-wrapper, stay up at night, and wake up family."

The scholars have mentioned two aspects concerning "tighten his waist-wrapper." The first is that it means avoiding his wives. The second is that it is an allusion to diligence and preparation for works. They said that the reason for his efforts during the last ten nights was out of seeking the Night of Power (laylat al-qadr).

## Clarifying The Secrets Of Fasting And Its Etiquette

There are three ranks to fasting: (1) the fast of the masses, (2) the elect, and (3) the elite of the elect.

- 1) The fast of the masses is restraining one's stomach and genitals from achieving their lusts.
- 2) The fast of the elect is restraining one's glance, tongue, hands, legs, hearing, vision, and all other physical faculties from sins.
- 3) The fast of the elite of the elect is the heart fasting from base aspirations, and thoughts that take one away from Allah; and restraining the heart in totality from everything save Allah. (This type of fasting has explanations that come elsewhere.)

The etiquette of the fast of the elect includes lowering the gaze, protecting the tongue from unlawful or offensive speech which is hurtful, or [simply] offers no benefit, and guarding the remaining physical faculties.

One of the hadiths narrated in Bukhari is that



the Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever has not left untruthful talk and acting upon it: Allah has no need of him putting aside his food and drink."

Its etiquette includes not filling up with food and drink at night, but rather eat portions since mankind fills no container [more evil] than his stomach – since whenever one eats his fill at the beginning of the night he will not be of use to himself for the rest of the night. It is the same regarding eating one's fill before beginning the fast: he will be of no use to himself until near noon, since too much food leads to laziness and abatement. And besides: the whole purpose of fasting is missed by eating too much, since the point is that one taste hunger, and forgo what he desires.

## Voluntary Fasts

As for voluntary fasts: know that the desirability of fasting becomes emphatic during meritorious days.

Some of the meritorious days are once each year, such as fasting six days of Shawwal after Ramadan, the day of Arafah, Ashura, the first ten days of Dhi l-Hijja, and the month of Muharram.

Some of the meritorious days repeat each month, like [the first day at] the beginning of the month, the middle, and the end. Whoever fasts the beginning, middle, and end of the month has done right – other than it being best that one make the three days [if one fasts just three days each month] (the "White Days").

Some of the days repeat each week; they are Monday and Thursday.

The most superior voluntary fast is the fast of Dawud (peace be upon him): he would fast for one day, and break fast for one day.

Fasting thus combines three concepts:

- 1) That the nafs is given its share the day the fast is broken, and fulfils its devotion the day it fasts. By this, it combines between what it is entitled to and what is incumbent upon it; and this is fair.
- 2) That the day one eats is a day of thanks,

and the day one fasts is a day of patience. And faith is two halves: thanks, and patience.

- 3) It is more difficult on the nafs regarding one's [spiritual] efforts [against the self], since every time the nafs begins yearning for one state, it is removed from it.

## Fasting Perpetually

As for fasting perpetually, one of the reports that Muslim included (but not Bukhari) is narrated from Qatada (Allah be pleased with him) that 'Omar (Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet ﷺ, "What of someone who fasts perpetually, all the time?" He ﷺ replied, "He has no fast, and no breaking fast," or: "he did not fast, and he did not break the fast." This hadith is interpreted to apply to someone who consecutively fasts [without breaking fast for] the days which are forbidden to fast. As for someone who breaks fast on the two days of Eid and the days of Tashriq [during Hajj]: there is no harm in this.

It was related from Hisham bin 'Urwah (Allah grant him mercy) that his father would consecutively fast, and 'A'ishah (Allah be pleased with her) would consecutively fast.

Anas bin Malik (Allah be pleased with him) said that Abu Talha consecutively fasted after the [death of the] Prophet ﷺ for forty years.

Know that whomever has been granted astuteness knows the purpose of fasting, and induces himself [to fast] to the extent that it does not debilitate him from superior deeds.

Ibn Mas'ud (Allah be pleased with him) fasted little. He would say, "If I fast, I become too weak to pray. And I prefer prayer over fasting."

Some of them would become too weak to recite Quran when they fasted, so they would increase the amount they broke fast in order to be able to recite.

Every person knows his condition and what is best for himself.

Courtesy: ilmgate.org

# Reflections

Maulana Abdul Sattar حفظه الله reflects upon the discourses of our pious predecessors...

*"It is not that we do not possess the love for Haqq (truth), it is just that our religious zeal is rather frail. We are like a lamp, which has oil and fire both, but needs to be set alight, a little ignition then fans up the flames. Similarly, being Muslims Imaan (Faith) is instituted within; consequently, we identify with Allah ﷻ and thus the love for Allah ﷻ and Rasulullah ﷺ is reserved within our hearts. A little thrust to our Imaan and love is inevitably going to light us up! For example, upon entering a masjid, our*

*spirituality is affected by its environment and we feel its level getting elevated. The reason for this is that in some corner of our hearts we possess **اليمان** the fire of Imaan and love."*

The objective is not to cut ourselves from the rest of the world and become Junaid **رضي الله عنه** and Shibli Rahmatullahi Alayhi, but the only goal is to become Muslims in the true sense of the word. Even that is going to be a major achievement for us. Today it is disheartening to see that even Muslims have weak Imaan; neither there is love for Allah **ﷻ** and Prophet **ﷺ** in them, nor the fear of aakhirah (Hereafter). The anguish of jahannum (Hell) terrifies us naught in comparison to the terror that the thought of spending a month in jail brings.

Our pious elders say that when a true Muslim loves Allah **ﷻ** then his love for the corporeal should not even be slightly like his love for the Omnipotent. In fact, his love for Allah Ta'ala should be so overpowering that it becomes evident to the rest of the universe that this Muslim loves none but his Allah **ﷻ**.

*"Tell the entire universe that we have united ourselves with the only One! Whoever connects with Him unites with us, and whoever moves away from Him shall keep away from us too. Whoever continues to be in a relation with Him is our friend as well; whoever maintains distance from Him dissociates from us too. We only wish to gratify Him, even if that means displeasing the entire universe."*

Subhan'Allah! What a beautiful thought expressing how not to displease Allah **ﷻ** even in the least bit! Those who connect with Allah **ﷻ** are allies and associates, and those who sever ties with Him are marked as strangers and foreign to us. Believing Allah's friends to be our allies and His adversaries to be our foes is the foremost right of Love. Someone who claims to love his mother but is also devoted to her enemy is, indeed, a brutal liar. Similarly, a person's devotion becomes doubtful when he professes love for his father but continues to maintain contact with his opponents too. When we hold such beliefs in our dealings with people and relations around us then why not treat Allah **ﷻ** in the same way?

How does a mortal lover worship his beloved? Be it during drinking, eating or sleeping, his beloved rules his heart and mind all the time. No less than this is the basic right of Allah's **ﷻ** love on our hearts and minds - to reign supreme. The state of our love for Allah **ﷻ** should at least be similar to our ephemeral love for mortals. Has our love for Allah **ﷻ** become so degraded as compared to our love for the humankind? If not, then what is the reason behind this lack of passion? Whoever truly loves Allah Ta'ala will always be enthusiastic, and full of passionate sentiments towards Him. It is with reference to such lovers that Allah **ﷻ** says in the glorious Quran:

*"These are the ones to whom trade, buying and selling does not make ignorant to the remembrance of Allah."*

*"The claim for Allah's **ﷻ** love and the thought of (worldly) life and prestige cannot co-exist. When a person loves someone he takes pleasure in sacrificing his pride for his love. Therefore, a Momin's love is only going to be considered as being sincere when both his (worldly) life and honour are dedicated to the Creator of both the worlds and His Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam. Today, our hypocrisy is ruining our reputation - we profess love for Allah **ﷻ** but still hold our pride and life dearest. We know the evils of a certain custom but still indulge in it, we are aware of the orders of Shar'iah, but contradict it because of social and peer pressures. Has criticism from society ever influenced a devoted lover? He enjoys the guilty verdict. To cease being intense in love because of social censures testifies to the fact that the air of love has not even brushed past him. All compromises and conclusive speculations come to a halt when in love. Wealth, life and pride are all delightfully put by the Beloved's feet. And if the Beloved accepts it all, the lover is grateful for the favourable reception, considering it his pleasure. Compromises are resorted to where a variety of relations have to be taken care of - adopt a policy which gratifies the empire and makes happy the emperor too. The public stays contented, while the job also gets well done. If, however, Allah's **ﷻ** rope is firmly held on to, and no heed paid to anything that*

*contradicts His commands, it is only then that all uncertainties vanish. The world becomes a nonentity for the one who strongly believes in Allah ﷻ – being anonymous or celebrated, positively received or disapproved, nothing matters! He wants to become praiseworthy in Allah's ﷻ sight and not in the eyes of His creation. A lover does not bother about what people say, his only concern is his Beloved's say. It is all about His love. The lover neither laughs for people, nor eats for them, nor is his any worldly act for them; instead all his actions are to impress his Beloved. Likewise, when a Momin loves Allah ﷻ, what people would think is the last thing he is concerned with; he only does things the way Allah ﷻ has commanded him to. May Allah ﷻ grant us some fraction of this love. (Only then) Life is going to become worth living."*

If a lover finds out that a certain act upsets his beloved then is it possible that he would continue upon it, considering there is still time left for their meeting? Never! His love is never going to allow him to go against his beloved's wishes, no matter how much time there be left for the event of meeting, or even if there is no chance of getting united altogether. Alas, when it comes to our affair with Allah ﷻ, our behaviour is quite the opposite. Our love, this concludes, is not all-embracing.

In this scenario the complaint goes from bad to worse that an ordinary beauty is loved to the extent of being worshipped but the love for Allah ﷻ is not even considered to be equal to that! Some (worldly beloveds) are loved for their beauty, others for their wealth or any other worldly reason. Allah ﷻ, however, is the only Being who is absolutely complete in everything, be it splendour or beauty! Whatever qualities others (worldly beloveds) have, are only a blessing of Allah ﷻ. Then why not love the Supreme?

As a matter of fact, we love Allah ﷻ, but our love for mortals has overshadowed it. That is why we do not realize when we make Allah ﷻ unhappy. Only where love prevails these things are consciously acknowledged. Imagine what would our condition be if the graph of our wealth starts falling off? How would we feel if our

cell phone crashes? When we hold something dear and it starts declining in some way, we immediately sense it.

*"When a person gets bitten by snake, he is unable to sense the bitterness of the Neem leaves. Likewise, we have been bitten by the snake of this world, owing to which the severity of Allah ﷻ displeasure is not felt. The cure for this snakebite is to develop a strong bond with Allah ﷻ, which would illuminate our hearts. Only then our hearts will instinctively identify the damage that is inflicted upon them due to Allah's ﷻ displeasure. Worldly losses and sufferings are nothing as compared to the sorrow of earning Allah's displeasure. May Allah ﷻ grant His love to all of us."*

The easiest prescription to grow in Allah ﷻ love is to always keep His blessings in mind. Our love for Him is going to intensify if we do so. Secondly, the duas (supplications) for various occasions as taught by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ should be constantly made. Dua for entering and exiting the Masjid, while coming in and leaving the house, getting in the car, going to the graveyard, leaving for bazaar, seeing someone in agony – the Sunnah authenticates a Dua for every occasion, and all these should be memorized. Thirdly, it is a recommend exercise to always think about our love for Allah ﷻ in solitude. Further, whatever is talked about often automatically enters the heart. Since our eyes and ears are set on the affairs of this world, consequently we dream about the same while sleeping too. Likewise, constant remembrance of Allah ﷻ would make His love entrenched in our hearts.

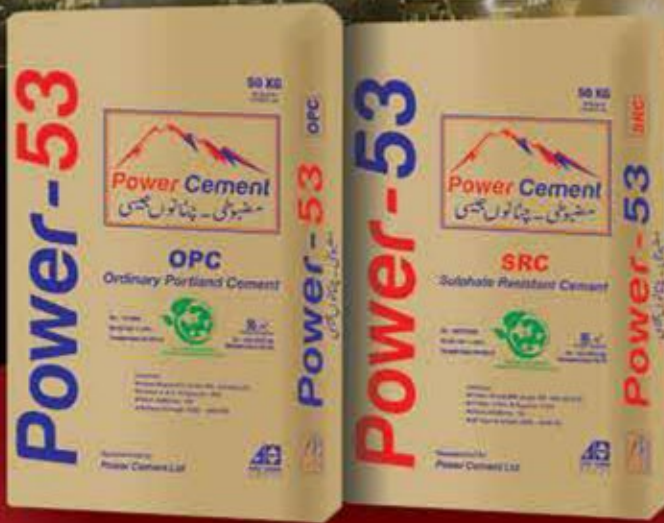
Even if these three acts are practised with faith, we will experience our love for Allah ﷻ strengthening. But again, the package comes with a condition – these three acts should not only be consciously done, but also continually! Although rewards would be earned even if done for a few days, thorough benefit would not be attained. May Allah ﷻ make it easy for all of us to act upon these. Aameen

*- Translated from 'Aaina-e-Zindagi' as printed in monthly Fahmedeen, March 2011*



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# *The Blind Girl*

A journey from self-absorption to self-discovery

By Ateefah Sana Ur Rab

Eyesight, the utmost blessing, without which one cannot steer the wheel of life, is often taken for granted. I neither realised its significance nor experienced innermost gratitude until a trip to the ophthalmologist proclaimed that my eye's lens was deteriorating. The initial reaction I experienced was utter disbelief, but one has to face the facts. There is no getting around reality and what is bound to happen.

It is what it is, and a major part of life lies beyond our control. To say I felt weak and overwhelmed would be an understatement. It wasn't just that. Happiness didn't feel like itself anymore; the sun seemed to have lost its warming effect; the surroundings appeared dull. I couldn't focus on the tasks at hand; they were devoid of their importance. In simple words, it was like watching yourself

fade away and being stuck in a trance similar to encountering episodes of dissociation and non-existence.

The next few days were blurred. Mom's reprimanding sessions helped, but weren't successful. Sadness was like a guest who had no intention of leaving. The entire week went by in a haze with me being elusive. The Saturday sun had long climbed over the horizon when something tugged the blanket at my feet. Maano, our domesticated feline friend, jumped onto the mattress to inspect the situation. I shall always remain baffled by how easily animals process the changes in our well-being.

"Mr'roww."

"Not in the mood right now..."

"Mr'roww..."

"Sorry, Maano. Not today." I turned over to the other side and waited for the cat to leave. Ignorant of my words, she snuggled under my arm and started purring. Calmness seemed to reverberate from the vibrating ball of fur and seeped into my chest. I'd almost dozed off when Mom turned on the lights. "Natasha. Downstairs. Now. No excuses."

"Yeah? Okay, okay. I'll get up!" I surrendered. "What's up, though? Guests coming?"

"Do guests need to come over now for you to stop moping around and being unjust to yourself? Get up. I will see you eating breakfast in ten minutes. Am I clear?" The curt familiarity of her tone was enough. I broke into a sprint towards the hallway. There is no getting around life, and there is no getting around angered mothers.

Fast forward a few hours, we'd driven to the supermarket nearby to get our monthly groceries. The sky bore clouds with rivers of blue peeking at the earth. Gushes of wind journeyed hither and thither. Pollution appeared to have subsided a little. The air was light, cool, and refreshing. I let it fill my lungs as if I had been deprived of oxygen for quite some time. Mom nudged my shoulder and my eyes snapped open.

"Looks like dragging you out of that suffocating room was a brilliant idea." She teased.

"Thanks, Mom."

She gestured far ahead to the right. "Didn't you want some scarves to match your outfit? Sumaira's wedding is just two months away."

"Oh yes! I can't believe I forgot!"

"Well, I think I'll get one, too. Let's go."

I noticed the couple as we approached. The man would have been in his early 70s, quite weak himself, yet supported a cart with a neat stack of crocheted blankets and scarves. There was something about him and the old woman sitting on that little chair, which made me smile.

"Assalam-o-Alaikum, Beti. We have a variety of scarves in vibrant colours, and if you prefer otherwise, we have some pleasant shades in ombre as well."

"WalaikumAssalam, Chacha. Such intricate designs you have, especially the geometrical ones. The craftsmanship is magnificent." I voiced out in awe.

"Credit goes to my wife. When she couldn't do it anymore, she taught me." He glanced at the woman, his facial features brightening.

"As an amateur, I am no judge of this. But you're a marvellous teacher, Chachi."

"Your work reminds me of my late grandmother. The house felt more inviting and cosier with her handmade quilts, tablecloths, pillowcases, cushion covers, and everything." I heard Mom's appraisal beside me.

"Jazakillah Khairan Kaseeran, dear. It's been my hobby since I was a young woman like you. I cannot work because of my eyesight now. But indeed, Alhamdulillah, my Lord, has blessed me with a good husband. He has never felt ashamed of doing any kind of work, even if it was attributed to women. He is a hard-working man and I am eternally grateful to Allah ﷻ. His blessings upon us have always been abundant." A wrinkled smile glowed across her sunken cheeks.

The gratitude in her voice threw me off

balance. I felt deeply embarrassed and infinitely small in front of the Creator. The surge of disappointment I experienced was overwhelming—it acted as an eye-opener. Hadn't I been granted more than I could ever ask for? My necessities were far below; the list of things I had acquired in life consisted of luxury items—aloud, they spoke of a lavish lifestyle. It was as if a lightning bolt had struck my slumbering soul. The past years played like a reel on public display. Shivers ran down my spine as I tried to contain myself.

"Anything wrong, dear? Are you okay?"

"Yes—yes, I am fine. Um, I'd like to purchase," I choked out, my words barely audible, "This blue one here and that geometrical lilac underneath the yellow."

"The auburn scarf for me, please." Mom's voice was a reminder of her presence.

We hurried off after making the payment and drove back home.

Hours after dinner and routine chores, I escaped to the room upstairs. My head came to rest against the familiar softness of my pillow. The welled-up emotions finally found an outlet. Guilt, shame, disappointment, sadness, and regret. I couldn't muster up the courage to look at myself in the mirror and bring about the long-awaited confrontation. Reality struck hard and truth hit home. The sudden exposure had rendered me speechless—I saw the flaws in my perspective and how rigidly I viewed life.

"Natasha," A streak of light pierced through the dark. It was Mom. She stepped in quietly and closed the door behind her. I lay still. Her muffled footsteps stopped near the bed and she sat down. Instinctively, I placed my head in her lap and her fingers, gentle and soft, combed through my hair. A long sigh eluded my lips and spoke of everything I tried to bury under my throat.

"Natasha, why do you punish yourself?"

"I've been living with a blindfold, Mom, and I... I just realised the problem is me."

"Oh, dear, no. You are not the problem. You found yourself holding onto things

that have turned out to be problematic. We make mistakes. We jump to conclusions and overthink a lot. We stress ourselves out and hover towards the negative. It is not unusual. We are humans, remember? We were not created perfect. We are not destined to attain perfection, but to try our best, no matter the obstacles we find in our way."

"What if I am a lost cause? What if it's too late?"

Her fingers rested on my forehead and I felt her stare despite the darkness surrounding us.

"Natasha, come on. If you were a lost cause—if it were, by chance, too late—you wouldn't have that look on your face as if you've encountered a ghost."

"I cannot believe that I've been so stupid. I have let myself down and I cannot even imagine how much I have disappointed Allah ﷻ..."

"And yet, Allah ﷻ is the most Beneficent and the most Merciful. Do you think Allah ﷻ will not accept us if we run back to Him with genuine repentance, begging for forgiveness? You are not late, my dear. Allah ﷻ has not closed His doors upon us. We only have to run back to Him and ask Him to take us under His protection. With Allah ﷻ with us at every step, we shall never be lost."

Gratitude descended upon me like tender rain and an immense urge to seek redemption—to turn over a new leaf. I silently vowed to start practising gratitude, one day at a time, and keep trying for the rest of my life. In truth, it wasn't only my eyesight that I needed to be concerned with. The insight into one's soul held more importance. Physical health required care and attention. Similarly, the soul, too, demanded to be nurtured to its full potential. To start the journey, it is essential for us to realise that to be a better version of ourselves, we must acknowledge that everything is not what meets the eye. There is a lot more awaiting our attention. We cannot truly aspire to live a fulfilling life until and unless we climb out of the pits of self-absorption and take a step forward into the light.





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# A WEEK IN IRAN

## (Episode 2)

Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Zawjah Zia

The city of Isfahan was conquered in 19th AH during the caliphate of Sayyidina Umar ؓ. A king named *Qazosqaan* used to rule here at that time. *Hazrat* Abdullah ibn Utban ؓ took it under siege. When the two armies confronted each other, *Qazosqaan* sent a dispatch to *Hazrat* Abdullah suggesting that having the two armies go into battle shall result only in futile bloodshed. So let the two

of us have a fight first; then if you are killed, your army shall recede and if I am killed, my army shall surrender. *Hazrat* Abdullah ibn Utban agreed to it.

And so the contest commenced. *Hazrat* Abdullah ibn Utban offered *Qazosqaan* to have a go at him first. *Qazosqaan* attacked but failed to harm *Hazrat* Abdullah ibn



Utban even a bit. The saddle of his horse was cut into pieces however. So now when Hazrat Abdullah advanced for his turn to attack, Qazosqaan was clearly baffled by his resilience and so he proclaimed his surrender before Hazrat Abdullah could even make his move.

Therefore, a peace agreement was formalized; the citizens were provided amnesty under the new Muslim government and then on, this city thrived to become a center of knowledge and learning.

Undoubtedly, this land would've been laced with reminiscences and intellectual imprints of this legacy of knowledge and learning. Sadly however, when the rule of Shiite Safavids was established here, all traces of Sunni religious tradition were systematically wiped off. All one may witness here now are the imprints of the Safavid sultanate. They had taken Isfahan as the capital city for a long period of time so there are still magnificent forts, palaces and masjids here from that era.

When we reached the old city area, our hosts took us to a piazza named as Maiden e Naqsh e Jahan. This indeed is a sight worth seeing. A plain spanning an area of one kilometer by half a kilometer, it has a grand Masjid at one side and a thick boundary wall on the rest of the three sides. There's a magnificent watch-tower constructed on a corner of the thick boundary wall. This area used to be a playground for Chugaan (Polo). The emperors would enjoy the game from above the watch-tower. The grand Masjid at one side of this piazza is from the Safavi era, but there's another Masjid just adjacent to it, which dates back to the Seljuk era. It has the names of the first three of the rightly guided Caliphs of Islam: Sayyidina Abu Bakr ﷺ, Umar ﷺ and Uthman ﷺ beautifully carved at one side and the name of the forth rightly

guided caliph Sayyidina Ali al Murtaza ﷺ at the other side. I couldn't quite make out the reason for this differentiation between the names of the three caliphs and Sayyidina Ali ﷺ.

Nonetheless, we prayed our Zuhr in this masjid in congregation. This was the area of old Isfahan. My imagination kept visualizing the gatherings of the people of knowledge and learning here. And yet the eyes remained deprived of witnessing any remains of that golden legacy.

The city of Isfahan is situated along the two banks of a beautiful river. Therefore, it is quite scenic a view with bridges connecting the two banks spread out through the city. One of these fantastic bridges is called the *Se Wasa* Bridge because it has thirty three arches. Another one is called *Khuwajo*. The view of the city is breathtaking from upon this bridge: the grandeur of beautiful buildings, green belts and the flower-laden patches. Our hosts gave us a good tour of all these bridges.

We remained in Isfahan till four o'clock in the evening and went back after lunch.

It took us around two and a half hours to reach Qom; the city we had bypassed earlier on our way to Isfahan. This area was conquered by Muslims in 23AH at the hands of Sayyidina Abu Musa Ash'ari ﷺ in the era of the Caliphate of Sayyidina Umar ﷺ. It was not a very significant city at that time but a cluster of small towns called *Kumundaan*. When Abdur Rehman ibn al Ash'as rebelled against Hajjaj ibn Yousaf in 83AH, he took refuge here and then he and some others from his army combined these seven towns as one city; these towns being like seven neighborhoods of that city. So it became from *Kumundaan* to Qom. The most prominent name among the people who established Qom was Abdullah

ibn Saad. One of his sons was born and bred in Kufa under the Shiite atmosphere. After the establishment of Qom, he moved here and laid foundations of Shiaism here. As time passed, the whole city converted to Shiaism. It is this very city about which a minister and an author Sahib ibn Ibad once said to the judge:

*Ayyuhal Qazi Bi Qom, Qadd Azalnaaka Fa-Qum !!*

Qum in Arabic is a command to stand up. So what this phrase means is that "O Qazi of Qom, we have suspended you from your position, so stand up." The legend has it that afterwards, whenever that judge was asked about the reason of his suspension, he would say:

*Ana Ma'zool us Saj'l, min ghairi jurmin wa la sababin.*

"I was suspended not for a crime or a reason, but plain fondness for rhyme."

(Mu'jam al Buldaan; page 397)

Anyways, this city has been a center for the Shiite sect since the beginning of the second century. Many renowned names from the Shia scholars were born here. Till date, it is a city hosting many knowledge centers for Shia scholarship. It also has the famous library of Qom which is well-known for its collection of rare classical texts of Islam. The institutes here, imparting the scholarship in the Imamate sect of the Shia tradition, are renowned for their high standards. Apart from that, we had the opportunity of visiting an international center established solely for the Ahl as Sunnah wal Jama'ah. Sunni students from around the world come here to attain scholarship in the four Sunni schools of thought. It was really astonishing for me when a board member of this center, who was a Shia scholar, informed us that around eight thousand students were

enrolled in the center at that time. But my fellow, Maulana Muhammad Qasim sahib confirmed that the actual figure might even be more than that as the center had its branches in many other cities as well. It should indeed be a point of concern for the Ahl as Sunnah that such a large number of their students are gaining their knowledge from here.

Apart from these educational centers, Qom is also famous because it has the shrine of Sayyidah Masooma ؑ; sister of Hazrat Ali Raza ؑ. There is a grand Masjid built with the shrine which is crowded with a huge number of pilgrims all the time. All sorts of innovative rituals and practices that have become a norm of many common-folk regarding the shrines of the saints and pious people, are practiced here too, with all its associated, disliked deviations.

We left Qom for Tehran right after Maghrib *Salah*. It was very late at night when we reached back our hotel in Tehran.

(To be continued, *insha'Allah*)



# The Fountain of Youth

By Mawlana Uwais Iqbal

*Across the ages, continents and sciences, Muslims, even teenage Muslims, contributed to the scholarly fabric that has been passed down to us from generation to generation.*

*'Take advantage of your youth before your old age'.* This statement of the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, was not lost upon the Muslims of the past. Taking advantage of time and youth can be done in several ways. One of these ways is embedded in the culture of teaching and learning that permeates throughout the Islamic world. The contributions of scholars of the past in the Islamic world across the various religious and secular sciences are far too many to be enumerated. Such contributions and advances were only made possible by the underlying social infrastructure, intellectual meritocracy and collective social concern. A striking feature of this culture of learning was that it enabled scholars to make significant and lasting contributions at young and tender ages. Across the ages, continents and sciences, Muslims, even teenage Muslims, contributed to the scholarly fabric that has been passed down to us from generation to generation. This present article seeks to highlight a few such examples of Muslim intellectuals making significant and lasting contributions in their youth.

## Morphological Maturity

The 14th century bore witness to a number of great scholars and thinkers including Sa'ad al-Din Masud ibn Umar al-Taftazani (712 AH/1322 CE – 791 AH/1390 CE). Born in 1322, the Persian polymath al-Taftazani is perhaps one of the most celebrated scholars and intellectuals of the post-classical period. His works across the fields of linguistics, theology, logic and the principles of jurisprudence came to serve as textbooks in seminaries across the Muslim world. Even today, a

number of his scholarly contributions serve as guides for advanced level students in seminaries across the Muslim world from Al-Azhar in Egypt, to Deoband in India and Konya in Turkey.

His ability and genius shone through even at a very young age. At the mere age of 16, Taftazani had authored a commentary on *Tasrif al-Izzi'*, an elementary work in Arabic morphology. Producing a commentary on a staple text of study at such a young age is a feat in and of itself. However, this contribution in the form of a commentary was so elusive, comprehensive and full of insight that to this day, some 650 years later, it still serves as an indispensable handbook for anyone serious in their study of Arabic morphology.

## Poetic Beginnings

The lands of 16th century Algeria cultivated a sharp-minded young thinker with a knack for poetry in the form of Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad al-Akhdari (918 AH/1512 CE – 983 AH/1575 CE). It is reported that Imam al-Akhdari began composing didactic poems (nazm) from the age of 17. Didactic poems, the medieval equivalent to a set of flashcards, serve to organise knowledge in rhythmic verses so that it can easily be committed to memory and recalled seamlessly. By the age of 20, Imam al-Akhdari had penned didactic poems in astronomy and on the astrolabe. At 21, Imam al-Akhdari authored the poem he is most renowned for. His didactic poem, *al-Sullam al-Munawraq*, versified Athir al-Din al-Abhari's (d. 660 AH/1265 CE) manual in logic, *Isagoge*, in 144 verses. Five centuries later, this poem still serves as required study for students of logic.

## Like Teacher Like Student

The Egyptian scholar, Jalal al-Din Muhammad ibn Shihab al-Din al-Mahalli (791 AH/1389 CE – 864 AH/1460 CE), was one of the great scholars of Shafi Fiqh during the 15th century. Imam al-Mahalli set out with the intention to author a commentary (*Tafseer*) on the Qur'an. Fate had determined that he would reach

his demise before he could complete this endeavour. A budding student of his, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (849 AH/1445 CE – 911 AH/1505 CE) rose to the occasion and took on the task of completing the work started by his teacher.

Imam al-Suyuti mentions that he began this endeavour on the 1st of Ramadan 870 AH (1466 CE) and completed the *Tafseer* of the remaining half of the Qur'an in 40 days on the 10th of Shawwal 870 AH. At the age of 21, and within the space of just 40 days, Imam al-Suyuti was able to complete the *Tafseer* work started by his teacher. The combined commentary of Imam al-Mahalli and Imam al-Suyuti became known as '*Tafseer al-Jalalayan'* meaning 'The *Commentary* of the Two Jalal's': the teacher, Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and the student, Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti. Today, over 570 years later, this masterful work of *Tafseer* is still renowned as a key text due to its concise style and comprehensive nature. One cannot be considered a scholar until he has completed a study of this text. In seminaries across the globe, this work is still taught today and remains as one of the key works for students and scholars of *Tafseer* alike.

## Hidden Talent

The 15th-century Algerian scholar Imam Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Sanusi (832 AH/1428 CE – 895 AH/1490 CE) is well known for his pedagogical writings in theology. He writes for the student at every level, from beginner all the way through to the advanced scholar. His works are a mainstay in the study of theology.

One of his students, al-Mullali, reports that the first work Imam al-Sanusi compiled was a commentary on *al-Fara'id al-Hawfi*, an inheritance manual in Maliki Fiqh. al-Mullali further adds that Imam al-Sanusi completed this work when he was approximately 18 or 19 years old. Imam al-Sanusi decided to show this work to his teacher who was so amazed and taken aback by the fertile mind and blessed pen of his student that he advised him to hide the work and delay its publication and circulation. His teacher feared that other scholars would become jealous of his ability at

such a young age and Imam al-Sanusi would be afflicted with the evil eye.

## Abridging the Ancients and the Moderns

One of the most important thinkers of the medieval period was the Arab historian 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Khaldun (732 AH/1332 CE – 808 AH/1406 CE). Born in Tunis to a family of bureaucrats, Ibn Khaldun's training and schooling prepared him to lay the intellectual foundations for the modern fields of sociology, economics and historiography. Ibn Khaldun saw history, the development of civilisations and society as a result of a series of causal processes dictated by laws in the same way the natural world is dictated by laws.

Such philosophical thinking and ideation was a direct result of his studies during his early life. Some 150 years prior to Ibn Khaldun, the 12th-century philosopher-theologian, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606 AH/1210 CE) produced a work called *al-Muhassal al-Afkaar al-Mutaqaddimin wa al-Muta'akhhireen*. This phenomenal work, *al-Muhassal*, sought to integrate the Hellenistic and Avicennan philosophical traditions into the wider theological Kalam tradition as a single unified system of thought. Imam Razi endeavoured to organise the positions and arguments of ancient Greek philosophers and contemporary Islamic philosophers and theologians under the thought structure of theology.

The work, *al-Muhassal*, stands as a landmark contribution in philosophical theology in attempting to capture and preserve the breadth and depth of philosophical and theological thought across the Islamic world and beyond. *al-Muhassal* is an advanced synthesis of philosophy and theology which demands an exceedingly sharp mind and a familiarity with multiple distinct intellectual traditions.

As part of the culmination of his studies, Ibn Khaldun's teacher tasked him with a final assignment concerning Imam al-Razi's *al-Muhassal*. Ibn Khaldun took on the project to abridge this colossal work of Imam al-Razi and

named the work *Lubab al-Muhassal*. The El-Escorial library in San Lorenzo, Spain houses a copy of an autographed manuscript of Ibn Khaldun's work. Ibn Khaldun himself mentions that this work was issued as an assignment for the culmination and completion of his studies. He mentions that he completed the work in 1351 CE which would make him 19 at the time of writing. At the age of 19, Ibn Khaldun had diligently studied, understood and masterfully summarised the canon of philosophical and theological thought in the Islamic world. This expertise and exposure to rigorous philosophical thinking at such a young age undoubtedly shaped and influenced the future intellectual and scholar Ibn Khaldun was to become.

## Conclusion

Youth is the spring of life. It can either be a time of hedonistic enjoyment and self-satisfying fulfilment or it can be a time of self-discovery, growing enlightenment and increasing perfection. These examples from history across the Islamic world highlight a shared culture of contribution, service and a concern for the continuity of tradition that was embedded even within young minds. In all of these anecdotes, a young mind put forward a contribution with sincere effort to serve and benefit others. In doing so, these contributions have outlasted generations and centuries later their legacy is still alive. They weaved forward the fabric of scholarship and thought that enshrouds time, space and fleeting concerns. This note from history should serve as a reminder for us to think of how we can take advantage of our youth before our old age. The past can serve to motivate our present so that we can be mindful of how we continue to weave forward the future.

يا رجال العمر، يا ملح البلد  
من يصلح الملح، إذ الملح فسد

○ Men of age, ○ Salt of the nation,

Who will preserve the salt once the salt has spoiled?

Courtesy: [ilmgate.org](http://ilmgate.org)

# Understanding the Deeper Meaning of Salah

By Rabia Fatima





Salah, or prayer, is one of the five pillars of Islam, a fundamental act of worship that Muslims around the world engage in five times daily. While it is often viewed as a physical ritual, its significance goes far beyond mere movements and recitations. Salah embodies a spiritual, emotional, and psychological journey that can profoundly transform the lives of those who perform it with mindfulness and sincerity. Here we aim to explore the deeper meanings of Salah and how this sacred practice can lead to profound personal and spiritual growth.

## The Spiritual Dimension of Salah

Salah is first and foremost an act of worship, a means through which Muslims connect with Allah (God). This connection is not limited to the act of standing, bowing, and prostrating, but extends to the intention and consciousness one brings to the prayer. The concept of *khushu'* (humility and concentration) is central to this experience. When performed with *khushu'*, Salah becomes a powerful tool for spiritual elevation. It serves as a reminder of the presence of Allah ﷻ in every aspect of life, fostering a sense of gratitude, humility, and submission.

## The Role of Intention (*Niyyah*)

In Islam, every act of worship begins with *niyyah*, or intention. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized that actions are judged by their intentions, highlighting the importance of beginning Salah with a clear and sincere purpose. This intention sets the tone for the prayer, transforming it from a routine exercise into a meaningful encounter with the Divine. By focusing on the purpose behind each movement and word, worshippers can experience a deeper connection and a more profound sense of spirituality.

## The Recitation of the Qur'an

The recitation of the Qur'an during Salah is not merely a ritualistic act but a moment of reflection and contemplation. The verses recited in prayer remind Muslims of the

teachings, guidance, and mercy of Allah ﷻ. Understanding the meaning of these verses can greatly enhance the spiritual experience of Salah. For those who do not speak Arabic, learning the translation of the verses they recite can help them engage more deeply with the prayer and draw more meaningful lessons from it.

## The Psychological Impact of Salah

Beyond its spiritual significance, Salah also has a profound psychological impact. Engaging in regular prayer can lead to increased emotional stability, reduced anxiety, and a greater sense of inner peace. This is partly because Salah provides a structured time for reflection and mindfulness, allowing individuals to step away from the stresses of daily life and focus on their connection with Allah ﷻ.

## Mindfulness and Focus

Salah encourages a state of mindfulness, where the individual is fully present in the moment. This mindfulness, when practiced consistently, can have lasting effects on mental health. The repetitive nature of the prayer movements, combined with the focus on the recitation, helps to anchor the mind and reduce distractions. Over time, this practice can cultivate a sense of calm and tranquility that extends beyond the prayer itself.

## Stress Relief and Emotional Stability

The act of turning to Allah ﷻ in prayer, especially during times of distress, provides comfort and reassurance. Salah serves as a reminder that one is never alone, and that there is always a higher power to rely on. This sense of divine support can be a significant source of strength during difficult times, contributing to emotional resilience and stability.

## The Social and Communal Aspects of Salah

While Salah is often a personal act of worship,

it also has a strong communal dimension, particularly in the case of the congregational prayers (*Salat al-Jama'ah*). Praying in congregation fosters a sense of unity and brotherhood among Muslims, reinforcing the idea that they are part of a larger, global community.

## Congregational Prayer and Unity

When Muslims gather for congregational prayers, particularly for the Friday prayer (*Jumu'ah*), it serves as a powerful symbol of unity and equality. Regardless of social, economic, or ethnic differences, all worshippers stand shoulder to shoulder, symbolizing the universal brotherhood of Islam. This shared experience strengthens communal bonds and promotes a sense of belonging.

## Encouragement and Accountability

Praying in congregation also provides an opportunity for mutual encouragement and accountability. Being part of a community that values regular prayer can motivate individuals to maintain their own prayer routine. Additionally, the communal aspect of *Salah* helps reinforce Islamic values and ethics, as individuals are reminded of their responsibilities towards one another and towards Allah ﷻ.

## The Transformational Power of Salah

The true power of *Salah* lies in its ability to transform the individual. When approached with sincerity and mindfulness, *Salah* can lead to significant personal growth. It cultivates qualities such as patience, discipline, humility, and empathy, all of which are essential for leading a righteous and fulfilling life.

## Building Discipline and Consistency

The requirement to perform *Salah* five times a

day instills a sense of discipline and structure in a Muslim's life. This regularity helps develop a strong sense of time management and prioritization. Over time, the discipline required to maintain this routine can extend to other areas of life, leading to overall personal development.

## Fostering Humility and Gratitude

*Salah* is a constant reminder of human vulnerability and the need for divine guidance. By regularly acknowledging one's dependence on Allah ﷻ, a worshipper cultivates humility and gratitude. These qualities are essential for personal growth, as they help individuals maintain perspective, avoid arrogance, and appreciate the blessings in their lives.

## Enhancing Empathy and Compassion

Through *Salah*, Muslims are reminded of their duty towards others. The act of praying for oneself and for the community fosters a sense of empathy and compassion. This is further reinforced during congregational prayers, where the well-being of the entire community is placed at the forefront. Such a mindset encourages Muslims to act with kindness and consideration in their daily interactions.

*Salah* is much more than a religious obligation; it is a profound spiritual practice that has the power to transform lives. By engaging in prayer with sincerity, mindfulness, and understanding, Muslims can experience a deep connection with Allah ﷻ, achieve emotional and psychological well-being, and strengthen their sense of community. The deeper meanings of *Salah* reveal it as a comprehensive tool for personal and spiritual growth, making it an essential practice for Muslims seeking to lead a balanced and fulfilling life.



# Iqbal's Poetic Wisdom

Syria and Palestine

*Translated by V.G. Kiernan*

Heaven's blessing on those brazen Frenchmen shine!  
Aleppo's rare glass brims with their red wine.  
—If the Jew claims the soil of Palestine,  
Why not the Arab Spain? Some new design  
Must have inflamed our English potentates;  
This is no story of oranges, honey or dates.

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## To the Palestinian Arabs

*Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah*

I know the fire that burns throughout your frame,  
The lands of world still fear its scorching flame.  
Your cure in Geneva or London you can't trace,  
Wind-pipe of Franks is gripped by Jewish race.  
I know that subject nations freedom gain,  
If they would nourish self, display its main.

# Prophet's Legacy ﷺ for Women

By Tanzeela Ahmed

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the best of mankind is accredited by all religions for his commendable character, mercy and unmatched morals. Being Muslims, love, compliance and devotion to Prophet ﷺ is in our blood. Our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was sent by Allah Almighty as a 'Prophet of Mercy' for mankind, for all creatures. The

most incredible and genuine man that ever lived on this earth, preached a religion, practised exceptional principles, and initiated social and political reforms to establish an ideal and powerful Muslim society through his teachings and character.

In the distinguished book, The 100 - A Ranking



of the Most Influential Persons in History by Michael H. Hart, Muhammad ﷺ is at the top of the list. He states:

“Muhammad was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular levels. This unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.”

## Status of Women prior to Islam

Prophet ﷺ was born in the time when women were exposed to rejection and disgrace, deprived of basic rights and were even treated as humans. In Arabia, daughters were believed to be a burden and how horrific it is that tribes tended to get rid of this burden by burying innocent souls alive. Women were treated like slaves, had poor social status with no voice and did not get any compensation from heirs. They weren't considered eligible to take decisions of their life as there was no concept of 'marriage consent' for women. It wasn't legitimate for a widow to live freely and she remained a 'possession' of her in-laws.

## Prophet Muhammad ﷺ - The Saviour of women rights

The last messenger ﷺ of Allah is the one who treated women as a blessing, and gave them basic rights and respect equal to that of men. Prophet ﷺ provided women such rights and privileges fourteen hundred years ago that Western women did not enjoy until centuries later.

He taught his followers that the most deserving of a person's good behavior is his mother (Ibn Majah) and heaven is under the mother's feet (Nasai: 3107).

Muhammad ﷺ served as a role model and always encouraged Muslim men to treat their women right. Muhammad ﷺ infused a new spirit into the Muslim women through the purity of Islamic teachings that elevated their social status and dignity. His practices not only defended women from harm but also gave them unprecedented rights. Hazrat Aisha ؓ narrated: “Prophet ﷺ labelled the good behavior and right treatment towards women as a condition for the perfection of faith” (Al-Mustadrak: Kitab-al-Iman: 173).

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ is genuinely called the greatest advocate of women's rights and social justice. His teachings, deeds, manners and legacy had a deep impression on the status of women in Muslim world. Muhammad ﷺ said: “O Muslims, listen carefully, I instruct you to do good to women” (Tirmidhi). Prophet ﷺ used to assist his wives in home chores. It was the blessed Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ to indulge in the service of the family, occasionally.

Prophet ﷺ, through Allah's divine message, bestowed upon women the rights of inheritance, property ownership, trading and marriage, including the right to choose their life partner and initiate divorce. In the glorious era of Islam, women were scholars, professionals, intellectuals, merchants and property holders.

Let's have an overview of women's rights to appreciate how Prophet Muhammad ﷺ empowered Muslim women:

## Procurement of Knowledge and Education

In the 7th century, Muhammad ﷺ professed that the quest of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim, woman or man. “Pursuit of knowledge is compulsory for all Muslims-both

men and women with no discrimination" (Ibn Majah: 224).

In the early years of Islam, women eagerly sought knowledge and Islamic education from the messenger ﷺ of Allah. Thus to facilitate them, Prophet ﷺ fixed an entire day in a week for women looking for intellectual guidance and Islamic teachings. Because of the Prophet's ﷺ soft nature and benevolence, women used to ask him questions about their domestic and personal life too in order to clarify their old concepts.

## Gender Equality and Social Justice

In the dark-age, when women were generally perceived as inferior in all regards, Prophet ﷺ led by example with his gentle, sympathetic and kind behaviour towards women. He offered women the respect, honour and dignity equal to men and tried to shield them from ill-treatment, injustice and oppression. He elucidated that women and men are equal before Allah ﷻ and said: "Women are the twin halves of men" (Abu Dawud: 236).

He stressed upon equality between women and men at domestic and societal level. The Prophet's ﷺ interaction with women, including his wives, daughters, and other females reflects how he upheld their honour and dignity protected their rights.

The second caliph, Hazrat Umar رضي الله عنه narrated: "We didn't pay much regard to women in Makkah. However, they were treated better in Madina. The Prophet ﷺ bestowed upon women their due rights through his commands and deeds, which, therefore, strengthened their position and status in the society" (Mishkat ul Masabih).

## Marriage consent and Divorce Decision

In the Islamic society, marriage is valued

as a sacred foundation of family life and it's established on mutual respect, love, harmony and trust. What makes the marriage contract valid is the consent of a woman. Prophet ﷺ offered women the right to accept or reject their marriage proposal and voice their choice thus to discourage forced marriages. Muslim women do possess the right to initiate divorce in case of an abusive or an unhealthy relationship. The messenger ﷺ of Allah said: "A woman who is married without her consent is entitled to invalidate the marriage" (Abu Dawud: 2096).

## Wives as Companions

The Prophet ﷺ strictly forbade violence against a woman or inflicting any kind of pain on her. Muhammad ﷺ treated his wives in the best possible manner throughout his life. Holy Prophet's ﷺ wives were contented by his compassion, charismatic personality, illuminated company, and the affection and sympathy that he cordially extended to them.

"The best amongst you are those who are the best to their wives; and I am the best to mine" (Ibn Hibban and Al-Hakim).

He firmly condemned ill treatment and domestic violence, and said: "Do not raise hand on your wives; live with them in harmony" (Bukhari: 5186).

## Enrichment of Religious and Social status

Prophet ﷺ encouraged the Muslim women to be spirited contributors to society and play an active religious role. "Women are permitted to go to the mosque" (Bukhari, 869).

Muhammad ﷺ empowered women through the teachings of Islam to pursue their best potential in life. During the Islamic era, women took part in battles, served as nurses, ran family business and indulged in merchandising.

Hazrat Khadija رضي الله عنها was independent and renowned businesswoman of her time. After becoming Prophet's companion, she extended her strength, wealth and assurance to him in times of need. Hazrat Aisha رضي الله عنها is known to be as one of the most influential scholars in Islamic history. She was cherished as a beacon of wisdom and knowledge and Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم recommended asking religious questions from Aisha رضي الله عنها in his absence.

## Acquisition of Inheritance and Prosperity

Islam let the women - mother, daughter, wife, and sister - relish their particular share in inheritance, depending on their relation to the deceased family member. In Arabian tribes, it was not less than a revolution that Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم preached that women hold the right to inherit property and manage their assets. In true Islamic society, no one could deprive a woman from her inherited share in property. Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "A woman has the right to her husband's wealth" (Bukhari, 5045). Women are set free from any financial liabilities and burden too. What she accepts from her parents or earns herself solely belongs to her.

## Rewards of bringing up girls

Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم gave daughters a right to live with honour and dignity. He depicted the best behaviour and affection for his beloved daughter, Hazrat Fatima رضي الله عنها. Hazrat Aisha رضي الله عنها narrated that the Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم of Allah said: "Whoever takes responsibility of daughters' affairs and treats them right, his daughters will serve for him as a protection from the fire of Hell" (Bukhari: 5995).

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم considered daughters as the Rahmah (mercy) of Allah ﷻ. He gave daughters a high position in the society and preached that the existence of a woman is a source of mercy and blessing, and upbringing

them is a source of entering Heaven. Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Whoever has two or three daughters or sisters and treats them well will go to Jannat" (Abu Dawud).

Since ages, the West has misrepresented the status of women in Islam. In fact, it is Islam and the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم who bestowed women with rights and privileges that the Western women did not enjoy even until centuries later. Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stressed upon fairness and gender equality. Hence, if anywhere in Muslim societies women are found being deprived of their rights, it is in reality deviation from Islam and the teachings of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم.

"He must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness."

*(The Genuine Islam by George Bernard Shaw)*



# The Poison of Positivism

By Dr. Asad Zaman

## Introduction

Logical Positivism is a toxic philosophy which forms the foundations of a Western education. Like my fellow students, I absorbed its basic tenets without even learning its name, because it is so deeply embedded as to be invisible. Time after time I ran into problems because the ways of reasoning taught by this philosophy conflicted with my intuitions and gut-feelings. Eventually, after exploring one of these conflicts in depth, I realized that my heart was right, and that positivism was a wrong way of reasoning. But it took me a long time to undo the effects of positivism, and to learn to see clearly why it was wrong, and how to think correctly. In this article, I will try to boil down these life experiences into the simplest possible form; exploring the topic in its full depth would require much more depth and detail.

The questions I hope to address in this extract are the following:

1. What is Logical Positivism?
2. What is wrong with Logical Positivism?
3. Why does it appear to be extremely plausible, even though it is obviously false?
4. How can an obviously false philosophy become widely popular, and deeply influence thought and action worldwide?

Before proceeding to provide more detailed answers, a very brief summary will be helpful as a guide.

Logical Positivism (LP) is a theory of

knowledge. According to LP, only science produces valid knowledge. All other types of knowledge do not qualify to be considered as "knowledge". The LP theory has its origins in some subtle mistakes made by early Enlightenment Philosophers which became deeply entrenched in the foundations of Western thought. Because nearly all the literature produced by intellectuals in the European traditions reflects these mistakes, a Western education automatically indoctrinates students into believing this false philosophy. A clear rejection of this philosophy became possible only after Thomas Kuhn's pathbreaking work on "scientific revolutions" in the 1960s. This work has been understood by specialists and philosophers, who have decisively rejected positivism. However, outside this narrow circle, pre-Kuhnian ideas about science continue to dominate. The idea that science is the only valid source of knowledge continues to be the foundation of a Western education, and influences thought globally.

## My Personal Journey

Reality is hidden from our eyes. It is unknowable, unmeasurable, unquantifiable. Knowledge consists of trying to learn about this hidden reality, even though we will never be able to grasp it fully. We can feel with our hearts what we cannot see with our eyes. Even though I could not have articulated it at the time, this is the natural epistemology we all grow up with. However, my education in the West taught me an entirely different set of ideas about the nature of knowledge.



My Western education taught me to believe in Logical Positivism. This philosophy says that all the knowledge that we have comes from our senses and logic. Importantly, it denies the value of tradition and of faith as sources of knowledge. Any traditional knowledge, or Quranic teaching, must be tested empirically, and must accord with our observations and logic, if it is to be counted as knowledge. Positivism has very disturbing implications. Morality is just meaningless noise; we cannot evaluate, using observations and logic, statements like "It is wrong to kill". Emotions are not part of knowledge. Thus, our feelings of outrage, anger, and disgust, at acts of oppression against innocent victims have no significance. Our life-experiences and skills are not part of knowledge.

This radical change in the theory of knowledge, which took place in the early 20th Century, created a radical change in university education, designed to convey knowledge. The change is documented by Julie Reuben in "Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality". She writes that in early 20th Century, the explicit goal of university education was to build character, and teach civic and social responsibility to students. Changes in theory of knowledge created by Logical Positivism, combined with other forces, led to the purely technical education now in vogue. Abandonment of character-building as a goal of education has caused a lot of damage globally.

These broader issues escaped me completely in my youth. What was of concern to me was the technical implications of positivism for statistics. The standard definition of probability as a limiting frequency within an infinite sequence of identical trials fails completely from a positivist perspective. The subjective Bayesian approach is much more satisfactory, but it also leads to some puzzling conclusions. This approach identifies probability as a subjective belief and proves that this belief must exist and must satisfy

some rules if our behavior is rational. However, experiments on people, as well as introspection into my own heart, led to the conclusion that personal evaluations of probability do not satisfy the rules specified by the Bayesian approach.

This was another miniature conflict between my head and my heart. My reason was perfectly convinced by the Bayesian arguments, and I was an ardent subjectivist. But my heart and intuition kept telling me that this position could not be right. Ultimately, I stumbled upon some technical difficulties with the Bayesian position. In attempting to resolve them, I realized that the subjectivist position was wrong. The key stumbling block is the conflict between the observable manifestation of subjective belief, and the actual unobservable belief. Positivism holds that no such conflicts can exist, because we only have observable manifestations, but we never have access to the unobservable. However, my personal experiences tell me that I often make choices which do not correspond to the preference inside my heart.

## Choosing the Heart over the Head

As I struggled with the problem of understanding the meaning of probability, I came to the realization that the Bayesian argument, strongly dependent upon positivist philosophy, was wrong. Then, I set myself the task of understanding why it was wrong, when it seemed so clear and persuasive intellectually. Gradually, the flaws in the positivist position became so clear to me, that it became clear that Logical Positivism is obviously false. A brief explanation of this can be given by thinking about the idea of "observable". Positivists take intuitions, emotions, spiritual states to be unobservable. This is true in the sense that my internal states are not observable to others. But they are very clearly observable to myself. In fact, my internal states are the

foundations and building blocks of all my knowledge about the world. Denying the importance and relevance of my internal states is like “feigning Anesthesia” – assuming that we have no emotions and spirituality, when we observe these states directly. This fundamental problem was recognized and stated by a lifelong enthusiastic advocate who popularized Logical Positivism, A. J. Ayer. In a late life interview, he acknowledged that “it was all wrong”.

To accept Logical Positivism is to accept that our internal states – feelings, intuitions, experiences, and the knowledge that our hearts have been imprinted with – are not part of genuine knowledge. Such a stance is immediately implied by the idea that science is the only source of valid knowledge. But it is also obviously false. Our life experiences and heart-certainties are the most important sources of our knowledge. Once this became clear to me, I tried to explain this insight to others. These attempts failed miserably initially. Positivism is so deeply embedded into a Western education that it is very hard for those trained in the West to overcome it.

The central debate can be summarized very briefly as follows.

What is knowledge? A Western education teaches us knowledge consists of mathematics, chemistry, biology, physics, economics, political science, management etc. These are all the subjects contained in the syllabus of a modern Western education. What is common in these subjects is that they study the external world, but not our internal world. Science is the study of external reality. If this is taken to be the sole source of valid knowledge, then the only knowledge which matters is that of the world around us. But what about our internal world, the world of our heart and spirit? Logical Positivism denies that these are sources of knowledge because any knowledge that these provide are unique to us, and therefore obviously not a part of science. Yet, learning how to make the best

use of these precious few moments of life is obviously the most important question we all face in our lives. It is equally obvious that science cannot provide us with any clues to answer this question.

Once it became clear to me that the most important knowledge, that we all need, is ruled out of the bounds of knowledge by Logical Positivism, a second question emerged. WHY did such an obviously false philosophy become the foundation for Western knowledge? The philosophy of Logical Positivism explains the meaning of the following two Quranic verses:

“It’s not the eyes that are blind, but the heart.” (Quran 22:46)

“And those who disbelieve, their guardians are the evil ones; they bring them out of light into all kinds of darkness”. (Quran 2:257)

I have already talked about details of European intellectual history earlier, which led to their rejection of the ‘unobservable’, one of the central pillars of positivism. It is this rejection of unobservables which blinds positivists to our internal world, which is actually at the center of our human experience and knowledge of the external reality. This rejection leads to absurd philosophical stances on things of extreme importance to our daily lives. Just reflect on how much Einstein’s discoveries can help us in making friends, understanding social responsibilities, learning courage, love, compassion, and other essential human qualities.

## Epistemic Arrogance versus Humility

Religion provides us with certainties on which to build our lives. Rejecting religion left European intellectuals afloat on a sea of uncertainty. They cast about for alternative certainties and decided to put their faith in the newly emerging science. It was widely believed that Newton’s discoveries represented certain truth about the universe,

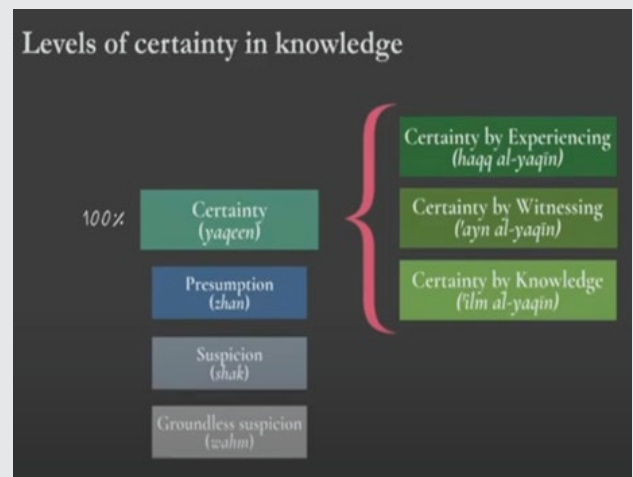
showing that man could arrive at truth by using observations and logic. It became an uncontested article of faith among European intellectuals that science led to truth, and that science was the only source of truth. It remains an unrecognized truth that this quest for certainty has caused enormous damage to the European intellectual tradition.

Epistemic arrogance entails that knowledge is worthy of this name only if it is true with certainty.

This idea, that knowledge must be true leads directly to skepticism. It is fairly easy to show that we can be certain of nothing, and therefore we have no knowledge. David Lewis, a prominent philosopher faces the problem squarely in his essay on "Elusive Knowledge". He starts by noting that we all have a lot of knowledge. But if we insist on certainty, then all of this knowledge disappears, because it is all fallible. The essay starts by an appeal to our (Eurocentric) sensibilities: the idea that "we have knowledge, but we cannot rule out errors" just sounds wrong. Surely, knowledge must be certain. Lewis refuses to accept the straightforward idea that we are humans and hence fallible, and all our knowledge is subject to the possibility of error. Instead, in a complex and convoluted essay which can only be understood by professional philosophers, he attempts to redefine the meaning of certainty in such a way that all of our knowledge becomes *infallible*. To accomplish this impossible goal, he starts with the infallibility of knowledge as an axiom, and redefines the entire lexicon to protect this axiom from the charge of being obviously false. The problems being faced by Lewis arise from crude binaries like something is either fallible or *infallible*, corresponding to something is either true or false. To understand why this creates unnecessary problems for epistemology, we contrast this confusion with the clarity of an Islamic approach, based on epistemic humility.

Epistemic Humility: Infallibility is unachievable. Certainty is a condition of the heart, which can be achieved. However, this feeling is not *infallible* as a guide to the truth. One may feel absolutely certain, and yet prove to be wrong. Quran (17:85) "You (mankind) have been given very little knowledge."

A complex and multilayered Islamic approach to epistemology is sketched in an excellent series of lectures by Dr. Recep Senturk entitled "Decolonizing Social Sciences: From Uniplexity to Multiplexity". The following diagram from the first lecture provides the following diagram showing the different levels of certainty which are possible for human beings to achieve:



### Multiple Levels of Certainty

An experience provides the highest level of certainty achievable, but even this is not enough to provide us with *infallible* knowledge. When Western philosophy assumes infallibility as an essential characteristic of knowledge, skepticism is the only possible outcome – nothing we know is *infallible*, and hence we have zero knowledge. David Lewis starts out by acknowledging this, and then shows how we can play word games which will allow us to pretend that the fallible knowledge we have is *infallible*, so that we can make-believe that knowledge is true with certainty.

# *Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani* دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Kaiser Nizamani

## The Mosque of Dār al-'Ulūm

After Dār al-'Ulūm shifted to Sharafi, while the classrooms and dormitory buildings of Dār al-'Ulūm had been constructed, a proper mosque could not be built immediately, and initially, pray-ers were offered on a paved floor near a well. Later, as the number of students increased, the hall of the northern classroom building was used as a prayer space. The foundation stone for the proper mosque was laid on 15 Sha'ban 1377 AH (7 March 1958) during the annual gathering. Its construction continued gradually, until the task of laying its roof was scheduled for 6 Rabī al-Thānī 1378 AH. Our respected father رحمته الله said that instead of getting this done by hired labour-ers, it should be carried out by the staff and students of Dār al-'Ulūm themselves. Accordingly, on that day, all the teachers, students, and administrative staff of Dār al-'Ulūm remained busy the entire day in laying the roof. We, too, *Alhamdulillah*, attained this blessing. Congregational prayers took place in this mosque for many years. After the passing away of our respected father رحمته الله, even this mosque became cramped for space, whereafter a major expansion plan was initiated under the supervision of my elder brother, Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani رحمته الله, which, *Alhamdulillah*, has now been completed. The previous mosque has been entirely incorporated into this new one.

Various events were held at Dār al-'Ulūm to provide students with opportunities to practice and enhance their speaking and writing skills. That year, in Jamādi al-Thānī 1378 AH, corresponding to December 1958, a writing competition was held in which three questions related to acquiring knowledge were given. I wrote an article on the topic "Islam's Approach to Knowledge" which was deemed worthy of first place.

In any case, our academic year thus concluded successfully with the grace and favour of Allah

Most High, and *Alhamdulillah* the results of the annual examinations were also good. But I still remember the pain of an incident from those exams. By the grace of Allah, we had prepared well for those exams and hoped that *Inshā Allah* we would secure good marks. And this did happen in most subjects. However, the paper for *Sharḥ Nukhbat al-Fikr* was set by Hadhrat Mawlana Akbar Ali رحمته الله, who was known for setting tough exams and awarding marks very stringently. I was thus apprehensive about this exam. When the paper came, one question completely baffled me. I still remember that question to this day. It contained the following excerpt from *Sharḥ Nu-khbat al-Fikr*:

فإن قيل: إنما اتفقوا علي وجوب العمل به لا علي  
صحته، منعه

Beneath this excerpt, the question was:

"Explain this passage and provide the "سند منع" (sanad mana'). Since only this portion of the passage was quoted, due to my lack of understanding, I was unable to comprehend its meaning without the context. I could not determine to what the pronoun in "وجوب العمل به" referred to, nor could I grasp the meaning of "منع", let alone "سند منع". Consequently, I wrote some incoherent and nonsensical answer. As a result, Hadhrat Mawlana Akbar Ali رحمته الله awarded me 41 marks (perhaps taking into account my answers to the other questions), which placed me in the lowest passing category for this subject. Even though I had studied hard for *Mishkat*, I attained unexpectedly low marks in that exam as well. I do not recall ever getting such poor marks in the exam of any other book. I was deeply disheartened at this, and it is the "blessing" of that pain that even after 56 years, I still remember that question.

The following were my results in the annual exams that year:

Book / Subject	Marks
Mishkāt	41
Nukhbat al-Fikr	41
Sharḥ ‘Aqāid	50
Jalālayn	50
al-Fawz al-Kabīr	49
Ḥuṣūn Ḥamīdiyyah	49

I had written the following note beside these results in my personal diary: “The exams of *Mishkāt* and *Nukhbat al-Fikr* were conducted by Mawlana Akbar Ali Sahib.”

## My First Writing on Islamic Jurisprudence

After the academic year ended, we returned home to spend our vacations of Sha‘ban and Ramadan. A detailed query regarding the ruling on conducting congregational *Tahajjud* prayers during Ramadan had come to my respected father رحمته الله. My respected father رحمته الله instructed me: “Gather the relevant references from the books of *Fiqh* on this issue so that it becomes easier for me to write the reply, and you also get practice in referring to books of *Fiqh*.” This gave me a chance to pursue my desire. Accordingly, I collected the relevant passages from all the books of *Fiqh* available in my respected father’s رحمته الله personal library. I gathered a heap of books, each marked at the relevant pages, beside my pillow. When my respected father saw this heap, he was very pleased and remarked: “By gathering so many books, you have acted according to my own temperament”. Encouraged by these words, I submitted: “If you permit, shall I pen down my understanding from these references and present it to you?” My respected father granted his permission, whereafter I wrote a detailed answer and presented it to him. He was overjoyed at reading it and made numerous

supplications for me. Later, in his reply to the query (dated 4 Shawwal 1378 AH), he wrote the following at the start to the correspondent:

“I assigned this query to my youngest son, Muhammad Taqi (may Allah preserve him), who is set to begin his studies of *Dawrah al-Ḥadith* this year. My intention was for him to practice referring to books of *Fiqh*, and after he extracts the relevant references, I would write the answer. However, MashaAllah, this boy is intelligent. He extracted all the references on his own without any assistance from me and then used those references to write the answer by himself. When I reviewed his writing, I found it fully sufficient and comprehensive. I am therefore sending the same answer with my attestation on it.”

And at the end of the Fatwa, he wrote the following words:

الله درّ المجيب، حيثُ أصاب فيما أجاب، وأجاد  
فيما أفاد، مع ملاحظة أدب الأكابر، وفقه الله  
تعالى لما يُحبّ ويرضي

This was my first academic writing, which the late respected Majd al-Dīn of Sylhet later published as a pamphlet titled “*Jamā‘at Tahajjud Dar Ramaḍan*”. I was in the fifteenth year of my life, and after Eid, our *Dawrah al-Ḥadith* began.

## The Year of *Dawrah al-Ḥadith*

In that year (Shawwal 1378 AH, corresponding to April 1959), our lessons of Sahih Bukhari were under Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Rashīd Ahmad رحمته الله; Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi was taught by Hadhrat Mawlana Salīmullah Khan رحمته الله; Sahih Muslim by Hadhrat Mawlana Akbar Ali رحمته الله; Abu Dawud was initially under Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Haqīq رحمته الله, but was later transferred to Hadhrat Mawlana Qāri Ri‘ayatullah رحمته الله, from whom we studied the majority of it. Sunan Nasai and Muwatta Imam Muhammad were under Hadhrat Mawlana Sahban Mahmūd رحمته الله; Sunan Ibn Majah was

with Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Haqīq رحمۃ اللہ علیہ; and Muwatta Imam Malik and Shamāil Tirmidhi were taught by our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. At that time, our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ resided in the city and would visit Dār al-‘Ulūm once or twice a week, and would conduct these lessons during those visits.

## Engrossment in Studies

The year of Dawrah al-Ḥadith is a very memorable one in the life of a student of knowledge. During that year, a student detaches himself from every other subject and devotes his complete attention to the blessed Ahadith of the Noble Messenger ﷺ. From morning until evening, the mind is absorbed in a single preoccupation, with lessons on Ahadith taking place in every single class. The following couplet of Hadhrat Majzub رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would come to my mind:

اُن کا ذکر، اُن کی تمنا، اُن کی یاد  
وقت کتنا قیمتی ہے آج کل

Mentioning him, yearning for him, remembering him

## How precious is time nowadays

Due to the blessings of companionship with Hadhrat Mufti Rashīd Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, a love for books had already been instilled in my heart since the previous year. When the year of Dawrat al-Ḥadith began, the desire arose in my heart to thoroughly prepare for each lesson before attending the class. For this, we brought a few books from the personal library of our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. One was Fath al-Mulhim, the commentary on Sahih Muslim, and the other was an incomplete commentary on Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi titled “al-Ṭib al-Shadhī”, written by Hadhrat Mawlana Ashfaq Ahmad Kandhlavi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. It was printed as a large book using an old typeface. Hadhrat Binnori’s commentary “Ma‘arif al-Sunan” had not yet been published, so this was the

best commentary on Tirmidhi as of that time, though it only covered up to Kitāb al-Ṭahārah. Additionally, our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ also gave us al-‘Urf al-Shadhī and al-Kawkab al-Durrī. Beyond these, the lectures on Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi delivered by Hadhrat ‘Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, which our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had personally transcribed, were also available. Furthermore, our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had these transcriptions fully copied by his paternal cousin, Hadhrat Mawlana Zahūr Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, and added numerous annotations from al-Kawkab al-Durrī and al-‘Urf al-Shadhī in the margins, and had it bound into a large volume. He kindly gave this to us as well. With these, we had excellent reference material for the study of Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi. For Sahih Bukhari, in the beginning, the heart desired to refer to ‘Umdat al-Qāri and Fath al-Bārī as much as possible. Since we did not possess these two books, we had to visit the library of Dār al-‘Ulūm to study them. In those days, the library was located in the dilapidated building known as Purāna Bangla (Old Bungalow). This was the same bungalow that the late Haji Ibrahim Dadabhai, who had endowed his land to Dār al-‘Ulūm, had gifted to Dār al-‘Ulūm along with the land. On its eastern side was a two-storey residential building. Toward its west, after a courtyard, stood a long building, a part of which was used as the Administration Office. What was the Administration Office? It consisted of a long mat spread on the floor, with a wooden floor desk placed on one side along with a bolster pillow. The other part of this same long building had been converted into the library, where numerous wooden cupboards were haphazardly strewn around, with each cupboard containing books arranged by subject. Hadhrat Mawlana Abdul Khafi Saharanpuri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was the librarian and was known for his strictness. However, seeing our passion for reading, he became very kind to us. After attending our class of Tirmidhi in the fourth period, we would head to the library. There, we would study ‘Umdat al-Qāri and

Fath al-Bārī as much as possible, and during this time, also familiarize ourselves with other books. Once or twice, it so happened that I became so engrossed in studying a book that I did not realize it was time for the library to close. I requested Mawlana رحمته: “Can I stay here until Zuhr while you can go for lunch?” He kindly granted me permission.

Hadhrat Mufti Rashīd Ahmad رحمته would deliver fluent lectures in his class of Sahih Bukhari and I would record them in Urdu. I still have a copy of those notes preserved with me. On the other hand, Hadhrat Mawlana Salīmullah Khan رحمته would dictate his lessons on Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi during class, and since dictation provided some pauses, I would record his lectures in Arabic. The reality is that Hadhrat’s lectures were so well-structured that all aspects of the subject under discussion would come together in a beautifully organized manner. The points that were scattered across various commentaries would be logically and cohesively presented, refined and arranged in a seamless flow. I still have the manuscripts of both sets of lectures preserved with me.

This kind of enjoyment and immersion during student life was such that one would become oblivious even to one’s own physical needs. At that time, Khadau slippers were used in Dār al-‘Ulūm for walking around. Today, perhaps few people remain who know what Khadau means. This was a wooden slipper with a rubber strap, and one would wear it by sliding one’s foot under the strap. If walked upon on a hard floor, it would produce a loud clacking sound that could be heard from afar. While they were typically used for making ablution in the bathrooms, we had adopted them as regular footwear. When we would return home on Thursdays, we would wear fresh clothes on Fridays and bring another set back with us to Dār al-‘Ulūm. This set of clothes would then be changed on Monday or Tuesday. Because of Takrār, study, and sometimes lessons continuing late into the night, we would have

little time for sleep, while lessons would begin early in the morning. However, if ever a teacher was delayed in arriving for class, we would get a short moment to lie down in a corner of the veranda. We would thus rest for a while on the bare floor.

The practical exercises of deriving jurisprudential rulings from books of Fiqh, intended to train us in drafting Fatwas, which had been started by Hadhrat Mufti Rashīd Ahmad رحمته the previous year, continued this year as well. In addition, our respected father رحمته would occasionally assign us some writing tasks. At that time, our respected father رحمته was publishing a new and revised version of Imdād al-Fatāwā. He said that a brief biography of its author, i.e. Hakīm al-Ummah Hadhrat Thanwi رحمته, should be included at the beginning. He instructed me to write a concise account of his life. At that time, I had only just begun Dawrah al-Ḥadīth. Using “Ashraf al-Sawanih” and the late Munshi ‘Abd al-Rahman’s book “Sirat-e-Ashraf” as references, I wrote a short article, which was perhaps my first piece of writing to be published in a book. It is still printed at the beginning of Imdād al-Fatāwā, and at the end of the article, the date Muharram 1379 AH (July 1959) is recorded, which means that I had written it before our tri-monthly exams, and at that time, I would have been sixteen years and three months old — rather not yet sixteen according to the solar calendar. I mention this because if any lack of refinement or maturity is found in that article, the reason for it becomes known.

In the tri-monthly exams of that year, I was honoured to achieve first position in the class of Sahih Bukhari and Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi. I received 54 marks in Sahih Bukhari, a score that no student had attained before, and 52 marks in Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi, Shamāil and Muwatta. In the six-monthly exams as well, I came first in Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi, and except for Sunan Abi Dawud, in which I received 47 marks, I did not score below 50 in any other subject. In Sahih



Bukhari, I received 52 marks, 51 in Ṭahāwi, and 50 in the remaining books.

After the six-monthly exams in the year of Dawrah al-Ḥadith, classes generally continue at night as well. At that time, our class consisted of approximately thirty students. Hence, after Isha, in the light of a single lantern, Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Rashīd Ahmad رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would teach Sahih Bukhari under two trees near Purāna Bangla. These were Neem and Tamarind trees whose branches intertwined at the top, and both trees are still alive to this day. Whenever I pass beneath them, the memories of those lessons are refreshed in my mind.

Especially in the lessons of Sahih Bukhari, the classes at the end of the year often consist of Ahadith that have already been covered previously and the teacher has already explained them. Therefore, merely reading the text suffices for such Ahadith. As a result, the lessons proceed at a very fast pace, and only those selected students are permitted to read the text who can read both quickly and correctly. In our class, the teacher had appointed four students for this task. Two of them were us two brothers, the third was Mawlana Muhammad Amīn Quettavi, and the fourth was Mawlana Muhammad Irani. When the teacher would sense the student getting slow after reading for some time, he would say: "Let's change the driver now", and then, calling one of us by name, he would say: "Now you read". The lesson would continue in this manner late into the night.

I have mentioned before that Hadhrat Mawlana Salīmullah Khan رحمۃ اللہ علیہ would dictate his lectures during the lessons of Jāmi' Tirmidhi. Naturally, dictation would take time, so the lessons progressed at a slower pace. As a result, by the end of the academic year, we had only completed the book up to the four pillars. At the same time, Hadhrat had also started the second volume of Tirmidhi without dictation, and this progressed relatively faster. When

very little time remained before the end of the academic year, Hadhrat said: "Now, most of the remaining Ahadith are such that they have already been covered in Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Abu Dawud, etc., so it will suffice to complete the remaining book by recitation." For this purpose, Hadhrat began conducting additional lessons to complete the book. When approximately one hundred pages remained, Hadhrat conducted a lesson that lasted the entire night. For this, a stove was brought into the classroom, and tea was prepared and served at intervals. In this manner, the book was completed in one or two nights.

It was during those days that, in God knows what state of mental absorption, I composed the following verses addressing my classmates:

بہت ہی سخت آگے گردش ایم ہے، پی لو!  
 غنیمت ہے کہ گردش میں ابھی تک حجام ہے، پی لو!  
 تمہیں تصویر ہستی میں وفا کا رنگ بھرنے ہے  
 جفا و جور کی ظلمت جہاں میں عام ہے، پی لو!  
 تمہیں طغوت کی بے رحم طغیانی سے لڑنا ہے  
 بہت سا کام ہے، پی لو، بہت سا کام ہے، پی لو!  
 سخاوت حجام و مینا کی بڑی نعمت ہے دیوانو!  
 یہ ساقی کی توجہ بھی بڑا انعام ہے، پی لو!

Translation:

Difficult trials of time lie ahead, drink!

Consider it fortunate that the goblet still passes around, drink!

You must paint the colours of loyalty into the picture of life,

The gloom of tyranny and oppression prevails in the world, drink!

You must battle the merciless tide of tyranny,

There is much work to do, drink, there is much work to do, drink!

The generosity of the goblet and cup is a great blessing, O passionate souls!

And the attention of the cup-bearer is a great gift too, drink!

At this juncture, it seems appropriate to clarify a point. Observing the way Dawrah al-Ḥadīth is taught in our madrasas, an objection might arise in the minds of contemporary educationists: what is the benefit of teaching so many books from start to finish in this manner, especially when similar Ahadith are repeated across these books. Several teachers often discuss the same Ahadith, and by the end of the year, it is common for teachers to suffice with a simple recitation of the text. In contrast, if summaries of these books were prepared and taught, as is done in universities, it would not require as much effort, and the need for reciting the entire text would also be eliminated.

The answer to this objection is that there are two objectives in teaching and learning Hadith, and neither of them can be deemed unimportant. The first objective is that the student becomes familiar with the relevant topics and discussions of the Hadith, develops the ability to comprehend them and derive conclusions from them, and also gains an understanding of the principles of Jarḥ wa Ta'dīl (evaluation of narrators). In other words, this can be referred to as Dirayat al-Ḥadīth. (Translator: Dirayat al-Ḥadīth - knowledge and understanding of the Hadith) The second object, however, is "Riwayat al-Ḥadīth" (Translator: Riwayat al-Ḥadīth: Narration of the Hadith), which means that the student gets the opportunity to recite the primary books of Hadith directly in front of the teacher, so that the student himself becomes part of the sanad (chain of transmission) of those Ahadith. Allah Most High has established the chain of transmission of Hadith as a unique system for its preservation, unparalleled in any other science or art in the world. It is through this chain of narrators that we can

confidently trace who narrated a particular Hadith and assess the reliability of its narrators. This practice has continued since the time of the pious predecessors, that when a teacher teaches Hadith, he also narrates his sanad, i.e. the chain through which the Hadith reached him. The practice of students reciting the Hadith before their teachers has been ongoing since the time of the Companions (RA), and our pious elders continued this even after the books of Hadith were compiled and published, for becoming a part of the sanad is itself a blessing. To attain this blessing, even simply reciting the Hadith before a teacher is sufficient, as it connects a person to the golden chain of transmission, which, passing through the pious predecessors, reaches the Noble Messenger ﷺ himself. The blessings of this connection cannot be achieved by merely studying summaries or abridged texts. Outside the Indian subcontinent, unadulterated Islamic madrasas have largely disappeared, and hence this practice has become obsolete in those countries at an institutional level. Nonetheless, at an individual level, some scholars continue to teach books of Hadith riwayatan (with narration), and enthusiastic students acquire this blessing through their own efforts. But, by the grace of Allah Most High, this practice is still alive in the madrasas of the subcontinent.

In any case, by the grace and mercy of Allah Most High, the year of Dawrah al-Ḥadīth came to an end, and on Thursday 7 Rajab 1379 AH (approximately 4 January 1960), our respected father رحمه الله delivered the lesson on the last chapter of Sahih Bukhari and completed it (This date is recorded in my notes of Taqrīr Bukhari). And in Sha'ban 1379 AH (equivalent to February 1960), it was time for the exams. At that time, I was two months short of completing the seventeenth year of my life according to the lunar calendar, and eight months short according to the solar calendar. By that time, Dār al-'Ulūm Karachi was not affiliated with Wifāq al-Madāris al-'Arabiyyah

(the Federation of Islamic Seminaries). The Wifāq did not hold the status it does, by the grace and mercy of Allah Most High, today. And due to multiple considerations in light of the circumstances at that time, our respected father رحمته preferred to keep Dār al-‘Ulūm separate from it. As a result, all exams at Dār al-‘Ulūm were conducted independently at its own level. However, some of our respected teachers wished for Dār al-‘Ulūm to join Wifāq, and they also put forward various suggestions to address the reasons due to which our respected father رحمته disliked becoming affiliated with it.

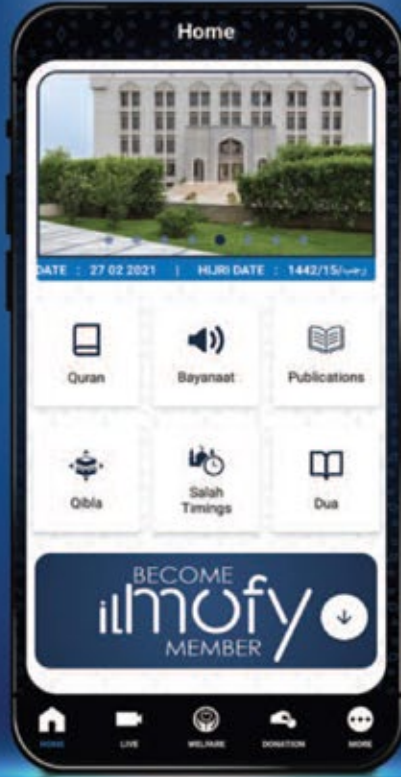
On the other hand, it was the special grace and favour of Allah Most High that both of us brothers were blessed with abundant kindness from our teachers, and they all held a favourable opinion of us. We wrote all our exam papers in Arabic, which was generally well-received by the teachers. It was due to this that on one occasion Hadhrat Mawlana Salīmullah Khan رحمته remarked in a gathering of teachers: “If Dār al-‘Ulūm is to affiliate with Wifāq, this year would be the best time, because if this year’s annual exams at Dār al-‘Ulūm are held under Wifāq, *Inshā Allah* Taqī is expected to secure the first position across the entire Wifāq, and thus Dār al-‘Ulūm could achieve the first position in its very first year of affiliation with the Wifāq.”

Though Dār al-‘Ulūm did not affiliate with Wifāq that year, and the exams were conducted independently at Dār al-‘Ulūm’s own level, it was by the grace and favour of Allah Most High that our answers received great encouragement from our teachers. At that time, Dār al-‘Ulūm Karachi followed the old marking system of Dār al-‘Ulūm Deoband, where each paper was marked out of fifty. However, if a student’s answers were exceptionally good, the examiner could award marks exceeding fifty. Typically, such papers were awarded fifty-one marks; for extraordinary answers, fifty-two marks were awarded, and in very rare cases, fifty-three marks. Hadhrat Mawlana Akbar Ali

رحمته was known for being extremely strict in grading papers. I have already mentioned an instance of this I myself experienced during last year’s exams, where, in the paper of Nukhbat al-Fikr, he gave me forty-one marks, which at that time was considered Lower Class pass, at which I was deeply disheartened. This time, the exam of Sunan Nasai was conducted by him, and a record-breaking incident occurred, in that he awarded me fifty-five marks in that paper (which is a record in the history of Dār al-‘Ulūm exams that has never been broken) and even wrote a note of praise on the paper. Sadly, I did not get to see this note myself, as students were not shown their graded exam paper. However, Hadhrat Mawlana mentioned to our respected father and the principal رحمته: “I have never seen such an answer paper in my entire teaching career”. Additionally, though we learned our results later, while Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Rashīd Ahmad was marking my paper, he immediately called my respected father to congratulate him, and awarded me fifty-four marks. The following were my results:

Book / Subject	Marks
Sahih Bukhari	54
Sahih Muslim	52
Sunan Abu Dawod	52
Sunan Nasai	55
Jāmi‘ Tirmidhi	50
Ṭahāwi	52
Muwatta Imam Muhammad	52
Shamāil Tirmidhi	50
Muwatta Imam Malik	51
Sunan Ibn Majah	51

My elder brother, Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafi‘ Usmani رحمته, achieved more or less similar results.



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