

The Intellect

Al Quran
Surah Al-A'raf Part 1

Al Hadith
Basic Principles of
Inheritance in Islam

The Awakening
Managing our Homes
Maulana Abdus Sattar حفظه الله

*Odyssey
of the Spirit
(Part 2 of 3)*

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Translation by Kaiser Nizamani

Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم و رحمة الله و بركاته

Adab, which can be loosely translated as etiquette or good / appropriate manners, is a very important Islamic tenet. Though a virtue increasingly rare in urban Muslim societies, it is still prevalent and meticulously observed to the hilt in some stellar, isolated communities.

Case-in-point: Mauritania – a nation which has only 0.5% arable land, (the rest of it being consumed by the Sahara desert), and is one of the least visited countries in Africa. Despite its unpopularity amongst tourists, thousands of seekers of *Ilm* flock to its deserts each year to sit at the feet of scholars who have memorized, along with the Holy Qur'an, volumes upon volumes of classical books of Islamic knowledge. Their children, with their unadulterated minds, are able to commit to memory entire sets of classical Arabic poetry books. Their *Adab* and methodology of learning is unique as well. For example, in a famous seat of learning, Nabbaghiyya, a small village in the desert, there's no formal curriculum or structured class timetable; rather students gather and take turns, one by one, to sit before a Shaykh and each student recites from an Islamic book of their choice. The Shaykh explains the meaning of the text, line by line, without holding a book, purely from memory!

The memorization of the Holy Qur'an is done by writing each verse on a wooden board (*Luh*); the ink to write upon it is made from coal, and each student recites a verse more than a hundred times till it is fully committed to memory. The level of *Adab* shown to the Divine words is unparalleled: when the *Luh* needs to be wiped out (for another verse to be written on it) and washed clean with a sponge or sand, the washed off ink is gathered in a bowl and this water is then poured into a special hole in the sand, surrounded by stones to demarcate its boundaries. No one steps near or over this hole, out of reverence for the ink which once carved out words of a Quranic verse!

In stark contrast to this, we observe the prevalence of a complete lack of good manners and etiquettes in most modern societies. Leave alone the adoption of appropriate mannerisms towards strangers, even close family members are at the receiving end of blatant ridicule and pure selfish behavior. With a complete disregard to the blessings bestowed upon them by their Lord ﷻ, parents are only kept in communication to milk out their money through emotional blackmailing.

The account of a widow in the States, who spent years raising her two kids by sacrificing her own wants and needs, is indeed eye-opening. She says she was sent a shocking email by her daughter, mentioning that her prospective in-laws felt she need not attend her daughter's wedding (as they wished it to be an intimate gathering); and, if she wished to be a part of it, she could do it through Google Meet! This, after her daughter had siphoned off \$30,000 for the wedding from her and she was expected to wire another \$50,000!

All the years of her sacrifice and hardship as a widowed mother of two flashed before her eyes – the missed celebrations, the old car she had driven for fourteen years to save up for them, single-handedly bringing them up without any personal considerations, breaks or vacations, with bills always piling up on the kitchen counter...

A far cry from the *Huqooq* (rights) of parents emphasized unendingly in Divine texts, this behavior on the daughter's part lacked even basic courtesy and rudimentary manners. But with such a disdainful attitude, the mother had her moment of truth: suddenly, she says, something inside her clicked – she felt she had to set boundaries so as not to be selfishly used as a money-vending machine. She felt she had been taken for granted for too many years. Decision made, with no display of anger or disdain, but quiet, firm action, she cancelled the wire transfer which was to fund her daughter's wedding and switched off her phone. Countless phone calls, zero remorse later, nothing could change the hurt mother's mind. It was obvious that the effort to reconnect on the daughter's part was not to apologize or show regret for dishonoring her mother so blatantly but to try to convince her to continue funding a wedding she was disinvited from. So much for respect. So much for *Adab*!

To read more on this indispensable (yet gradually vanishing) virtue of *Adab*, and its critical importance in Islam, turn to our *Action Alerts* section.

In *Al-Qur'an*, we've begun featuring the commentary on Surah Al-A'raf in this issue, starting with a basic introduction of the Surah.

And in our *Cover Story*, we will be continuing the enthralling journey of the German revert, Sh. Muhammad Harun in *Odyssey of the Spirit* (featuring in three parts in *The Intellect* magazine).

In the portion featured this time, the Shaykh describes his soul-enriching experiences in Karachi and how he comes across the "watchword" of the Turkish dervish, yet again!

Since more than a year, while penning down each quarterly editorial, one wished for the situation in Gaza to have improved somewhat. But alas! Reprieve seems nowhere in sight.

As things turn from bad to worse, our supplications must intensify and our actions must speak louder than our words.

We beseech our Rabb ﷻ for His unseen armies to wreak havoc upon the inhumane and cruel occupiers...

Du'as,

Zawjah Farid

The Meanings of the Quran

Surah
Al-A'raf
Part 1

Introduction

Literally, ar'af means 'heights'. In Quranic terminology, the word refers to a high place between Paradise and Hell. The people whose good and bad deeds are equal will be detained here for some time, but ultimately Allah's Mercy will allow them to enter Paradise. Since verses 46 and 48 of this Surah contain a description of such people, it has been named after this place.

Like other Makki Surahs, the basic theme of this Surah is to invite unbelievers of Makkah to accept the true faith, including the Oneness of Allah, the Messengership of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Life after death. The last verses of the previous Surah warned the unbelievers of divine retribution. The present Surah describes the details of this warning by depicting scenes of Paradise and Hell, and by narrating the stories of the nations that were destroyed by the divine scourge, right here in this world, when they rejected their respective Prophets ﷺ. Many subsidiary subjects are also taken up in the context of this basic theme.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

المص

Alif, Lam, Mim, Sad [1] ¹

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلِ إِلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(This is) a Book sent down to you. Therefore, your heart must not be straightened because of it.² (It is revealed to you so that you may warn through it, and it may be an advice for the believers. [2]

تَبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ

(O human kind,) follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow any masters other than Him.³ Little you heed to advice! [3]

وَكَمْ مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا بَيَاتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ

How many a town We have destroyed! Our punishment came upon them at night or when they were having a nap at midday. [4]

فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ

So, when Our punishment came upon them, they could say nothing but cry, "We were wrongdoers indeed." [5]

لَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

So, We shall ask those to whom the messengers were sent, and We shall ask the messengers (how they conveyed the message). [6]

فَلَنَقْصِصَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ

Then, having full knowledge, We shall tell them the whole story, as We were never far from them. [7]

وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

The Weighing (of deeds) on that day is definite.⁴ As for those whose scales are heavy, they will be the successful ones. [8]

وَمَن خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظْلِمُونَ

But those whose scales are light, they are the ones who have brought loss to themselves, because they did not do justice to Our verses. [9]

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

We established you on earth, and created in it means of living for you. Little you appreciate. [10]

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ

We created you, then gave you a shape, then We said to the angels, "Prostrate yourself before Adam." So, they all prostrated themselves, except Iblees (Satan). He did not join those who fell prostrate. [11]

قَالَ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ

Allah said, "What has prevented you from prostrating when I ordered you?" He said, "I am better than him. You have created me of fire and created him of clay." [12]

قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الصَّاغِرِينَ

He said, "Then, get you down from here, it is not for you to show arrogance here. So, get out. You are one of the degraded". [13]

قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ

He said, "Then give me respite until the day when all will be resurrected." [14]

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ

He (Allah) said, "You are granted respite." [15]

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

He said, "Now that you have led me astray, I will certainly sit for them (in ambush) on Your straight path. [16]

ثُمَّ لَآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ

Then I will come upon them from their front side and from their behind, and from their right and from their left. You will not find most of them grateful." [17]

قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْذُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لَّنْ تَبْعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

He (Allah) said, "Get out of here, condemned, rejected. Indeed, whosoever will follow you from among them, I will fill Hell with all of you together. [18]

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

O' Adam, dwell you and your wife, in Paradise, and eat from wherever you like, but do not go near this tree, otherwise you shall join the transgressors." [19]

Explanatory Notes

- 1) As explained in the beginning of Surah Al-Baqarah (Surah 2), the exact purport of the letters found at the beginning of various Surahs is not known to anyone except Allah.
- 2) This is a direction to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he should convey the message of this Book to the people regardless of the reaction he received from them. Their hostile and obstinate attitude was hurtful to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and at times caused him to think whether or not he was responsible for their aversion from the truth. The Holy Quran frequently consoles him by declaring that his responsibility is no more than to convey the message. The reaction of the addressees is neither in his control, nor is he liable for it in the least. Therefore, he should carry on his mission without any fear of rejection, ridicule or hostility that may be demonstrated by the unbelievers.
- 3) The reference to masters here is to the leaders and the soothsayers upon whom the pagans used to rely in matters of faith.
- 4) The Holy Quran has mentioned at several places that all human deeds will be weighed on the Day of Judgment, and the decision for Paradise or Hell will be based upon the weighing. The old philosophers used to speculate about how such abstract things as 'deeds', can actually be 'weighed'. Modern instruments have proved that it is not impossible to weigh or measure such intangibles as temperature, light, voice etc. If man is able to invent scales and meters to quantify these abstract things, how can it be presumed that the Omnipotent Creator of the whole universe is unable to weigh the deeds of His servants?

(Al-Qur'an to be continued In sha' Allah...)



Wealth for Virtuous Ends

Maulana Manzoor Naumani رحمه الله

(214/74) It is related by Abu Kabshah el-Anmari that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "There are three things which I swear to be true and, in addition to them, there is another thing which I want to tell you. So, remember it. The three things which I swear to be true are: (i) No one will become poor by spending in the way of Allah [i.e., Allah ﷻ will bestow prosperity on him and multiply his wealth]; (ii) When a man is wronged and he remains patient, Allah ﷻ will raise him esteem in return for it [i.e., when a wrong is perpetrated on a person and he bears it patiently, Allah ﷻ will cause an increase in his high rank and good reputation]; and (iii) No one will open the door of begging but Allah ﷻ will open the door of poverty for him [i.e., whoever will make it his habit to extend a begging hand toward others will be condemned to want and indigence by Allah ﷻ]. The thing that I want to tell you and which you should remember, apart from these, is that there are four types of men in this world:

(i) One whom Allah ﷻ has granted wealth as well as the knowledge of the correct way of life and he fears Allah ﷻ in the expenditure and utilization of his wealth and shows kindness to relatives by means of it and spends it in the way it ought to be done for the good pleasure of the Lord. This person is of the highest station.

(ii) The slave whom Allah ﷻ has endowed with correct knowledge [and the right spirit] but was not given wealth; his intention is sound and he [honestly] feels and says that if he had wealth, he, too, would spend and utilise it as virtuous men do. The recompense of both these men is equal [i.e., people of the second

category will be rewarded in the same way as those of the first due to the purity of their intention).

(iii) The slave whom Allah ﷻ has given wealth but not the knowledge [and spirit] of using and spending it properly; he spends his wealth foolishly and in wrong ways and without the fear of Allah ﷻ, and does not show kindness to relatives through his worldly possessions nor spends as he ought to spend it. These are the worst kind of men.

(iv) The slave whom Allah ﷻ gave neither wealth nor right knowledge [and spirit]; he says that if they had wealth, he, too, would spend it as one wasteful and self-indulgent man does. Such is their intention and the sin of both these types of men is equal [i.e., the fault of the people of the last category will be identical, due to their evil intention, to what is of the people belonging to the third category owing to their misdeeds) [Tirmidhi].

Commentary: The meaning of the above tradition has been explained in the course of the translation. It is, however, necessary to bear in mind that the intention of evil conduct which has been condemned here as equivalent to the evil conduct itself belongs to the class of resolve and determination, i.e., the bondsman may be eager and bent upon committing a sin but cannot do so owing to an incapability or lack of opportunity. When the intention of a person is of that degree, it will amount to the commission of the sin and will be deserving of punishment in the same way as the transgression upon which his heart is set.

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

Basic Principles of Inheritance in Islam

By Mawlana Muhammad Saleem Dhorat

On the occasion of the death of a person, we are reminded of the Hereafter, and to an extent, we are mindful of ensuring that our actions concerning the deceased are completed according to the Commands of Allāh ta'āla and the sunnah of the Prophet sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam. Unfortunately, one area which remains largely unpractised and neglected is that of the correct distribution of inheritance.

The wealth, possessions, property, etc. that a person leaves behind are the deceased's estate. This needs to be distributed to the rightful inheritors in accordance with the laws of Sharī'ah. The Prophet sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam, stressing its importance, says,

Learn (the knowledge of) inheritance and teach it (to the people), for it is half of knowledge; and it will eventually be forgotten. It will be the first (knowledge) to be taken away from my Ummah. (Ibn Mājah رحمه الله)


Nowadays, even those considered religious, who are very cautious regarding their wealth and food, ensuring that they are all from halāl sources, are neglectful regarding this part of Sharī'ah. Beware of the fact that not giving someone their due right from the inheritance is just like stealing their wealth. Stated below are a few points which will, inshā'allāh, help us learn some basic principles of inheritance, together with prevailing misconceptions and incorrect practices. Due to the delicate and complex nature of the rules of inheritance, one must consult the 'Ulamā and Muftis رحمه الله in

all circumstances.


When distributing the deceased's estate, the following steps need to be taken in the order mentioned:

1. From the estate, the first right of the deceased is that of the funeral expenses. It is of course another matter if out of love one or more of the inheritors decide to personally bear the expenses. However, if the deceased be a woman survived by her husband, then her husband will bear the funeral expenses. This will be his responsibility, irrespective of whether she has left behind an estate or not. It should be remembered here that neither should one indulge in extravagance nor miserliness, but a path of moderation should be adopted.
2. After drawing the funeral expenses, one will need to ascertain whether the deceased had left any debts. If needed, scrutinise his records and statements to determine this. Any debts need to be paid off before any inheritor can receive any share. For example, if the deceased left behind a house valued at £100,000 and also had debts amounting to the same, then the house will be sold and the debt will be settled after deducting funeral expenses. The inheritors will, in such circumstances, receive nothing. Should the inheritors refuse to clear the debts and unjustly claim the house for themselves, then the estate, which they will have wrongfully seized, will be deemed harām.

3. A person has the right to make a wasiyyah (bequest) in one third of his estate in favour of certain individuals or eligible organisations and causes. There are two principles which apply to this.

- Firstly, the deceased cannot make a wasiyyah for anyone who stands to receive a share in his inheritance as defined by the Shari'ah. This is because the Prophet ﷺ has said, "There is no wasiyyah for the inheritor." (Abū Dāwūd )
- Secondly, wasiyyah can only apply to a maximum of one third of the estate.

For example, if a person makes a wasiyyah for £5,000 to be donated to a particular masjid, as far as the first condition is concerned, the masjid will be eligible as it is not an inheritor of the deceased. However, upon death, if after deducting the funeral expenses and debts, it is calculated that only £9,000 remains, then the masjid will not receive £5,000 as proposed in the wasiyyah. Rather, it will only receive £3,000, as wasiyyah can only apply to a maximum of one third of the estate.

4. Lastly all those who are eligible to receive a share of the inheritance should get their respective shares according to what has been defined in great detail in our Shari'ah. For this, an 'Alim or Mufti  should be consulted.

Important note: Females who stand to inherit are often neglected. The Shari'ah, with its wisdom, has allocated shares for both males and females and it is important that these are abided by.

For men there is a share in what the parents and the nearest of kin have left. And for women there is a share in what the parents and the nearest of kin have left, be it small or large, a determined share. (4:7)



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Unfortunately, nowadays in society it is

common that women are not given their share; rather, they are contacted by the brothers who inform them of their plans for their share of the wealth and in doing so attempt to coax them into making the same decision. In many cases, due to the position of the brother in the family, the sister, daughter, etc. will find it difficult to actually acquire her share. Therefore, the money should be physically handed over to her so that she can decide as she wishes.

Note: It should be borne in mind that in situations wherein there is a minor (non-bāligh) amongst the inheritors, and the inheritors decide to collectively spend the estate in a certain cause, the consent of the minor will not be valid until he/she reaches maturity. This is because in many cases the consent of a minor is not valid in Shari'ah. However, if other inheritors besides the minor decide to individually or collectively spend their share of the inheritance in a particular cause then this is their prerogative.

Note: Another very important matter to keep in mind is that of separate and identifiable ownership. Many people nowadays have joint bank accounts. Upon the death of a person, it becomes extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to ascertain exactly how much belonged to each person because each would deposit their money into one account. By keeping separate bank accounts it becomes easy to distribute the inheritance correctly after someone's death. Similarly, every item in the home should have an identifiable owner, so upon the death of someone there are no issues. In order to do this, records should be kept clearly identifying the owners of all items in the home.

Inshā'allāh, if we keep in mind the importance of consulting the 'Ulama and Muftis  regarding inheritance and start with the few basic principles mentioned above, we will be able to ensure its correct implementation upon someone's death. May Allāh ta'ālā  grant us the tawfiq to fulfil His commandments in all facets of our lives.

Managing our Homes – Part 2

Excerpted from the discourses of Maulana Abdus Sattar حفظہ اللہ

How to bring back love in the homes?

How should love be brought back into the homes? How can the broken hearts be mended? Apart from the numerous steps that need to be taken, it is essential that the women of the house be treated with gentleness and kindness and their rights be fulfilled in the right spirit. Allah's ﷻ states in his glorious book:

“And live with them in the recognized manner” (Surah Nisa, 19).

Allah ﷻ Himself presents the case for kind behavior towards women, to live with them peacefully and to recognize that they too are someone's daughters. On the other hand, women are told: If you too desire divine favour and the eternal abode, then know that heaven lies for you in the obedience of your husband (given that this obedience does not contradict obedience to Allah's ﷻ commands). With

this mutual relationship of kindness and obedience, the home becomes no less than heaven on earth.

How Can Our Homes Flourish?

So how will our homes become the centers of love and affection? The way to the building of homes and eventually the society entails many actions on our part. However, there are four things that we should purify our homes from; in fact we shouldn't let these things anywhere near our homes.

The harms of pride and anger

The first thing to rid the home of is pride and conceit. This is such an evil that the home must be protected from this disease in all conditions; every member of the home should be cleansed from this impurity. God forbid that this evil finds its way in the mother or the daughter in law, a power struggle will then



break out where either one thinks that every decision must be made in accordance with one's own opinion alone and nothing should be done without one's consent. This is a sure shot way of ensuring that all the peace of the home is lost and the home becomes a living hell. Our homes have become centers of backbiting and inconsiderate behavior. In fact, the root cause of backbiting and oppressive behavior is the presence of pride in the heart. A proud person always looks for opportunities to debase others; this stems from the disease that the proud one always wants to see himself on top. Therefore he will not stop at anything and he will target anyone who he fears will take the mantle from his own self. It does not matter whether this person is his own blood brother or her daughter in law; no one is safe from his harm. The second thing that the home must be safeguarded from is anger. It is established from experience that a man always regrets and feels shameful about the decisions made during fits of rage and anger. Although one may say certain things or commit certain actions in such times, the fact is, that its repercussions will stick with him all his life and be a reason for regret and remorse. That is why it is imperative that the home is cleansed from the effects of this disease. In fact, even when a child has to be disciplined, it is better that silence is adopted at the actual time of offense so that the decisions are not made at a time when anger dominates the intellect. At a later appropriate time, when a person is in control of himself, anger should be feigned and appropriate training and admonishment should be imparted to the child.

The cancer of illicit relationships

The third thing to protect the household from is the establishment of a relationship with a non-*mahram*. This holds as much for a man as it does for the woman.

Consider it our ill luck or our woeful state that in today's society, both the opportunity and frequency of committing this disgusting sin has become rampant and widespread. The number of illicit friendships is on the rise, a multitude of opportunities to establish

illicit relationships have opened up, mixed gatherings have become the norm; from school and colleges to weddings the same is the case. Open male and female youth inter-mingling is not considered a sin anymore; in fact people give it the false label of developing 'trust' and 'understanding'. What was left of modesty has been lost due to the emergence of the internet; a place where a person has unrestricted access to establishing illicit relationships or 'friendships'; one can operate here without any fear of being exposed or embarrassed. When this is the state of a society, then only Allah's ﷻ can protect such a people. And in this current system of schooling and education, if a girl or a boy becomes tainted by an illicit relationship, then this sticks with them for their entire life. It is very difficult for such a person to become wholly committed to their spouse in the future; in this way this marriage is in shambles even before it has had a chance to be a source of bliss.

The filth of unlawfully acquired sustenance

The fourth and final thing to purify one's home from is unlawfully acquired sustenance. The women of the past were extremely wise and were appreciative of setting high moral standards for their homes. Mothers, daughters and sisters alike would declare to their men: "We will tolerate smaller portions of food, we will survive on one pair of clothing, we accept to be poor, but in no circumstances will we allow unlawful sustenance to enter our homes. Because once unlawful sustenance finds its way inside our home, my son will not remain mine anymore, my daughter will cease to be mine, so much so that our marital lives will become devoid of trust; so please do not bring unlawfully earned sustenance into my home." Strive to protect your homes from these four things, (1) pride and conceit, (2) anger, (3) illicit relationships and (4) unlawful sustenance. Then, *insha'Allah*, you will see fruits come forth, your homes will be cleansed from disunity and discord, and peace and tranquility will become the hallmarks of your homes.

Continued, Insha'Allah

Odyssey of the Spirit

(Part 2 of 3)

By Muhammad Harun
(Published originally as a 4-part series in
Women's Own)

After returning to Kabul there was nothing to keep me much longer in Afghanistan, and I soon crossed the Khyber Pass and reached Peshawar.

I somehow had the notion that I wanted to reach Bombay first of all places in India, and this was only possible either by sea or by air, and since the latter was, due to financial restraints out of the question, I boarded a train to Karachi, where I hoped to get a ship. The train ride gave me a lot of time and ease to read in my 'Mathnawi', and doing this, the length, discomfort and monotony of the journey south did not bother me at all. While reading I came across a passage, where the author stated, that for the traveler on the path of reality, it would become necessary at one point to acquire the help and guidance of a master, without which further progress not only was not possible, but the danger of being waylaid and misled became imminent. I do not remember, nor did I pay any attention, where exactly the train was passing at this point, but I have good reasons to believe that it must have been somewhere half-way between Lahore and Multan when I silently turned to my Creator and said this prayer in my heart:

'O my God, YOU know of this plan of mine to go to India, which I consider the best I ever made. If it is good for me in YOUR Sight, make me succeed in it, and make me find a master to teach me. But if YOU in YOUR Wisdom know, that it is better for me, that I should find a guide from among the Muslims to lead me on the path of reality, then I am prepared to give up my own plan and submit to what YOU have planned for me'.

Now this was really the turning point, the point where I actually surrendered the management of my life to HIM, and by that – inwardly – I became a Muslim, because that is exactly what Islam means: surrender. Of course Islam cannot be complete or take effect, if it is executed only inwardly, just as it is utterly in vain, if it is practiced only outwardly. It is complete only when the outward is based on the inward and the inward confirms the outward, or the other way around, which is only a different, but just as valid approach, in order to provide an access for people with a different mentality. In one case love leads to wisdom and knowledge and in the other, knowledge leads to wisdom and love - and God knows best.

When I got down from the train in Karachi, a man came straight up to me, took my bag and carried it to a taxi opened the door and took his seat behind the steering wheel: "Where do you want to go?" - "If I knew that, I wouldn't be sitting in your taxi", I thought to myself. I told him I needed to go to the shipping company which operated the Karachi – Bombay boat, and perhaps to the harbor. He told me that would cost me 10 Rupees, and upon my remark that I was going to pay that much, even though I thought he was trying to rip me off (which was not justified at all, since I had no idea how far the good man was going to drive me), he said very seriously that he was not going to charge me anything if I thought that, which effectively dispelled all my distrust about his honesty. At the shipping company I was told that the next boat to Bombay was not due before another two weeks, and the harbor seemed to be a restricted area, prohibited to enter for anyone who could not convince the guards of having a justified reason to be there, which of course 'looking for a passage to Bombay' was not.

"Where do you want to go now?" was the inevitable next question of my taxi driver, and when I told him that I neither knew that nor had enough money to go to a hotel for two weeks, he pondered for a short while and then started driving. After a while he stopped the cab, and asked me to follow him. We went into a densely populated, poorly developed low-income-area somewhere alongside the railway tracks, by-standing children staring at me like I was a creature from another world. After a short walk we reached a hut, where a man was baking bread in a 'tandoor'. The taxi driver spoke shortly with the baker and then told me that I could stay here until the departure of my ship to Bombay in two weeks' time, apologizing that he was not able to accommodate me in his own house.

The baker did not know English at all, and so I could not verbally communicate with him, but the hospitality I was given by this simple man was absolutely remarkable. He gave me a bed

and served me two meals every day for two weeks, not once asking me a single question, or indicating in any way whatsoever that he expected anything in return.

Taj, the taxi driver came by almost every day, he also showed me a small shrine nearby, which was like a peaceful, pretty little island in this chaotic metropolitan ocean of concrete and exhaust fumes. There were flowers and trees with birds singing in them, a horse, a few goats and some domestic fowl, and calm but happy people, who did not seem to have anything other to do than just to be there. An outward manifestation of the beauty and serenity of the soul of that saintly person who once lived there and lies buried there. There was also a man living there, who, I was told, was a descendant of the former, he had noble features and on his face and in his eyes I noticed some sort of light. He was very respected and sometimes he came out and sat there on the veranda on a prayer mat, listening to people who came there to seek solace or counsel, sometimes he would rise his hands to pray for someone.

During these days of waiting I used to spend most of my time at that place, which somehow attracted me very strongly, reading in my 'Mathnawi' (مثنوی). On the wall over the prayer rug, on which the caretaker of the shrine used to sit, there were two Arabic calligraphies which attracted my attention in a very peculiar way, and I often caught myself looking at them, wondering what meaning lay hidden under these artful pen strokes, and I somehow had a strong intuition that the mystery of the entire universe was encrypted here. Only much later I realized how correct and to the point my feelings had been: these two Arabic calligraphies actually depicted the Divine Name 'Allah' (الله), the eternal source and destiny of all creation, and the name of the Noble Prophet 'Muhammad' – peace be upon him (ﷺ), its real purpose and ultimate fulfillment. (There is a very famous tradition in which is related that God addressed the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) in words to the effect: "Had

it not been for you, I would not have brought the creation into existence".)

After two relaxed weeks, Taj, my taxi driver took me again to the city where I was informed by the shipping company, that the boat to Bombay was due in two days. Walking out of their office, a man in the street came straight up to me and asked me whether I was German. Somewhat surprised I admitted it, and hearing that, he insisted that I went with him to his office close by. He was a Persian businessman who had once worked and lived in Germany for some time, and he was just curious why I had come and what I was doing here. Over a cup of tea, I told him about my journey and its prospective destination, and after listening patiently, he said: "Look, if you really want to learn more about Islam and also learn Arabic, I can take you to a place where you can stay and study it, free." I thought to myself...now?...two days before my ship is going to take me to Bombay? It didn't really make any sense! But then, something deep inside me reminded me of that promise I had made myself in Istanbul at the beginning of my journey, that, if ever I had a chance to learn Arabic, I would do so. Well, this was it, here someone actually offered me to arrange for me to learn Arabic free of cost. I was confronted with my own sincerity. How serious could I take myself and my quest altogether, if I did not stick to a decision I had made in a 'moment of truth'? And what was it anyway that was stopping me - missing a boat which goes every month? And what about the prayer I had made, surrendering the pursuit and realization of my plans to the higher wisdom of divine guidance? How could I be so sure, that the offer of this Persian businessman, was not part of the divine guidance? If I was not to face myself being a total hypocrite, there was only one possible answer to all of these questions, my conscience was bombarding me with: I had to check it out, I had to give this offer at least a fair trial.

Soon the three of us were sitting in Taj's taxi, who followed the directions of the businessman. After stopping at a few places, where the latter

got out of the car to make some inquiries, we finally stopped at an enormous mosque which had a religious school (madrasah) attached to it. The businessman again got out, and after a short while he returned with two bearded and turbaned men, and the tidings that I could study and stay here, and would even get a small stipend, however there was one condition – an administrative requirement: I would have to become a Muslim first. I was not very thrilled at the prospect of this, and thought that it was altogether not correct to make "becoming a Muslim" a condition for admitting me. If Islam was so good it should be self-evident, and one should be given a chance to come to that by one's own free decision, but since it appeared to be quite futile to argue with the administration of the place, I did not insist on my point of view, and instead asked what it implied to become a Muslim. One of the men who had come out with my Persian host explained, that first of all I had to pronounce the formula: 'ash_hadu an_la ilaha illa _llah wa ash_hadu anna muhammadan_rasula_ _llah ﷺ. That sounded familiar! It was the 'watchword of the dervishes' which I had been given in Turkey, and, realizing this, my 'icy' opposition to the whole idea started to thaw. At good last, I was told what the meaning of this "mysterious, powerful secret code" was: the simple affirmation of the oneness of God, and the genuineness of the prophethood of the Noble Prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him ﷺ. The second thing, the clergyman explained, I had to offer a ritual prayer five times a day. Thirdly, I had to keep a day-time fast every day during the lunar month of 'ramadan'. The fourth obligation was to give a fortieth part of one's wealth in charity, and the fifth and last requirement was to perform the pilgrimage to Makkah once in a lifetime, these last two obligations being conditional to disposing over sufficient means.

It did not take these 'Five Pillars of Islam' – as they are called - much time to pass the scrutiny of my conscience and intellect. The first and perhaps most consequential one did not really pose much of a problem. The mysterious,

logically inconsistent and incomprehensible Christian concept of a tri-unite, entirely good god, who sacrifices his only begotten son in order to appease his wrath about the evil which his own human creation had wrought, had long ago lost its credibility. I could not conceive that God who had given me an intellect as a faculty of discernment, would demand of me that I believed in something which was repulsive to this very intellect. I had no doubt that there was only one God, and the Prophet ﷺ of Islam, among whose followers my beloved and revered Mawlana Rumi was proud to count himself, had to be a genuine prophet ﷺ, no less genuine than Moses or Jesus, – peace be upon all of them – and I was not required to renounce those either, quite to the contrary Islam actually confirms them. So by pronouncing the Islamic testimony of faith, I would not betray any of what I believed to be true! To pray five times a day was a bit of a bother I thought, but then, one could probably get used to it. The fast was rather an incentive than a deterrent, I had kept more difficult fasts than the Islamic fast before, since I considered it to be a spiritually beneficial practice anyway. The charity tax and the pilgrimage were not acute at this point, and if my situation changed so that they would be, I did not think I would have a problem observing these either, and so I told them that although I did not consider it a pressing necessity for myself to become a Muslim yet, if they did, I was ready to go along.

We all went inside the compound and entered what appeared to be one of the lecture rooms, which soon filled up with students and lecturers, who gathered around us seating themselves on the floor. The apparent director of the school (if I remember correctly, his name was Mufti Wali Hasan ﷺ) addressed the gathering with a few words, and then made me repeat after him the Islamic testimony of faith like that dervish in Mersin had done before, only now, I was aware of its meaning. Then he told me that I should adopt a Muslim name now, and asked me what my old name was. I told him, it was "Harald", and one of the students immediately suggested the

name Haroon for me. The Mufti seemed to like this suggestion, but he bestowed upon me the great honor, which, when I think of it now, I often feel so unworthy of: preceding this suggested name Haroon, he added the best name any man could have, Muhammad.

With this new name, Muhammad Haroon ﷺ, the mufti conferred upon me a new identity, telling me, that all the sins and misdeeds I had committed in my life before this auspicious moment were completely forgiven, and that this was a new beginning for me with clean slates. I do not think I was at that time (or perhaps ever) able to fully grasp the magnitude of God's Generosity and Kindness unfolding in this event, nor the implications thereof, being admitted into the community of the followers of the Noble Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him ﷺ), being – potentially – the best community that ever walked the earth, representing the pinnacle of man's spiritual evolution. This statement must not be misunderstood, Islam does not have a "savioristic" doctrine like the Pauline version of Christianity, and unless the individual Muslim strives to realize this given potential by a correct life transaction (i.e. fulfilling the rights of his/her Creator, fellow creatures and own self have over him/her), it will not avail him or her anything at all.

After this short ceremony everyone present embraced me to welcome me into the new fold, and the joy and sincerity by which these people accepted me, a total stranger, as a brother, was quite moving. I bade farewell from the Iranian businessman and Taj, the taxi driver, and started to live in the new place.

This was quite a change! I was supposed to transform from a carefree wandering 'troubadour' into a disciplined student of theology, a transformation which perhaps never completely realized, but in as far as it progressed, I must admit that the five times daily prayers, which, in my ignorance, I had held in so little esteem, proved to be a formidable help.

(To be continued, in sha'Allah)

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A WEEK IN IRAN

(Episode 4)

Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Zawjah Zia

If there is a celebrated scholar in Zahidaan, its Maulana Muhammad Yousaf sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. He is a student of Maulana Syed Muhammad Yousaf Binori رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and he has established a huge Islamic center in Gasht Sarawan. He

is the one who did the Persian translation of my respected father's Tafseer Ma'arif ul Quran which has been published by the grace of Allah ﷻ. He had dearly invited me for a visit to his madrassah where they had their



annual gathering. He most kindly visited me at the hotel along with his colleagues and presented some of his writings as a gift. Due to extreme time constraints I could not accept his invitation to visit his madrassah in Gasht. It was so noble of him to accept my apology by saying that the comfort of the guest takes precedence over my wish.

Accompanying him were some of the esteemed members of his madrassah's faculty who were graduates of our DarulUloom Karachi. After having a refreshing lunch with these noble men, Maulana Abdul Haadi رحمہ اللہ and Maulana Abdul Qadir Arifi رحمہ اللہ from among them suggested that we go to a scenic park outside the city, in Barasaan. Having arrived there, we were informed that this park was designed and constructed by a few brothers from Balochistan. They had established multiple restaurants in that park. One of those restaurants had a beautiful arrangement of open-air floor seating. The recommendations said that its grilled meat dish was not to be missed. We had our dinner there and found the recommendations to be quite accurate. Moreover, the owner of the restaurant served us with so much love and honor and didn't even charge us anything. After dinner, he took us to show a beautiful Masjid in the middle of the park designed and constructed by him too. The stone encrusted walls of the masjid were truly a sight for the eyes.

Next day was Friday and the last day of the gathering at Darululoom Zahidaan. We reached at the gathering site at eleven 'o clock next morning. Each year, this gathering was held in the masjid of the Darululoom but this year, due to the expected numbers of the participants, it was being held in the city's Eid-gah. The venue was covered by white canopies to make the required seating arrangements. When we reached the venue, the governor of Balochistan, Mr. Muhandas

Ameeni Istaandar was addressing the crowd. The Imam of Jumuah for the Shiite community Sheikh Sulemaani's رحمہ اللہ speech was the next in line. After that, I was requested to speak.

When I reached the rostrum, I could see heads as far as the sight went. It was safely a crowd of no less than one lac people. I spoke for about an hour; trying to present the explanation of this Quranic verse:

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

[آل عمران: 164]

This verse has mentioned the four primary objectives of the prophethood of our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

1. Tilawah of the verses of the Quran
2. Teaching the meanings of the book of Allah
3. Teaching the wisdoms and insights thereof
4. Purification of the character.

I tried to pack the speech with explaining all four of these objectives and breaking it down for the audience into crisp points of action.

Firstly, I drew the attention of the audience towards the fact that Allah ﷻ has mentioned the Tilawah of the Quran as a separate and independent objective of prophethood. Hence highlighting its importance and then having the Prophet ﷺ teach us the formal rules of Tajweed and Qiraat. Therefore we have Tajweed and Qiraat as a formal discipline of knowledge in our tradition. So, this verse strongly refutes the misconception among some people who are of the opinion that mere Tilawah of the Quran Majeed is of no virtue and the Hifdh is like futile rote-learning.

Secondly, Allah ﷻ has appointed the Prophet ﷺ as the first teacher of the Quran. Of course, his students were the beloved companions who were Arabs and were experts of the Arabic language. They did not need a teacher for the mere translation of the Quran. Hence, it is not enough to know only the translation of the Quran Majeed in order to grasp its meaning without the explanations provided by the beloved Prophet ﷺ. So, this verse also clearly rejects the idea that someone can self-interpret the Quran Majeed correctly without the classical Tafseer attributed to the Prophet ﷺ.

Thirdly, the verse reiterates that the true wisdom and insight is that which is attained through the Quran and the Sunnah, not mere logic.

Fourthly, the matter was not rested at the wisdom and insight only. Rather, it was also deemed necessary to secure it with the purification of the souls and characters of the students of the Quran. This emphasizes the need of a spiritual mentor in learning the true essence of the Quranic teachings. Otherwise, the mere information of the Quran and Sunnah without purity of character can be counter-productive.

Fifthly, I tried drawing the attention of the crowd towards the fact that while mentioning these four objectives of prophethood, Allah ﷻ has mentioned the 'hummm' ("them" referring to the Companions) pronoun five times throughout this verse. This shows that the Companions ﷺ of the beloved Prophet ﷺ were his primary students. Now the question is, did the Prophet ﷺ succeed in attaining these objectives? In other words, did the Companions ﷺ learn these teachings and were purified by them or not? If not, then one would have to conclude that the last Prophet ﷺ of Allah ﷻ, after whom there is no other

Prophet ﷺ to come, (God-forbid) did not succeed in his mission. And if he did succeed, which he surely did, then it is as clear as daylight, that these Companions ﷺ were the sole custodians of the teaching of the Quran and Sunnah and their characters were the purest of all. If that is true, then their reverence, honor and taking them as our role models is the very result of the message of this verse. And dishonoring them to the slightest would be equal to disregarding the Prophet ﷺ as the teacher.

Last but not the least, I humbly mentioned that with the Fadhl of Allah ﷻ, our Madrassahs are aimed at the preservation of these four objectives mainly. There can be isolated rooms for improvement for sure, but disregarding them as a whole genre, would be an absolute fallacy committed against the message of this verse.

Narrating this heavy topic in a manner that is easily understandable for the masses was quite a challenge. However, I tried doing my best with the Tawfeeq of Allah ﷻ and the crowd listened with keen interest. The speech was simultaneously being translated into Persian by Maulana Muhammad Qasim sahib ﷺ.

After the speech, Ustadh Adnan Darwesh approached me and informed that he had requested a student of his to do a simultaneous translation in Arabic for him. He said he was deeply impressed by the insights. Especially, drawing the evidence from it in favor of the uprightness of the Companions ﷺ was unmatched.

All praise is due to Allah ﷻ for His tawfeeq.

(To be continued, insha'Allah ﷻ)

Honored

By Unaiza Ahsan

Yes there is destruction all around
Homes and schools razed to the ground
But just as sure as the earth is round
We all will firmly stand our ground

You can blow up our families
You can occupy our territories
Bomb our hospitals and factories
But you cannot erase our memories

You cannot just delete the genocide
No matter how hard you try to hide
Every person who has sympathized
Lives to tell about those who died

We stand strong, you are lowered
Your humanity gone, we are empowered
Do your propaganda, we are not bothered
You are disgraced, while we remain honored

Dedicated to the brave people of Palestine

600+ Missed calls from Palestine

By Ateefah Sana Ur Rab

The sky hues were a displeasing metallic shade. It has been like this for the past six- hundred days. Shades of azure have both flown from the horizon and the land. And if there had once been colours scattered about, none are now allowed to show face — crimson is all there amidst the blacks and the greys. Perhaps brown could be included as well— for it is often lurking nearby when blood turns stale. Rubble is not always cement and damaged infrastructure. But dreams, hope, and future hanging off the edge of an uncertain, relentless and overpowering death. There are shrouds of smoke or the lack of proper burial grieving the reality where humanity fails



and inequality thrives. If there is anything human, in this inflicted misfortune, it is faith that keeps them going, and hardly any other necessities of life...

Ever heard of a place where greenery has failed, where birds have eloped with tears and trauma, where breathing feels more than oxygen; its components are a high blend of phosphorus pentoxide. And yet, it is only the surface. The world is viewed from an onlooker's perspective. But to understand one's circumstances, we must walk in their shoes ...

Let us close our eyes. Fly away.

And wake up amongst the souls crying for help...

Ah, here we are!

Is that a mound of earth?

No, there...see? A giant pit right beside the uneven hill-like range.

Wait, can you see that? Something is poking out of the rubble. It is a hand.

I can see the arm, and ... nothing else.

No face, no figure. Just a lonely limb mourning the death of a surgeon in the making.

Or perhaps, a teacher soon to be celebrated worldwide.

The epitome of talent ripped to shreds by the hands of the complicit. If it's not harrowing enough, let us move ahead and answer the calls of what remains to be discovered.

The path is not a path but uneven ground with spaces in between the plummeted buildings. Cities, if they looked like cities once, live up to the name no more. The land transformed into a society of massive graves — death and destruction. There is not a place left unscathed by the evil. No shelter in sight. Even the dead lie far from protection and peace; the bodies disappear in the night. Perhaps to volunteer themselves to be used—there must be a reason, for the Skin Bank never encounters a

plight!

Seventy -five-plus years since it all began. The perpetrators are those who once chanted 'never again'. How truly heroic. The denouncers of the

Holocaust are now in favour of its presence. The atrocities are being broadcast live. Alas! Earthly justice has deliberately shut its eyes. But you and me. We are here. Making discoveries and trembling with fear. Come. We have come too far to exit here.

Hasn't it been hours?

We must have missed lunchtime.

There are no shops or restaurants open despite it being peak business time.

Oh, look, a store!

I know it's half in rubble, but maybe we'll find something to survive this famine.

Follow me and please be careful. There are food cans with concealed bombs and shrapnel all over the place. Hold my hand. Let us proceed slowly ...

The welcome sign lies two feet away from the entrance, burnt, and coated with dust.

There is no door, just a wooden mat leading inside. Litter is scattered about. Cans over cans and takeaway boxes —leftovers upon leftovers of uneaten food. Now full of maggots, it is but a mess of discoloured styrofoam. The shelves lie ransacked. There is nothing worthwhile which lies untouched. Packets of staple food have been emptied on the floor as if on purpose, mixed with bits of concrete, dust, gunpowder, and more.

Farther away, on a wall decorated with bullet holes, glares a six - pointed star spray - painted in blue.

The storage room of the desecrated store is like a military base or a playground where one keeps their 'hunting' equipment on display. But here, there are leaflets and shells and stolen photographs of broken families vandalised with words and symbols of pure mockery. And sentences full of indecency and contempt. Inhumane. Immoral. As if a group of chosen individuals are the only ones deemed worthy and are at liberty to slaughter the rest. Because of the mere differences in beliefs, race, and culture. As if only those under the blue star flag are permitted to live and to prosper, happily and intentionally, while they bring destruction and monstrosity,

labelling it 'self- defence'.

Time passes slowly, but at a relentless pace. Nature's sun retires to rest and many artificial suns take its place. See, these new suns are made of a fantastical technology. They are capable of light and gifting massive explosions—all the while maintaining a scientific ruse—a buzzing duly attuned to induce mental suffering.

Come, let's find a place to shelter through the night. A depleted, half- standing building shall suffice in this place where nothing remains intact.

Soon comes in view, an unsuitably suitable school weathering the afflicted with what remains. We find a place under the staircase; a tiny cave silently offering an ounce of protection. Let's stay huddled close and shut our eyes, allowing exhaustion to take control— temporarily disregarding how nerves get pinched, stuck in a space that triggers claustrophobia. Sleep shall momentarily remove the traces of pain.

In the middle of the night, the last shred of comfort rips away.

Explosions. Loud and horrific. Flames unstoppable.

Earth - shattering screams and people running around, covered in liquid crimson.

No sense of direction, just the desire to escape—to save oneself and loved ones from

further physical and mental destruction. But there they are, fighting alone—without

help from the world, without a glance from those in power.

Alas!

The advocates of peace have turned away their gaze.

They censor the evidence and butcher it down.

"This image contains graphics not suitable for the audience."

"This video goes against our community standards."

"You have violated our standards and policies by sharing false information. Your account is disabled."

And that is how it goes. The truth is brutally twisted to accommodate the evil.

There seems to be no end, no escape. An entire population of 2.227 million reduced to 1.85 million in front of our very eyes. And still, it continues.

This is NOT a war. For such a disaster to occur, both sides must have military power and the means to fight back.

This is a GENOCIDE packed with endless war crimes.

Broadcasted live on social media by the very journalists of Palestine—the eyewitnesses and the true victims who have unlawfully been labeled, anti-Semitic.

Bloodbath upon bloodbath.

The ground portrays images normally associated with Eid-ul-Adha, and the teachings

of Hazrat Ibrahim عليه السلام the Prophet who unquestionably submitted to Allah's decree. Even when the order was to sacrifice his most beloved - his son.

Alas!

The blood that flows like a river in these lands does not belong to sheep, cows, and

goats. For cattle are barely alive and breathing.

The blood that stains the sand, the rubble, the flour...mostly belongs to children, women and infants.

Most of the families have been wiped away from existence.

Most of the survivors are sole survivors in their family tree.

Hospitals, civilians, educational institutes, agriculture... targeted from top to bottom.

Loss. Pain. Hunger. Trauma.

You and me.

We were only there in our imagination.

We have the option of going back to our normal lives.

But...

What about the people of Gaza?

What about our beloved Palestine...?

Virtues of Adab

By Shaykh Abdurrahmaan Khan

(Excerpted with some editing from an article on SeekersGuidance)

It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The one who does not show etiquette to the elderly is not of us." In addition, many narrations discuss etiquette. Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Mubarak رضى الله عنه said, "We are more in need of a little adab than we are in need of much knowledge." Imam Shafi'i رضى الله عنه said, "My teacher Imam Malik advised me to let my knowledge be the salt and my adab be the dough." The vast majority of Imam Ahmed ibn Hanbal's رضى الله عنه students attended his classes to learn adab.

The work *Ta'lim al-Muta'allim* tells the story of two men who left home seeking knowledge. They studied together for the same number of years. When they returned home, one had gained deep knowledge of Fiqh but the other had not gained that much. When the people asked why this had happened, they were told that the scholar who had gained a deep understanding of the religion had faced the

Qiblah whenever he studied.

Allah ﷻ granted him an opening because of his adab. The other one had sat with his back to the Qiblah and therefore had gained little knowledge.

You will receive knowledge in proportion to the amount of adab you show to your teachers. Abdurrahman ibn Qasim said, "I served Imam Malik for twenty years. I received knowledge from him for two years, and received adab for the other eighteen years. How I wish I had dedicated all twenty years to adab".

Our level of adab is often connected to our opinion of ourselves. The more a person considers himself a great man of knowledge and demands respect from others, the more the illness of pride enters his heart, and the more difficult it is for him to display adab. On the other hand, the more a person considers himself the least of people, the more he is able to display beautiful adab.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I was only sent to you to perfect your character." He also said, "The best of you are those who are best in character."

Some scholars thus take the view that tasawwuf is entirely about having good character.

Examples of Adab

There are many examples from among the Prophet's Companions illustrating their adab to him. For instance, Thabit sat crying in the road after Allah Most High revealed the Quranic verse: "O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet or be loud to him in speech like the loudness of some of you to others, lest your deeds become worthless while you perceive not" (Sura al-Hujurat, 49:2). A passing companion asked him why he was crying, so he said, "I fear this verse of the Qur'an was revealed regarding me, because I have a loud voice, and when I speak my voice is naturally louder than that of the Messenger ﷺ. I fear that my deeds have been blotted out and I am going to be from among the people of the fire." The companion, whose name was Asim, told the story to the Prophet, who asked him to call Thabit. When Thabit came to the Prophet, he said, "O Thabit, why are you crying?" Thabit said, "My voice is too loud and I fear that this verse of the Qur'an refers to me." The Prophet cheered him up, saying, "Are you not pleased that you will live in this world praised and that you will be killed as a martyr and enter Paradise?"

The Prophet ﷺ was displaying excellent adab by saying this, because it is good etiquette to cheer someone up by saying something that makes them feel good about themselves. His statement was very good news for Thabit, who also undertook never to raise his voice above the voice of the Messenger ﷺ.

Etiquette with Our Teachers

It is said that Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani (RH) once saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream. The Prophet told him to deliver discourses and teach and call people to Allah. He said, "I do not have a pure Arab tongue so how can I speak among the eloquent people of Baghdad?" The Prophet said, "Open your mouth." So he opened his mouth and the Prophet spat into it seven times. He told him to speak in front of people and call them to the way of Allah Most High with wisdom and good admonition. Shaykh Abd al-Qadir prayed Zuhr and thereafter a large number of people gathered around him to learn from him. However, he was struck with fear and unable to speak. Then he saw a vision of Sayyidina Ali ؑ standing at his side. Sayyidina Ali ؑ said, "O my son, call people to Allah." He said, "O my father, the crowd has instilled within me a sense of fear that is causing me to become tongue-tied and I cannot speak." So Sayyidina Ali ؑ told him to open his mouth and, when he had done so, Sayyidina Ali spat into it six times. Shaykh Abd al-Qadir asked why he had not done so seven times, so he said, "I stopped at six so I may have adab with the Messenger of Allah." Thereafter, the vision of Sayyidina Ali left and Shaykh Abd al-Qadir was able to speak to the people.

Our community has a very insightful saying: you may achieve whatever you like in life, in the form of degrees, academic knowledge and wealth, but if you do not have etiquette and good character, you have nothing.

May Allah ﷻ make us people possessing good etiquette. Ameen

Islam and Our Environment

By Nazish Shekha

Actions speak louder than words. Climate change, environmental pollution, deforestation, are all simple phrases used by environmental activists to speak out about the result of our actions on our environment. These words do not even begin to quantify the damage that is being caused.

The obsession with making life easier and obtaining everything we desire has led to using most of the readily available resources of our world. This is done with no realization that while the resources are being depleted, mountains of rubbish are being created with our discarded items.

Depletion of Resources

The Quran has given a forewarning about man's attitude towards his environment. In Surah Al-A'araaf, the Quran's verses are also clear on wasting resources: *"Eat and drink, but waste not by excess; 'He loves not the excessive'"*, (Al-A'araaf Chapter 7, Verse 31). While we continue to eat certain fish, we are depleting the food source of other bigger fish in the food chain; we are wasting by excess. If we continue to eat food that has been over packed, throwing out the packaging is wasting by excess. Even the peels of fruits and vegetables can be used to create natural fertilizers for our gardens – simply throwing them out is wasting by excess.

Our usage of water can also be questioned. In many areas freshwater is simply washed down the drain due to leakages in the system. If we have the means to fix a leaking faucet or pipe down the street then does it not become our responsibility to see that water is not wasted?

Climate Change

The use of fossil fuels is said to be responsible for climate change. Climate change is a phenomenon linked to the increase of global

warming gases released by the burning of fossil fuels like crude oil, which is the raw material to all sorts of plastics, pesticides, chemicals and also the main source of fuel.

Environmental Pollution

Studies show that chemicals washed into the rivers and sea play havoc with the respiratory, nervous and reproductive systems of marine life. Similar evidence is present in birds.

Discarded plastic items fill up landfill sites and plastic bags end up interfering with the sewerage system and cause diseases. All end up ruining the natural habitats of living things.

Species Decline

In many cases a change in habitat will cause species to decline or increase in numbers. It changes the natural balance of numbers and will lead to the extinction of many plants and animals. The Quran clearly admonishes this behavior.

"And kill not a living creature, which Allah has made sacrosanct, except for a justifiable reason" (Surah Al An'aam, Verse 152). Man's activities have caused many species to decline in numbers.

Deforestation

Our needs are driving the process of habitat change by deforestation. Land that opens up after deforestation becomes useless and degraded after two or three years. The nutrients which were held together by the roots of trees are washed away. At higher altitudes, deforestation results in landslides.

Upsetting the Natural Equilibrium

Man's activities in water are causing changes in equilibrium including death of many species.

Over-fishing is also a grave issue as it changes the natural equilibrium.

Allah ﷻ has not created this universe in vain, without value and purpose. This vision is highlighted in Surah Ad-Dukhaan; *'We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them carelessly. We have not created them but for truth.'* (Chapter 44, Verses 88, 89)

The growing evidence of continuous depletion and degradation suggests that it is time to rethink how our actions can affect the environment. The best place to start is to change our habits of consumption.

- **Think about your use of resources in terms of a life-cycle analysis**

A good place to start is by identifying the resources we use as individuals: this includes our eating and drinking requirements, our clothing, our energy use, our modes of travel etc. Then we should consider how it is made, used and disposed off. Finally, we should try and quantify how much we are using. This would give us an idea of how our use of any particular resource or material is impacting the environment.

- **Find out what can be harmful and good for you by researching what you use**

It just takes a click to find any information you need including the positive and negative views of the consumers who have used the products. Companies have also begun to place environmental and social information related to their products online or publishing them in the sustainability reports.

- **Save resources by reducing fossil fuel use; look into alternate energy options, car pool etc**

Carbon footprint is a hot term amongst environmental activists. This tool calculates how much carbon dioxide you produce due to fossil fuels as per your daily lifestyle. The idea is to try and look for alternatives that produce fewer waste products. Simple changes to lifestyle include car pooling, buying higher

fuel efficiency cars, using public transport and walking to the local general store. Other measures include making your home more energy efficient, using solar water geysers, solar panels, wind turbines to reduce electricity and gas consumption and reducing your electricity consumption by turning off lights and other appliances when not in use. If you have a garden, set up a compost pile in one end of the garden to discard your vegetable and fruit peelings. In a couple of months the compost will be ready as a fertilizer.

- **Try and offset your Carbon Footprint**

One way of off-setting these gases produced is by planting trees. A Hadith narrates: "When a Muslim plants a tree, whatever is eaten from it is charity from him and whatever is stolen is charity and whatever is subtracted from it is charity". [Muslim]

- **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**

Almost everything can be recycled: newspapers, magazines and aluminium cans are common examples. In the book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, William McDonough and Michael Braungart emphasize how a material that has reached the end of its use in its current design can be used as raw material for another use.

The garbage should be separated into various types: glass bottles, metal items, paper etc. The Pakistani informal sector does a very good job at collecting and reselling material that can be reused. An effort should be made in handing over such material to them.

The environment is in the news a lot these days. By weighing out alternatives and deciding on what is best for the environment and our surroundings, we can conserve resources. Think of all the energy that will be saved by just plucking something from your roof garden or your balcony. It all comes down to one simple saying "Where there is a will, there is a way!"



A Chosen Few...

By Bint Yousuf

Truly, we are blessed people, the chosen people. It is no ordinary benefit to be especially selected out from the millions and billions from all over the Earth and given the blessing of Islam! At this very moment there are those out there who do not know what it means to have a purpose in life, who know not what pleasure there is in being a slave to Someone, who know not the peace one feels in having Someone in life to whom one belongs. There are those unfortunate ones out there who have never felt the lightness of being that comes with the reality of having Someone stronger than ourselves to bear our burdens and our sorrows, of having the One to whom we can turn in times of joy and sorrow, One whom we know will always be there regardless of time, space and circumstances.

The Muezzin calls out but only a select few rush to answer the summons of the Possessor of the Heavens and the Earth, of the East and the West, and all that lies in between. The Creator, the Sustainer, the First, the Last. A chance to talk to, to ask from and to thank every single day, not once but five times!

Hands need only be raised and a prayer needs only be uttered, and He listens. And not only listens but responds! Very few, a chosen few know what it is like to be listened to, no matter what, and answered, always answered.

Night falls and only a handful stand on their prayer mats, begging, pleading, crying. Only a few earn protection from the fires of Hell. Ramadan arrives, and some, only some fast with the same fervor and zeal and love as those of the days of past, attaining Taqwa and forgiveness. Few, a chosen few, are given the chance to perform pilgrimage to the house of

their Beloved Allah, to gaze upon the Ka'abah, to perform sacrifice in His name...

Blessed be the heart that believes, the soul that is purified and cleansed, blessed be the Muslims who surrender to His Will and struggle to leave all that is wrong.

How many know the contentment that comes with being on the path of truth, how many are those that feel the humility, complete awe and adoration, the gratitude that comes with recognizing the beauty of Islam? Joining the ranks in prayer and fighting for the truth? Some, only some are granted this chance; the chance to make something of their lives, the chance to stand on that One Day before their Lord and before their beautiful, perfect guide, Muhammad ﷺ - stand such that each is pleased with the other.

Acres and acres of fields, flowing rivers, soft reclining cushions, and rivers of wine... Everything their hearts' desire and more...

Not many will be those eyes which gaze upon the Prophet's ﷺ blessed face, few will be those who will see their Lord. The ecstasy, the beauty, the wonder of that moment cannot be expressed. Who will be those people what ranks would they have! What a gift and a blessing it shall be...

Truly, truly, blessed people will those be. A chosen few...

(It will be said to the pious): "O (you) the one in (complete) rest and satisfaction! Come back to your Lord, Well-pleased (yourself) and well-pleasing unto Him! Enter you, then, among My honoured slaves, and enter you My Paradise!" (Fajr: 27-30)

Rise and Fall of Civilizations

By Dr. Asad Zaman

Introduction

Having lost many battles to the West over the past few centuries has led to a deep inferiority complex, which is one of the central sources of the current difficulties of the Islamic Civilization. Re-building our shattered self-confidence requires coordinated steps on many fronts. One of the most important steps is to re-learn history — our education indoctrinates us into a Eurocentric view of the world, according to which all the great accomplishments were only achieved by Europeans while the rest of world has always consisted of barbarians and savages. It is essential to counter this extremely biased picture, by highlighting the accomplishments of other civilizations.

A work of fundamental importance in this direction is Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi's book on What the World Lost Due to the Decline of Islamic Civilization.

The following essay explains that all civilizations rise and fall in cycles, and the recent episode of the rise of Europe is now near its end — The European Civilization shows all the signs of decay and degeneration, and the time is ripe for the emergence of another world leader.

Ever since Ibn-e-Khaldun laid the foundations, the rise and fall of civilizations has been a favourite theme among historians. British historian Arnold Toynbee, stated that Ibn-e-Khaldun's Muqaddimah was "a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created." Since then, countless authors, including Toynbee, have written volumes presenting their theories about the rise and fall of nations.

Just like human beings, nations too have life-cycles, passing from youth to maturity to old age and death. Among these authors, the analysis of sociologist Giovanni Arrighi appears especially pertinent today. In his landmark history – The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times – Arrighi identifies systematic cycles of accumulation of wealth associated with different hegemonic centers of civilization. These hegemons last for about a century and then collapse, leading to the emergence of a new hegemon. Arrighi forecast the collapse of the latest hegemon (the USA in the post-war period), and emergence of a new hegemony cantered on Asia and led by China. Given that the last four hegemons have been of European origin, this would be a radical shift. The election of Trump is just one among myriad manifest symptoms of a civilization in decline. We may live to see the fulfilment of Arrighi's predictions of the end of Western hegemony.

Toynbee, one of world's most widely read,

translated and discussed scholars, studied the rise and fall of twenty-six civilizations in his monumental multi-volume Study of History. The most recent and youngest among these is the Western civilization that dominates the world today. As usual, Eurocentric historians have sung countless paeans to the never-ending list of the unique glories of the Western civilization. A whole library of books attributes the rise of the West to the intelligence, character, race, scientific talents, creativity, imagination, work ethics, courage, as well as good governance, democracy, and other social and political virtues. Naturally, these Eurocentric accounts portray the East as the diametric opposite, lacking all of these virtues. The book Eight Eurocentric Historians by James Blaut debunks more than thirty such self-congratulatory explanations of the rise of Europe. The task of constructing a non-Eurocentric history remains the need of the time.

Far from being unique, the rise of Europe repeats an age-old pattern of young, energetic but poor and primitive tribes on the periphery, overcoming old decaying and rich civilizations. From a long-term historical perspective, the past three centuries of European ascendance are just a flash in the pan. For comparison, Muslims ruled Andalus for more than six centuries, and created an extremely rich culture, based on tolerance for all religions and respect for all types of learning. In all dimensions of life, France was primitive compared to contemporary civilizations in China and the Islamic world. Charlemagne's emissaries were dazzled by the splendor of Haroun al Rashid's court, and the gifts they brought back were avidly imitated, and became models of Carolingian art.

Whereas civilizations over the globe in China, Persia, Turkey, India, Africa and Latin America had substantial amounts of peaceful contacts,

with trade and transfer of knowledge, the European city-states were in a constant state of war with each other. These hostilities spilled over in the form of the crusades against their Muslim neighbors. The conquest of Jerusalem repeats the standard patterns of energetic, poor and primitive outsiders looting rich, luxurious and decadent centers of civilization. When they took Jerusalem, the European victors indulged in a bloodbath, killing all men, women and children so that their horses were up to their knees in blood. In contrast, when Salauddin took Jerusalem back, he provided ships to take European prisoners back to their home countries.

Historian Henri Pirenne in *Mohammad and Charlemagne* noted that “Europe” was created by Islam; a collection of warring nations with different languages and cultures was ‘united’ only in their opposition to Islam. Despite these hostilities, Europeans were able to learn much from the advanced science, technology, and culture of the Muslims. However, an unfortunate outcome of this hostility was the complete suppression of the debt to the Muslims in European accounts. As Andalus lapsed into decadence and degeneration, the re-conquest of Islamic Spain handed to the Europeans a treasure trove of knowledge and technology far beyond their wildest imaginations. The Cordoba library was a wonder of the world, containing advanced knowledge of medicine, chemistry, physics, astronomy and mathematics from around the globe, and from all civilizations. However, the Catholic Church created a huge barrier to deriving benefits from this treasure. They forced all remaining Muslims to convert to Christianity, on pain of torture and death, and created the Spanish Inquisition to root out all remnants of Islamic thought and philosophies. Borrowing from Islamic sources was considered heresy, and was a deadly offence. Among the

many prosecuted for heresy, Alexander Scultetus was a close friend of Copernicus. Even though the heliocentric hypothesis of Copernicus is available from many previous sources, and his mathematical model is a carbon copy of one expounded by Ibn Shatir, Copernicus became known as a revolutionary because he could not openly acknowledge his tainted sources. A Byzantine Greek translation of Ibn Shatir’s work was available in the Vatican library, and Copernicus knew Greek. Many contemporaries of Copernicus were familiar with various Arabic astronomy texts; they imported them and read them directly from Arabic. Mercator was arrested by the Inquisition, and in grave danger of being tortured to death in a painful way. The famous “Mercator projection” was already used in Chinese star maps of the 10th century. The construction of Mercator’s map, critical to European navigation, needed precise trigonometric values—readily available from India. Fearful of the Inquisition, Mercator hid his pagan sources. Similarly, high officials of the church made other such “independent rediscoveries” by hiding their real sources.

This unfortunate concealment and suppression of sources of the European Enlightenment has had grave consequences. Knowledge apparently sprang full blown, like Athena from the forehead of Zeus, into Europe. Even careful historians like Max Weber were deceived into believing that Europeans were uniquely capable of rational and scientific thought. This myth about European knowledge is at the root of a thousand other myths we have swallowed as parts and parcels of a Eurocentric history.





Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Kaiser Nizamani

Construction of Korangi Township

This was a time when the late General Muhammad Ayub's martial law had newly been imposed,

and he had initiated numerous revolutionary undertakings. Due to the continuous arrival of refugees after the establishment of Pakistan, the issue of their settlement had still not been

fully resolved. The majority of the refugees were living in makeshift huts, and many people slept on footpaths. For their resettlement, General Muhammad Ayub Khan initiated the Korangi Township project and assigned the responsibility of its completion to the late General Muhammad Azam Khan. Accordingly, he began the construction of houses in the vast area of Korangi with lightning speed, and would supervise the work by coming to the site in person. Consequently, within a very short span of just a few years, a vast residential area—stretching from Korangi Road all the way to the front of our Dr al-Ulm—came into existence before our very eyes. As a result of this, we too gradually acquired some of the facilities of urban life. When the water pipeline reached Korangi Colony, we too received a share from it, and the pipeline extended to Dr al-Ulm. Thus, the hardship of bringing water from Sharafi Goth no longer remained, and an underground tank was constructed within the Dr al-Ulm, in which water began to be stored. Gradually, the electricity line also reached us, and instead of lanterns and oil lamps, we now began to directly benefit from electric light.

Our residence remained, as before, in the same small house which the late Hajj Kabr al-Dn had built and gifted to the Dr al-Ulm. Hadhrat Mawln Khurshid Iam (RH) had brought his family from Deoband and moved into a separate house. Therefore, both rooms of this house were now in the use of the three of us: myself, Bhai Sahib, and the late akm Musharraf usayn. The next year, when akm Musharraf Sahib completed his education, only the two of us remained in the house. This house was isolated from the other buildings of the Dr al-Ulm. On its right side ran a dirt road, on which the sound of camel carts would occasionally be heard. Beyond that, there was nothing but wilderness. In front of the house, towards the west, a sandy desert stretched far into the distance. The closest buildings were the classrooms to the southwest, which would become deserted at night. Thus, when the darkness of night deepened, a dreadful kind of silence would envelop the entire environment. Sometime later, when Bhai Sahib got married, he had to frequently travel to Lahore, and in this way,

I often had to remain alone in that atmosphere of silence and solitude.

Links with the City

From the time of our studies until the period of teaching, our stay was mostly in Dr al-Ulm. However, since our parents and two brothers were residing in our house at Lasbela House, we would go home every Thursday.

While people normally have numerous friends during their boyhood days with whom they play and spend their time in recreation, I did not have any such friends. The only friend who could fit that description was the late Hakm Musharraf Husayn, whom I have mentioned many times before. But he himself was a lively and sociable person with many friends, and he would spend his holidays with them. Thus, I remained deprived of his companionship during holidays. However, respected Muhammad Kaleem—with whom I had developed a friendly relationship during our stay at Burns Road—would sometimes come to visit us on Fridays. In those days, the eminent khalfah (spiritual successor) of akm al-Ummah adhrat Thnw (RH), adhrat Mawln Shh Abd al-Ghan Phlpr (RH), had come to Karachi. Kaleem Sahib had pledged bayah at his hand, and a distinct colour of adhrat's teachings had overtaken him. Thus, when he would visit us, he would mostly speak about adhrat (RH), and I would benefit greatly from him.

Later on, the late akm Musharraf usayn also began coming to our place on Fridays after Ar, and then for quite a long time, it became our routine that the three of us would go out for a walk after Ar. In those days, the city was not as crowded as is seen today. Thus, our outings would typically involve having tea somewhere in the Saddar area, and then walking up to Frere Hall or Aiwan-e-Sadr (Presidential Palace). Occasionally, we would also go to the Clifton beach. Beyond this, I had no other friendships during my boyhood days. Indeed, when I would see other boys my age, I would at times feel a sense of loneliness.

The time from Thursday evening until Friday evening, or until Saturday morning, used to be spent in the city. My respected father (RH) had

set up a very fine library in his home. These were books that respected father (RH), despite his limited income, had purchased from various places and collected. Besides Tafsir, adth, and Fiqh, they also related to history, poetry and literature, philosophy, as well as various branches of science. Since I had a passion for books, after arriving home on Thursday and meeting with the family, I would form a connection with that library of respected father (RH). Naturally, it was not possible to read every book in the entire library. However, I would turn over each book to find out its title, subject, and information about its author, and by glancing at the table of contents, if I found a topic of interest, I would read that section as well. In this manner, Alhamdulillah, I gradually became acquainted with every single book in my father's (RH) bookshelves, and I also came to know exactly where each book was placed. So whenever he needed a book, he would ask me for it, and I would bring it immediately without having to search for it. Through this practice, I also developed an understanding of which books would be useful when it came to researching a particular issue.

Our respected father (RH) used to regularly receive many important journals and weekly newspapers of the subcontinent. Every week I would make it a point to glance through the newly arrived newspapers and magazines, and from these I would keep informed about which issues were under discussion in the scholarly circles of the subcontinent. Besides this, since I had a passion for reading and for literature and composition, I would, from my student days, read the works of contemporary scholars and men of letters. Apart from the senior scholars of Deoband, I especially studied the books of adhrat Mawln Manir Asan Gln (RH), adhrat Mawln Sayyid Sulaymn Nadw (RH), Mawln Abul Kalm zd (RH), Mawln Shibl Numn (RH), and others. More than their subject matter, I would particularly observe the way they expressed literary and scholarly subjects in a clear, accessible, and literary style. In religious households, the reading of novels was not looked upon favourably. Nevertheless, I read all the novels of the late Nam ijz, for I reasoned that if Maqmt, Mutanabb, and Saba Muallaqt can be read for learning Arabic literature, then Nam ijz's

novels are far more acceptable for understanding Urdu literature and history — and through them, one acquires a particular taste for Urdu literature, and in general, they also support religious thought.

In this connection, I also read many books of Mawln Sayyid Abul Al Mawdd (RH) with great enthusiasm. Since, by the grace and favour of Allah Most High, I had the companionship and upbringing of my teachers, and especially of my respected father (RH), and had, to some extent, also developed an affinity with Islamic sciences, I would perceive those points in Mawln Mawdd's books which appeared to deviate from the views of the majority (jamhr), and I would also differ with them. But the reality is that, in conveying scholarly subjects with clarity and eloquence, I found his style far more effective and powerful than that of all the aforementioned writers. Additionally, the manner in which he critiqued Western thought also appeared to me very commendable. And at the same time, I would feel regret that — alas! if only this powerful critic of Western ideas had not chosen a path separate from that of the majority in matters of jurisprudence and creed, or at least had not adopted a combative tone towards other scholars in supporting his own judgments — then the Ummah might have been spared a great deal of discord. But may Allah Most High grant him His forgiveness. Motivated by literary fervour, he showed almost the same vehemence and sharpness towards traditional scholars as he showed against Western thought. As a result, those individuals who in matters of religion sufficed with his literature alone (and at least in those days, this was indeed the case with the general workers of Jamat-e-Islm and Islm Jamat-e-alab), such a thought, consciously or unconsciously, took root in their hearts: that the understanding of religion presented by Mawln Mawdd (RH) was one that no one else had presented; that the traditional scholars, rather than comprehending the comprehensiveness of the religion, had, under the influence of following their predecessors, confined themselves within the shell of a few rulings, and thereby fell short in truly guiding the Ummah; and particularly that in the political dimension of Islam, they had played no noteworthy role.

This notion becomes so deeply embedded in the

minds of some individuals that their conduct with traditional scholars and students of knowledge gives off an air of general contempt for them, and their pride in their own views seems to drip from their manner. Alhamdulillah, later on—especially during the leadership of adhlat Q usayn Amad (RH)—there was considerable improvement in this attitude. But at that time, the situation was indeed as I have described.

I remember that when I was in the class of Mishkt or Dawrat al-adth, a team from Islm Jamat-e-alab came to visit Dr al-Ulm. At that time, I had a file in my hand in which I wrote the discourses that my teachers would deliver during the lessons. I came across that team of Islm Jamat-e-alab on the way. Its leader (with whom I later developed friendly ties and who afterwards went to London), after replying to my salm, asked me about that file with a slightly tilted neck:

“Maulw ib! What are you carrying around?”

I replied: “This contains my teacher’s discourse which I write during the lesson.”

Without pause, he immediately said with a sarcastic smile: “Does it contain discussions about knowledge of the unseen (ilm al-ghayb)?”

In this was a clear taunt: that “You people in the madrasas are always entangled in these kinds of sectarian issues. What connection do you have with the real work of the religion (which, in reality, it is we who are engaged in)?”

In view of his manner of speaking, I felt it inappropriate to engage with him further, so I gave a brief reply and went on my way. But I had witnessed many such incidents, in which anything in religious service apart from what Mawln Mawdd (RH) was doing seemed to them to be nothing but a display of sectarianism, narrow-mindedness, and short-sightedness.

The area of Lasbela House had only newly begun to be populated at the time when we settled there. Before that, there were some huts of labourers. At that time, those poor people had constructed a shack-like mosque and named it “Masjid Numn.” They themselves had appointed its Imam, whose recitation was such that the ruling on the validity of prayer behind him was made only after considerable hesitation. And apart from this, there were also certain innovations (bidt). Yet, our

respected father (RH) would, instead of praying individually, deem it acceptable to pray behind him.

Later, when the founder of English Boot House, the late respected Tj ib, took upon himself all the expenses of the mosque and had it properly constructed, he at that time made suitable provision for that Imam ib, and in his place appointed Mawln Azzur Ramn as Imam, who, Masha’Allah, continues to this day to fulfil his duties in an excellent manner.

But the houses of educated people around the mosque continued to increase rapidly. The owner of a shop there, the late respected Masd ib, was a very active worker of Jamat-e-Islm, and he had taken an active part in spreading the work of Islm Jamat-e-alab among the youth of the neighbourhood.

Whenever I met the youth of Islm Jamat-e-alab who were of my age in Masjid Numn, I would not avoid them, but would meet them warmly, and I would also cooperate with them in their good works. Gradually, the feeling arose in their hearts that this person is not a stranger to us. As a result, some of them became informal with me, and would sometimes ask me rulings about matters related to prayer, fasting, and so on — but in this manner: “We are asking you, but together with your reply, provide evidence from the Qur’an and Sunnah as well. Because we are not among those who simply trust a Maulw ib’s (Islamic scholar’s) word and accept it. Explain it to us from the Qur’an and Sunnah.”

This was said by a fellow of the Jamat who used to visit me frequently, and with whom I had developed informality. I said to him:

“My brother! If, in compliance with this request of yours, I recite a verse or adth, will you understand what it means? And will you understand whether the issue is actually derived from it or not?”

He said:

“No, but if you also provide its translation, then we will understand whether the evidence is correct or not.”

I said:

“How will you know whether I have translated it correctly or not?”

He said:

“We know that you will not translate it incorrectly.”

I said:

“Sometimes, several translations of the same passage can be correct. How will you know which one I have done? And even if, for argument's sake, the translation is correct, how will you know whether or not there is another verse or adth that is contrary to it?”

At this, he fell silent. And after that, gradually, their demands softened, and then, over time, their mindset also changed.

On the one hand, I was aware of this mindset of theirs; but on the other hand, at that time, no other effective movement for the implementation of Islam existed in the country. Therefore, their efforts that were being made for the collective issues of the Ummah seemed worthy of support and assistance. And our respected father (RH) would often say about them the statement of adhrat Uthmn al-Ghani (may Allah be pleased with him):

“إِنْ هُمْ أَحْسَنُوا فَأَحْسِنْ مَعَهُمْ، وَإِنْ أَسَاءُوا،
فَاجْتَنِبْ إِسَاءَتَهُمْ”

Meaning: “If they do good, then do good along with them, and if they do bad, then avoid their bad.”

For this reason, I maintained ties with the workers of Islm Jamat-e-alab, and at times, upon their request, I would also address their gatherings. In those very days, respected Munawwar asan — who later also became the amr (leader) of Jamat-e-Islm — was among the workers of Islm Jamat-e-alab, and he too was present at several of those gatherings.

Among the workers of the Jamat I observed many admirable qualities. Many of the young men among them seemed truly enviable to me in their passion and struggle. I was also an admirer of their organizational abilities. However, regarding that mindset of theirs which I mentioned above, I would, as the occasion arose, present my counsels — and Alhamdulillah, their effect too became apparent. Later, my own engagements increased so much that this connection gradually came to an end.

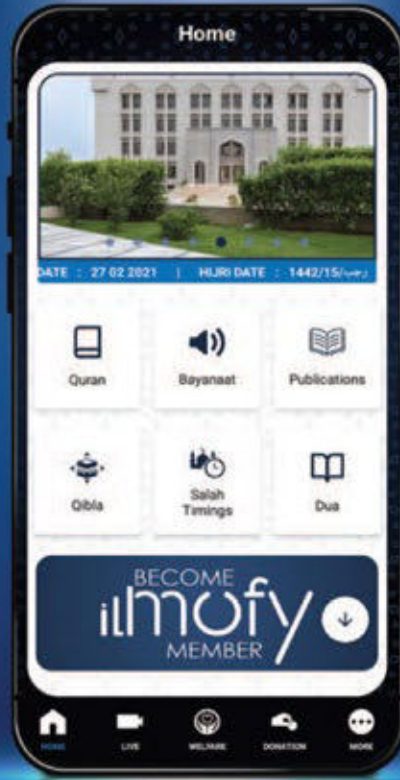
Teaching of *Nahw and Sharf*

In the early years of my teaching, I had occasion to teach all the books of Arabic Naw and arf, from Naw Mr to Shar Jm. But I never found myself inclined towards teaching Naw and arf as mere philosophical concepts. Therefore, the dialectical disputations based on Tarr Sunbat, Suwl Kbul, Suwl Bsl, and the like — which are carried out in Kfiyah and Shar Jm (and nowadays, in fact, such disputations begin right from Hidyat al-Naw) — though I did pass through them, I always kept in mind, and explained to the students, that the true foundation of Naw and arf is on the hearing of the speech of the Arabs, and to subject it to rational and logical arguments is such an after-the-fact notion that by becoming entangled in it, the real purpose of Naw and arf (i.e., correctness of writing and speech) is lost.

Usually, this is rationalized by saying that through it the students' minds are opened, and they develop a habit of precision in analysis — which, in the terminology of the madrasas, is called (sharpening the minds). But this would have been generally correct if the ability to apply the rules of Naw and arf had already been fully developed in the students, and if they had already become fully capable of reading, writing, and speaking correctly. Then, as an additional benefit, this objective could also have been attained — and perhaps in the beginning, this is what would have happened. But now the situation is such that students have not yet even acquired the ability to read Arabic text correctly, let alone being able to speak and write correctly, and right from the outset they are drawn into these disputations, as a result of which they fail to attain the real benefit of Naw and arf.

However, the method of teaching Kfiyah and similar books that had long been in practice in the madrasas was one to which the students were also accustomed, and for a teacher to deviate from that method was enough to render him unpopular among the students. And if a teacher did not himself raise those disputations, then some student or other would ask a question related to them.

The solution I adopted was that, when teaching Kfiyah, I followed the customary method for the first few days. But then I explained to the students



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