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Re-awakening to the
Ideals of a Blessed Life

The Intellect

The Fault in Our Alfaaz

Al-Qur'an

by Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

The Aims
of Education

Peer
Pressure

Towards
The Light

When the Heart
was at Peace

Rizq

The Last Man
of Jahnnam

On
Suspicion

The Truth about the
'Enlightenment'

The Existence
of God

The Lady
Knight

A Point
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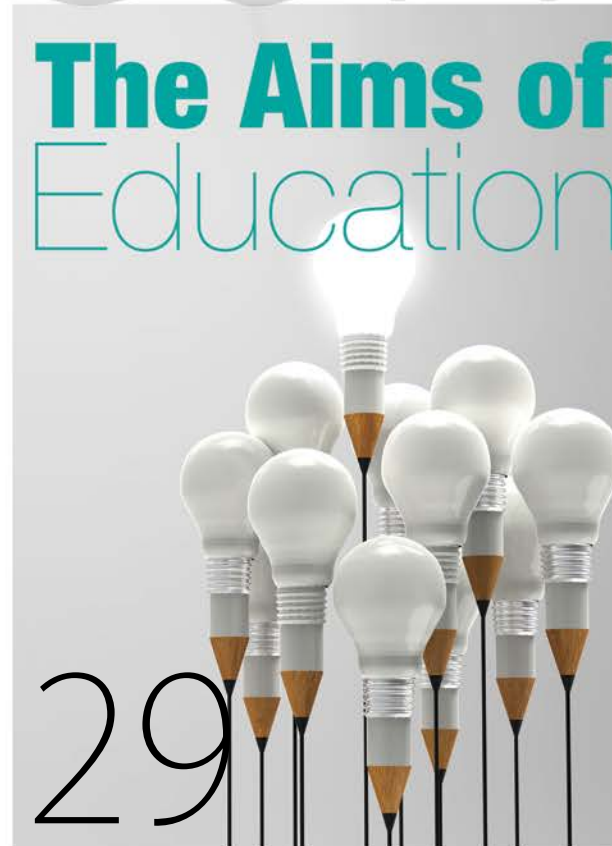
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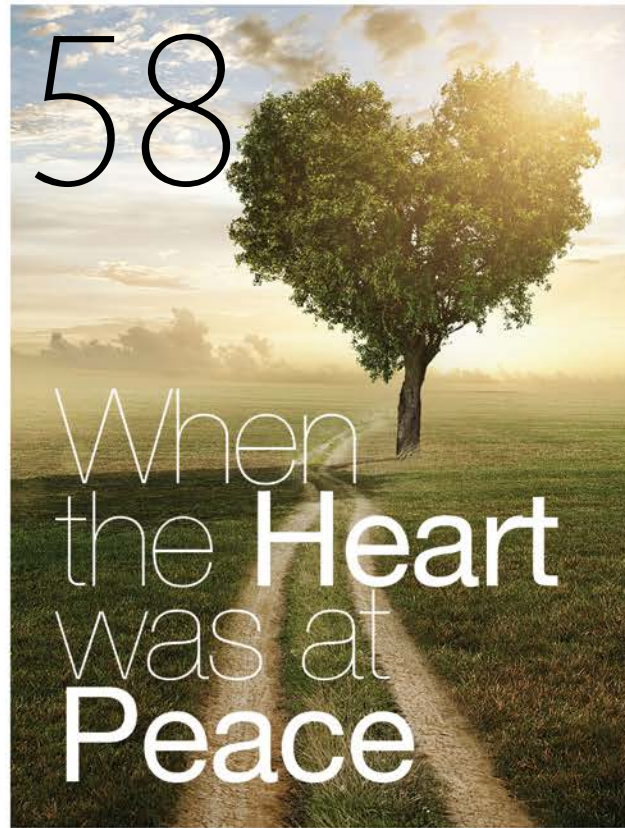
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appeared on the map of the world in the name of Islam, is yet to feel Islam in its veins.

But in the middle of these clouds of darkness, Mufti Taqi Sb. رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, one of the most learned scholars of our times, confidently lights a candle to drive away this melancholic air of despondency. For those who keep a buoyant outlook in life and harbor positive expectations, the text of his speech is indeed a ray of hope. It underlines the fact that individual efforts DO actually matter and it emphasizes that all is not as bleak as it seems *Alhamdulillah*. His optimism is infectious when he says that Pakistan holds a significant and special place in the comity of Muslim nations, if only the drops of water flow together, in the right direction, towards creating a sea of change, *inshAllah*.

Courtesy the dictations from social media and our own lack of pride in our traditions, it has become a fashion not to say and write things properly. In the world of "brbs" and "lols", it is little wonder that those who speak or write correct language are scoffed at, rather than appreciated; they are forced to become pariahs and even laughed at!

Our Cover Story, *The Fault in our Alfaaz* (words), examines the reasons behind such apathetic attitudes and spells out ways of emerging unscathed from this quagmire. It is not a piece just for linguists and the like; in fact, we all can learn the good (and unlearn the bad) by reading this refreshing work.

In this age of rising doubt and an onslaught of 'secularism' (and other 'isms'), it is evident that concerted efforts are being made by atheists and agnostics to propagate their views and confuse people through the internet, television and other media.

As Muslims, *Alhamdulillah*, we are in no need of reasons, explanations and scientific arguments for the existence of God; to us, Allah ﷻ is present in all aspects of our lives; He responds to our prayers and takes care of us in innumerable ways.

However, the Muslim youth of today is undoubtedly affected by the mounting tide of atheism, and the constant bombardment of material that seeks 'reasons' for everything. Thus, we must know both how to defend our faith and also to persuade friends who may be inclining towards doubts and confusions due to environmental pressures.

To this end, the article featured in *Reflections, The Existence of God*, is a very useful piece. Read it and pass it on to your friends as it would definitely prove to be helpful to those who are unduly influenced by atheistic or agnostic intimidations.

In the previous issue of The Intellect, a design-overhaul inadvertently resulted in two grave mistakes surfacing in the published version: 1) the sequence of the Arabic text in *The Awakening* was incorrect and 2) Only a portion of our cover story, *The Aims of Education*, was printed. We sincerely apologize for these mistakes and are reprinting the previous copy's main feature under *Education 101* in this issue.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid

Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام علیکم ورحمۃ اللہ وبرکاتہ

The new Islamic year, 1438 Hijri, is here. As clichéd and thorny as it may sound, we must endeavor to welcome it with a *du'a* for the creation of harmony in the *Ummah*. Let us also beseech the Almighty ﷻ to remove the suffering of Muslims caught up in conflict zones the world over; let us raise our hands to plead with the Omniscient not to let our sinful eyes watch the image of another innocent Alan Kurdi washing up on the shores of the Mediterranean, *Ameen*.

But, being Muslims, believers and submitters, we are not allowed to give up and drown in morbidity and depression; after all, another year is a fresh lease of life, not just for the individual, but also, collectively, for the *Ummah*. It is another term granted

to prove ourselves, to improve and do better, *inshAllah*. So let us tread carefully, but with hope and optimism.

Muharram is one of the four sanctified months and fasting in it is very meritorious, especially on the 9th and 10th or 10th and 11th of Muharram. Also, *ulema* opine that the different misconceptions related to this month, such as people avoiding *nikah* ceremonies or holding lamentation/ mourning ceremonies, have no basis in our religion; therefore we must be careful not to be drawn in by prevalent or majority opinions, which may turn out to be completely at cross-purposes with our *deen*. To clarify and reiterate these points, a write-up on *Muharram-ul-Haraam* has been included as a special feature.

Another special article made part of this issue is a speech delivered by Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb. رحمۃ اللہ علیہ on Pakistan's recent Independence Day.

Along with the general despondence that Muslims feel regarding the affairs of the *Ummah* (as mentioned earlier), the Muslims of Pakistan often additionally despair over the great lag in the infusion of that real spirit amongst people, which had originally led to the birth of this nation. Pakistanis, especially the elderly who had taken part in the freedom movement, are yet to see the fruition of their brave street chants of "*Pakistan ka matlab kya? La illaha illAllah!*" A country that



Zaiby pg10



Surah Aal-e Imran Part-13

The Meanings of the Noble Qur'an

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مدظلّه

Translation with Arabic Text

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا
لَهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَاللَّهُ مِيراثُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

180) Those who withhold in miserliness what Allah has given them out of His grace should not take it as good for them. Instead, it is bad for them. They shall be forced, on the Doomsday, to put on what they withheld, as iron-collars around their necks. To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth. Allah is All-aware of what

you do.

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَوَّيرٌ وَمَنْ آفِيئَةٌ
سَكَتُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلُ
ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾

181) Allah has surely heard the words of those who said, "Allah is poor, and we are rich."⁴⁷ We shall write down what they said, and their killings of the prophets unjustly; and We shall say, "Taste the punishment of the flaming fire.

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

182) This is due to what your hands sent ahead and that Allah is

not cruel to His servants."

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَاهَدَ إِلَيْنَا أَلَّا نُؤْتِيَ رَسُولًا
حَقًّا يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُبْرِكِينَ تَأْكُلُ النَّارُ فُلًا قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ
مِّن قَبْلِي بِالْحَقِّ وَاللَّذَى فَلْتُمَّ قَدِيرٌ فَتَأْتُمُوهُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

183) (There are) those who have said, "Allah has directed us that we should not believe in a messenger unless he comes to us with an offering to be eaten up by the fire."⁴⁸ Say, "A number of messengers have come to you, before me, with clear signs and with what you have said. So, why did you kill them, if you are true.?"

Zuyufur Rehman pg 13

فَإِنْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَلَا تَصِلُونَ إِلَّا إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ مُّهِينٍ ﴿١٨٤﴾

184) Then if they reject you, then messengers have been rejected before you. They came with clear signs and the Scriptures and the enlightening Book.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُ أُجْرَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَمْتَعٌ مُّثْقَلَةٌ ﴿١٨٥﴾

185) Every soul has to taste death. It is on the Day of judgement that you shall be paid your rewards in full. So, whoever has been kept away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has really succeeded. The worldly life is nothing but an illusionary enjoyment.

تَسْتَلْزِمُونَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَسْتُمْ بِمِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَنْ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذْحَبَ كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصَابَرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

186) Of course, you shall be tested in your wealth and yourselves; and, of course, you shall hear hurting statements from those who have been given the Book before you, and from those who associate (others with Allah in His divinity). If you observe patience and fear Allah, then this (observance) is among the matters of firm resolution.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ الْبَيْعَةَ لِيَأْجُزَنَّهُنَّ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَقَدْ دُخِلَ فِي الْبَيْعَةِ الْكُفْرَانُ لَمَّا كَانُوا فِي الْحَرَّةِ الْكُبْرَىٰ وَكَانَ كَيْدَ الْكُفْرَانِ لَمِيمًا ﴿١٨٧﴾

187) When Allah took a pledge from those who were given the Book: “You shall make it known to people, and you shall not conceal it,” they threw it away behind their backs, and acquired a small price for it. So, evil is what they acquire.

لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْغُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَهُمْ يَوَدُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾

188) Do not think of those who are delighted with what they did, and love to be praised for what they never did - do not think they are secure from the punishment. For them there is a painful punishment.

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

189) To Allah belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Allah is powerful to do everything.

إِنَّا فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ أَلْيَالِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

190) Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for the people of wisdom,

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ قَوْلُنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾

191) who remember Allah standing and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say) “Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. We proclaim Your purity. So, save us from the punishment of Fire.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾

192) Our Lord, whomsoever You admit into the Fire, he is disgraced by You indeed, and for the unjust there are no supporters.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَسْمَعُ مَا نَدَاكَ لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّكَمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

193) Our Lord, we heard a herald calling towards Faith: ‘Believe in your Lord.’ So we believed. Our Lord, forgive us, then, our sins, and write off our evil deeds, and make us die only when we have joined the righteous.

رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا نَحْنُ بِأَعْيُنِنَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ لَا تَخْلِفُ الْوَعْدَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

194) Our Lord, give us what You have promised us through Your messengers, and do not put us to disgrace on the Day of Judgement. Surely you do not go back on Your promise.”

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَابِدٍ مِّنْكُمْ مَّنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أُذِنَ بِعَمَلِهِ مِنْ بَعْضِ مَا جَزَاؤُهُمْ وَأَخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِينِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِ وَقَتَلُوا وَقَتَلُوا لَأَكْفِرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا نُؤْتِيَنَّهُمْ جَنَّتَ بَحْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ تَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

195) So, their Lord answered their prayer: “I do not allow the labour of any worker from among you, male or female, to go to waste. You are similar to one another.

49) So, those who emigrated, and were expelled from their homes, and were tortured in My way, and fought, and were killed, I shall certainly write off their evil deeds, and shall certainly admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, as a reward from Allah. It is Allah with Whom lies the beauty of the reward.

Explanation

47) When the Holy Quran prescribed *Zakah* (obligatory charity) and persuaded the believers to spend in Allah’s way, some Jews made fun of it by saying that Allah seems to be poor, while we are rich. The verse refers to such people.

48) It was a sign of the divine acceptance of a sacrifice offered by someone that the fire would appear from the heaven and burn up the sacrifice. This is mentioned in the Bible. (See Judges, 6:21) Although it was not an evidence of the prophet hood of anyone, the Jews demanded the Holy Prophet ﷺ to show this sign to prove his claim. The answer given in this verse is that the previous messengers came with a number of signs, including the aforementioned fire, but you killed them instead of accepting their call. Reference, for example, may be made to Ilyas m (Elijah). The Bible has given details of his story. In a competition with his opponents, his sacrifice was burnt up by the heavenly fire, while the sacrifice of the opponents was not. But instead of believing in his truthfulness proved by this sign, the king sentenced him to death. (See 1-Kings, chapter 18 & 19)

49) This means that all human beings are treated by Allah Ta‘ala equally, and that everyone will be awarded or punished according to his or her deeds. No one will be discriminated against on the basis of his sex, race or financial or social status.



the pulpit, said: “O people! Observe meekness for I have heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: “Whoever observes meekness (for the sake of Allah, i.e., with the aim of earning His pleasure), Allah will exalt him, in esteem, and whoever is proud and vainglorious, Allah will reduce him to a lower condition and he will become worthless in the eyes of others, and though he may be having a high notion of himself, others will consider him worse than dogs and pigs.” [Bahiqi]

(360/121) Haritha ibn Wahb h has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Shall I not tell you about the inhabitants of Paradise? They are every weak one who (if considered weak) if he were to swear an oath by Allah, He would keep it. Shall I not tell you about the inhabitants of Hell? They are very surely, uncivil and proud ones.” [Bukhari and Muslim; Mishkat Al- Masabih, v. 2, p.1058]

Commentary: This *hadith* describes the people of Paradise as weak. It is not the weakness of health for one *hadith* says: “Strong believers are better and dearer in the sight of Allah than the weaker ones.”

Rather, here weak means a noble, humble and mild person who deals humbly with others whom others regard as weak. In comparison, the proud and arrogant will go to Hell.

Another characteristic of these weak people of Paradise is that if they swear on Allah c, Allah c fulfils their promise. The Prophet ﷺ wishes to emphasize that if anyone draws himself near to Allah c by negating his own self then Allah c would help him keep his promise. Or if he swears an oath that Allah c must help him and approve his supplication then He will do so.

(362/122) It is related by Abdullah ibn Masud h that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Whoever will have pride in his heart, even of the weight of an atom, shall not enter Heaven.” [Bukhari and Muslim]

Commentary: Greatness is for Allah c in whose hands is the life and honour of everyone. He is Eternal and Everlasting, while everything else, living or non-living, is bound to perish one day. As the Qur’an says: “And unto Him (alone) belongeth majesty in the heavens and earth, and He is Mighty and Wise.” [Al-Jathiyah 45:37]

Thus, a proud and swollen-headed person who thinks too highly of himself and looks down upon others, so to speak, forgets his true state and begins to compete with the Almighty which is the height of insolence. It is about such a man that it is said, owing to his arrogance, he will not be admitted to Paradise.

As we have seen in various occasions in the past, when

it is told in the Traditions about a misdeed that whoever is guilty of it will not enter Heaven, it generally denotes that it has a effect of making a man unworthy of entry into Paradise or that such a person will not be admitted to Heaven along with the faithful believers, or straightaway like them, but will have to do a spell in Hell.

In the light of it, the above tradition would mean that a vain and conceited person will not go to Paradise immediately, but pay the penalty of his pride in Hell, and it would be only after the element of vanity had been destroyed in him and he had been cleansed from it in the everlasting fire, and was also a Believer, that he would enter Paradise.

(363/123) It is related by Abu Hurayrah h that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “There are three men to whom Allah will not speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them (In another version of the same Tradition, it is stated that He will not even look at them). One, the aged adulterer (or fornicator); two, the lying ruler, and three, the proud pauper.” [Muslim]

Commentary: Some sins are grave in themselves but their seriousness becomes even greater when they are committed by certain persons and in certain circumstances. As for instance, to steal is a great sin itself, but if a wealthy person who has no need to do it or a policeman or watchman commits theft, it is unforgivable. In the above Tradition, it is told about three such offenders that on the Day of Judgement, the Almighty will neither speak to them nor sanctify them and they will remain deprived of his benevolence, the aged adulterer, the lying ruler, and the proud pauper. The reason is not far to seek. If a person has an illicit sexual intercourse in his younger years, he can be excused for to yield to sexual passions during that period of life is a natural weakness. But if an old man does it, he is a shameless lecher. Likewise, if an ordinary person tells lies, it is understandable, but if a man who is in power does so, it will mean that there is no fear of Allah c in his heart and his viciousness is beyond measure. Again, human nature being what it is, if a rich man gives himself airs, one can understand it, but when a beggar begins to behave like that, it is pure meanness.

To sum up, all the three kinds of men will have no share in Divine Mercy on the Day of Resurrection. That Allah c will not ‘purify’ them, apparently, denotes that their misdeeds will not be forgiven and they will not be included among the faithful believers merely on the ground of faith or some virtuous deeds. They will have to undergo chastisement in the life to come.

(Excerpted from ‘Ma’ariful Hadith’, Maulana Muhammad Manzoor No’mani r, published by Darul-Isha’at)



Humility

Humility is a virtue on which a special stress is laid in the Qur’an and Traditions. Man, after all, is a slave of Allah c and, like a good slave, it is expected of him that every act of his is performed with humbleness. Meekness is a mark of servitude, while pride is the exclusive attribute of divinity. It thus, does not become a bondsman to be haughty and vainglorious.

(359/119) It is related by Ayaz bin Himar that the Mes-

senger of Allah ﷺ said: “Allah has revealed to me, and commanded me to observe humility. The effect of it should be that no one should oppress or be unjust to others, nor give himself airs.” [Abu Dawood]

(360/119) It is related that Sayyidina Umer ibn Khattab h one day, in the course of a sermon from



Fatwa Forum

By **Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani** رحمته الله

Some Questions about the Prayer of Qunoot

Q. (a) "Why is *du'a of qunoot* prayed during the *Isha* prayers (specially in the *witr*)? There must be a reason behind it."

(b) Since *du'a of qunoot* is a *du'a*, can we use it to pray it in other prayers i.e. after finishing *Fajr* prayers?

A. The forms of worship are prescribed by Allah Almighty and have been conveyed to us through the holy Prophet ﷺ. No doubt, every form or method of worship so prescribed has some wisdom behind it, but that wisdom has not been expressively mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and *Sunnah* in every case. We can attribute certain reasons for certain acts, but it will be a hypothetical exercise which may or may not be correct, because the real wisdom is best known to Allah ﷻ alone. The number of *rak'ats* in the *Fajr* prayer is two while it is four in *Zuhr*, *Asr* and *Isha* and three in *Maghrib*. The reason for these different numbers in different prayers is never mentioned in the Holy Sources of Islamic teachings. The recitals of prayer also vary from act to act. We are directed to recite Qur'anic verses while standing in the prayer, but we are forbidden from doing so in the state of *ruku'* or *sajdah*, likewise, *Tashahhud* has been prescribed

in the *qa'dah* (state of sitting) and in the *ruku'* or *sajdah*. The exact reason for these directions are not expressively mentioned in the Qur'an or in the *Sunnah*, because the essence of worship is nothing but to obey the Divine commands and to follow the prophetic practices even if their reasons are unknown.

Similar is the case of the *du'a of qunoot*. It has been prescribed in the last *rak'at* of *witr* without giving any reason. Therefore, we must follow it even though its exact reason is not known to us.

One can say that since the prayer of *witr* is the last prayer performed by a Muslim at night, a comprehensive *du'a* has been prescribed in its last *rak'at* so that one's daily activities may end with this prayer which encompasses all his needs, both in this world and in the Hereafter.

But as mentioned earlier, this is only a possible reason. Some other person may adduce another reason, the real wisdom being known to Allah ﷻ alone.

(b) Yes, there is no harm against reciting this *du'a* after prayers also. But it should not be recited during the *Salah* except in the *witr* prayer.

Prince
jeweller
pg17

Du'a how to beg Allah

Translated by Asra Ahmed

The Supplications of our Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet ﷺ taught us comprehensive du'as, which do not require us to add anything more to them. It is for this reason, that we

should constantly ask Allah ﷻ to give us that which is best for us,

“Oh Allah! Give me ease and productivity in my health, faith, children, earning, world, hereafter, life, death, nights and days.”

How to Protect our Wealth and Being

The Prophet ﷺ once stated at an occasion,

‘Protect your wealth (from theft, robbery or from getting burnt) by paying zakat and give charity to heal your sick ones (donate on their behalf). Beg and ask from Allah to prevent worries, sickness and calamity (from attacking you)’.

Who would not like to have good health, wealth and prosperity? Who wouldn't ask for a life free of worries and problems? The solutions to all these have been provided to us by our dear Prophet ﷺ, who has said, “Just ask Allah for everything,” and this can be done anytime, anywhere and whenever one gets a chance to do so.

The Rules of Supplicating

There are a few etiquettes that we must keep in mind while making du'a.

- Firstly, one has to ask Allah ﷻ with complete faith and conviction. It should not be a mere pretense. Du'as lacking faith are far from getting accepted.
- Du'a is not a name for words or phrases. It's the emotion behind it which holds significance. Du'a cannot be read out but it is something that can only

be asked for (with sincerity). It is a gift of Allah ﷻ and His mercy that whenever we ask Him, even if it is halfheartedly, He blesses us. If a beggar is begging in a manner where the hand is stretched out to beg but the face is turned away, the giver would never want to give him anything. But it is only Allah ﷻ who is willing to grant us whatever we ask for, despite our lack of concentration. However, it is very important to make du'a with complete faith and avoid any display of showing off.

Pray With Complete Faith & Belief

Another rule of supplication is to ask with complete confidence and belief that Who you are asking from, has the complete power and authority to give you what you are asking for.

(Surah An Nissa: Verse: 131) **وَلِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ**

Translation: “and unto God belong all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth”

(Surah Al Hadid: Verse 2) **لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ**

Translation: “His is the dominion over the heavens and the earth”

Allah's ﷻ Kingdom extends over the Earth and the Skies.

(Surah Al Hijr: Verse 21) **وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ**

Translation: “For, no single thing exists that does not have its source with Us”

Our pleas could be flawed but Allah ﷻ is fully sufficient and without any need for help or improvement. He has all the ability to grant us the things we desire for, be it related to ease, inner peace and contentment, or our children, or any other necessities. This is why (one must) ask from Allah ﷻ with faith and confidence.

The third rule of supplication is to ensure that the content of our Du'a's is appropriate, i.e., no such thing should be prayed for that is against the Islamic teachings, and that which Allah ﷻ would not like.

These three comprehensive rules should be kept in mind while supplicating to Allah ﷻ. Along with these rules, the Prophet ﷺ has also directed us to pay attention to certain conditions while supplicating.

The Conditions for the Acceptance of Our Prayers

The first condition is that the person making the du'a must be someone whose income is *Halal* (acceptable, e.g., not earned through cheating, lying, or participating in acts that are disliked by Allah ﷻ) It is imperative that the person earns in a Halal manner, as proven when the Prophet ﷺ's companion Hazrat Sa'ad bin abi Waqas رضي الله عنه asked him that despite his constant praying to Allah ﷻ, his supplications were

never answered. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then replied:

“Oh Saad! Avoid that which is sinful. Indeed, the one in whose stomach is food earned through *Haram* (unacceptable in Islam) ways, his prayers shall not be accepted for forty days”

Avoiding Sins

A servant of Allah ﷻ once said a very odd thing, “If you start avoiding all the sins you previously used to commit, Allah ﷻ will stop ignoring your prayers.

Despite seeming very insignificant, this actually holds a lot of truth. If we actually want to become among those whose prayers are immediately answered, and not delayed or ignored by Allah ﷻ, then we must free our hearts from all sinful intentions.

A Situation Where our Prayers are Accepted

If there is a person who constantly commits sin, with nothing stopping him, with no feeling of shame or guilt, or fear of the Hereafter, and then such a person eventually becomes fearful of Allah ﷻ and stops committing sin, at that point in time, whatever he prays for will be immediately accepted.

According to some *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he narrated the story of three young men from Bani Israel who were stuck in a cave. When they repented upon their sins and wrongdoings, and started praying to Allah ﷻ for forgiveness, He helped them out of their difficult situation. Out of the three, the prayer that one of them had asked, is as follows,

“Oh Allah! You know of the time when I was set out to do wrong with my cousin, feeling no guilt or shame, with nothing stopping me, she said **“إِلا هَاتِي”**, “fear Allah (and do not do this)”. And as soon as I heard your name, I let go of her and removed myself from that place. Oh Allah! I did that for you, and if you accepted that, then please help us out of this situation” (Muslim).

After this du'a, Allah ﷻ removed the rocks from the edge of the cave, and saved them from dying and gave them a second chance at life.

If we want Allah ﷻ to not decline our supplications, we must remove all intentions of sin and wrongdoings from our hearts. We must make our hearts free of all such intentions, and then we will observe how rapidly our du'as get accepted.

Allah ﷻ Loves the Act of Begging Him

We must recall times when a small child is begging his father for something, and how much the father enjoys this, and he loves to show people how cutely his child is asking for something, and how adorable he looks while doing it. It is for this reason that he doesn't immediately fulfill his wishes. In no way does this imply

that the father doesn't love his child, but this is, in fact, just a way of showing his affection, as the father wants people to see how endearing his child looks when he's asking for something.

In the same way, Allah ﷻ loves it when some people pray to Him, so much so that He tells His angels as to how much He loves His servant who is praying to Him, and how He wishes that His 'abd continues praying to Him.

When a servant of Allah ﷻ prays to Him and his prayers don't appear to be accepted, and yet he continues praying for what he wants, then this is a sign that Allah ﷻ has accepted all of his previous prayers, which is why he still has the ability to continue praying.

The Various Stages of Acceptance of Supplication

Allah ﷻ does not decline a servant's prayer. He accepts all the prayers of his servants, but because He is the Absolute Judge, He shows His acceptance in different ways.

The first stage is when Allah ﷻ gives His servant exactly what he has asked for.

The second stage is when, in exchange for His servant's du'a, Allah ﷻ removes any future problems and worries that might lie in his path.

The third stage is when Allah ﷻ really likes how his servant is praying to Him, so much so that He wants him to continue praying to Him, while He keeps giving him the "sawaab" for it. When, on the Day of Judgment, that servant will enter Allah's ﷻ court, he will be shown a list of all his good deeds. He will exclaim to Allah ﷻ, that he did not actually perform some of them, to which Allah ﷻ will reply saying that while he prayed to Allah ﷻ during his time on Earth, he didn't actually get to see some of his du'as being accepted, and all of the du'as that he did not see physically being accepted, had all actually been acknowledged by Allah ﷻ, and all of these extra good deeds were in exchange of them.

Supplicate with Sincerity

One condition for the acceptance of prayer, which is taught to us by the Holy Qur'an, is that du'a should be made with sincerity, as du'a actually is sincerity and not just words and phrases. Now, what is this sincerity, you might wonder. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'an,

(Surah Al Naml: Verse 62) "أَقْرَنُ مُجِيبَ الْمُضْطَرِّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ"

Translation: "Nay - who is it that responds to the distressed when he calls out to Him"

Du'a should be made in a state of complete restlessness, humility and desperation.

Have Faith that your Prayers will be answered

The one making the supplication must pray with complete faith and belief that Allah ﷻ will accept and answer his prayers, because to those who have doubts as to whether their prayers will get accepted or not, Allah ﷻ says,

"Aana, inda zanni abdi bi"

Translation: "I treat my servant in the manner that he expects me to."

Hajaj bin Yousuf was once performing *Tawaf* around the Ka'abah, when he saw a blind man also performing Tawaf, and reciting the following Du'a:

"Oh Allah! Please return my eyesight to me,"

At this moment, Hajaj bin Yousuf had encircled the Ka'abah thrice, and said to the blind man, that if his sight had not returned by the time Hajaj bin Yousuf was done with all seven rounds of Tawaf, he would behead him. Now, not only was the poor man worrying about his eyesight, but about his life too, as Hajaj bin Yousuf was known to be a cruel man, and beheading someone was very easy for him. The kind of supplication that the man then started doing before Allah ﷻ, with the utmost humility and desperation, was so appreciated by Him, that before Hajaj bin Yousuf's Tawaf was completed, Allah ﷻ had returned the man's eyesight to him.

Don't fall Prey to the Acts of some Aamil (people who will lead you astray)

When someone fulfills all the conditions of supplication, and makes du'a like he has been instructed to, Allah ﷻ will surely grant him whatever he has asked for, thus removing the need for him to go to magicians, and palm readers and self-appointed sorcerers.

The one who is not accustomed to the idea of supplicating to Allah ﷻ, can very easily be caught up in and led astray by the words of such magicians. Such a person not only risks damaging his faith on the hands of such fraudulent people, but also his wealth. Once he gets caught up with these types of people, it is very hard for him to free himself from such people and their tactics, and thus the rest of his life is spent in going from one person, to another, to help solve his problems, rather than turning to Allah ﷻ. He is so immersed in these situations that he completely forgets Allah's ﷻ instructions about turning to Him and asking Him for help in the matters of worry.

(To be continued...)

Frooto

pg21

The Fault in Our Alfaaz

By Muhammad Areeb Nafeyuddin Siddiqui



A bigger problem than itself, is not considering that problem to be a problem. Apologies for the complicated syntax, but essentially, that is how it is.

Let me elucidate this with an example. *Bid'ah* (an innovation in Deen, which does not have its roots in the practices of the *Khayr-ul-Quroon*, and is practised with the intent of earning spiritual rewards because the *mubtadi* is deprived of the ability to repent. Why is that so? Looking at the definition of *Bid'ah*, the reason behind this inability to repent is the very fact that the *mubtadi* does not consider whatever he is doing to be wrong—in fact, he does it considering that he is yielding rewards!

Referring to the title of this article, when we talk about the fault in our *alfaaz* (words), the situation is pretty much the same. To verify, try correcting someone's pronunciation or diction and their reaction will be testimony to my claim.

Something has gone seriously wrong somewhere. Where once people used to take pride in being able to converse properly, and following grammatical

any problem, the situation has become pretty different nowadays. I remember once during a visit to LUMS from Karachi with my schoolmates, one of them asked me for a pair of scissors. I still cannot get over the fact that I had been laughed at when I handed him over the *qenchi* (as opposed the *kenchi*). The incident impacted me not had been laughed at, but because I had been made aware of the magnitude of how much this problem has seeped into our society; forget about making an effort to pronounce words correctly yourself, if you find someone doing so, make them an object of ridicule!

conventions in both writing and speech, the situation has become pretty different nowadays. I remember once during a visit to LUMS from Karachi with my schoolmates, one of them asked me for a pair of scissors. I still cannot get over the fact that I had been laughed at when I handed him over the *qenchi* (as opposed the *kenchi*). The incident impacted me not had been laughed at, but because I had been made aware of the magnitude of how much this problem has seeped into our society; forget about making an effort to pronounce words correctly yourself, if you find someone doing so, make them an object of ridicule!

Unfortunately, that is where the problem actually begins.

The Problem Itself

The first question pertains to where the problem actually starts. When we investigate into the matter, there turn out to be some interconnected reasons behind it, such as, the lack of a family culture, negligence in primary education, company of slang and the role of media in our lives, both electronic and social. In my

opinion, the most important of these reasons is the first one.

The Lack of a Family Culture

Before I start elaborating on the detrimental effects of the lack of a family culture in the context of my topic, let me first explain my definition of the phrase. A family culture is a set of norms that a family observes, and a set of values a family holds very dear. When I talk about the lack of a family culture, a sad reality today is an increasing drop in its presence, as it plays a very defining role in the life of every member of a family. From what I have observed in my own extended family, most families (and especially newly-wed couples) today do not generally adhere to any strict set of values or norms. With so-called professionalism and money-making activities assuming increased importance, homemaking has been compromised on, the effects of which are adverse. The negligence in this sphere means that the values which the older generation held on to, are not passed on to the next. The result: all the wrong elements, which were not supposed to be involved in a child's upbringing, take over this colossal responsibility. Subconsciously, the child starts replicating the actions and language of the characters he sees on the TV, or of the people whom he meets.

Let me reinforce this point with a personal example. Belonging to a middle-class family, we had to wait for a very long time before we could afford a car, and would commute through public buses. The effect of frequent bus travels was that my year-old sister soon started chanting the conductors' slogans at home, and it took my parents quite some time to make her relinquish the habit. This explains the receptivity of the children to environmental stimuli, and the indispensable role of family cultures in filtering out the inappropriate ones.

In the Formative Years...

The next reason, negligence during primary education, was not on my initial list. It was after discussing this topic with my aunt, who has been associated with education in the capacities of a teacher, principal and curriculum developer since the last two-and-a-half decades that I became convinced upon this being one serious cause of our current state of affairs.

Having talked about a child's receptivity to environmental stimuli, the responsibility of the education policy makers should be to develop curricula which can enhance a child's sense of identity and belonging to a particular culture. However, the reality is a study in converse. Talking about Pakistan, most schools strongly discourage conversing in Urdu; in terms of layout, Urdu books are the driest and most boring; even teachers are often uninterested in teaching Urdu as a subject; teaching strategies are either ineffective or obsolete; cherry on top, there are hardly any teacher training sessions that help specifically for teaching Urdu. In other words, Urdu has been made a

second-degree language in the educational institutes of a country, which claims Urdu to be its national language. Therefore, it is no surprise that children generally find the subject uninteresting despite the rich literature the language has.

Even more disappointing is the fact that no attempts are made at reproaching the students for conversing in incorrect Urdu, or correcting the words they mispronounce. This responsibility does not solely lie upon the shoulders of the Urdu teacher, but on every conscientious person well-versed in the language.

Earlier when I mentioned that something has seriously gone wrong somewhere, it was because this has not been the attitude of our forefathers. Let me cite the example of Abdullah ibn Mubarak r, who along with being an esteemed *Faqih*, was also a qualified poet. He was so particular about the linguistic ability of his son that his son would not be served any food unless he had learnt a poetic verse. We, on the contrary, have embraced Lord Macaulay's (member, Supreme Council of India, 1834-38) Minute Upon Indian Education (February 1835) as if it was our own. Though we do not explicitly say this, our attitude towards our own language is a testimony to our innate belief that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of Arabia and India" (Macaulay in his *Minute*). Unfortunately, we have become, or are actively progressing towards becoming "English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."

The Company of Slang

With family cultures non-existent and an educational system devoid of values, a child is left vulnerable to the impacts of whatever company he has. Since the aforementioned two concerns are societal, so is their implication. This means that except for a select few, a child affected by these abysmal family and educational setups is forced to live in the company of people who are also unknowingly faced with similar issues. One and one make eleven: the effects of the deprivations of a child in the aforementioned areas multiply manifold when he is in company of others who have suffered, or are suffering from, the same fate as him. What happens next is what I term as a rebellion against these deprivations, which manifests itself in using slang and an obstinacy to adhere to prevalent linguistic norms. Hence, the next step essentially is the increased frequency of slang in the daily-use language.

So, if we wonder where do children learn all the slang, here is how it happens.

I must make clear here that unlike the initial two causes this third one is not limited to children alone and even impacts adults. No one should consider himself safe from the bad effects of their company. There must be *some* reason why Rasulullah ﷺ stressed so much on the need of selecting one's company care-

fully, and said that making good friends is half of all intelligence (*Mishkat*, page 420).

Among the bad effects one's company can have on one is the acquisition of slang in one's language. Quoting Mufti Ismail Menk, "using slang is disrespecting your own self; no slang in the world can ever make you respectable." This accentuates the seriousness of the issue of slang. I would go as far as to say, that the increased use of slang in our everyday language, leads to a yet another more serious problem: the fault in our *akhlaaq*!

The Role of Media

We now come to the fourth cause of our problem, i.e., the media. The disastrous effects of the absurdity of the electronic media require no explanation. Ranging from cartoons to talk-shows and to movies, language, be it English, or Urdu, is messed up everywhere. Thus, it is not ironic that those who take pride in being oblivious of correct Urdu, aren't exactly proficient in English either. With something as evidently disastrous as the idiot box, I do not feel that I need to elaborate more on this. Let me move on to the rage that social media has become in our times.

The era of the human history that we are going through can rightly be called the social media age. The numerous avenues of social networking available today constitute a world of their own. This world has its own distinctive language, culture and norms of behaviour. The nature of these customs and the question of whether or not they are positive have been explored abundantly. Talking about the fault in our 'alfaaz', the issue arises from our general inability to draw a line between this unreal world of the internet, and the much more important world of actuality, in which we reside. Unfortunately, it is the language, culture and norms of behaviour of the former that start infringing upon the latter.

To get things straight, I am not exactly a huge fan of the Grammar Nazis who terrorise the social media with their obsessive compulsive error-identification. Though an eyesore, I won't go on correcting grammar and diction on the social media (excuse the instances when I am in a bad mood or trying to joke with friends). Such slips, I feel, are okay on the social media "only" (take note of the quotation marks).

But then, as I said, there is this inability to draw a line of distinction, as a result of which 'qenchi' stays 'kenchi' and 'kya hua' becomes 'kya hoya'.

More unfortunately, these very faults in our alfaaz extend into Arabic as well. So many incorrect variants of *Assalamualaikum* are available in the society that just listing them down would probably necessitate another article, and I can say with little doubt that every single one of us has encountered one or more of these variants.

I encountered one such variant a few days back. Being

aware of the disastrous meaning of that particular variant, I corrected my friend, only to hear a response very familiar to those who try to make the correction: "Oh come on! These *Mullahs* have made *deen* so difficult! It doesn't matter if I say *Assalamualaikum* or *Assalalekum*, because the actions are judged on intentions, and I know I meant the right thing. Allah is the God, not a Grammar Nazi."

This characteristic response brings us to an entirely new dimension of the fault in our alfaaz, and that is a disastrously messed-up understanding of the *Hadith*, "actions are judged on intentions," and even though this is not exactly my topic, it would be helpful to understand the context to which this *Hadith* applies.

What we tend to misunderstand is that a good intention can justify impermissible acts. Well, no. The act of stealing, for example, will not be justified even if the thief intends to donate all that he has stolen, to charity. The rewards of charity, however, can be multiplied manifold based on our extent of *Ikhlās* i.e., purity of intention. Conversely, the rewards may be reduced if the intention is not pure.

What does this round up to? The incorrect words of *Salaam* or incorrect pronunciation of the Words of the Qur'an cannot be justified by the aforementioned *Hadith*. An incorrect, or an impermissible, act can never be justified, no matter how pure the intention is.

What to Do?

So far we have covered the causes, effects and manifestations of the faults in our alfaaz, and knowing it is half the battle. As far as the other half is concerned, I will outline some steps which may be taken to counter this grave problem we face nowadays.

However, before going any further, I must tell you that no matter what steps we take, the rectification will take time. It has been quite a long time since we unlearned our cultural and linguistic roots, and it is preposterous to expect that the relearning will take place overnight. It requires mental, emotional and intellectual training, and training is always hard.

First and foremost, we require mental training. Understand that the fault in our alfaaz is a problem. Until and unless you don't tell your mind that it is an issue which must be dealt with, no degree of effort will help, because the brain will keep telling you that whatever you're doing is just a waste of energy.

The second exercise is part of the emotional training and requires that we put the blame for whatever has happened on our own shoulders. There is absolutely no use in blaming the media or the education system about it, because education is supposed to begin at home, not in schools and the use, misuse and choice of media is on our own discretion. Accepting the responsibility for whatever has happened so far is an indirect way of telling your heart and mind that I was

the one who messed things up, and therefore, it is me who has to put them straight again.

However, once you have accepted the responsibility for whatever has happened, things may start going wrong, and if the next exercise is not done properly, a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness may develop, which will be lethal to what we are trying to achieve. The second emotional step, therefore, is to realise that there is no use in fretting over it. Instead, efforts should be channelized towards trying to rectify it.

After you have trained your mind into believing that the problem is serious, and that something must be done about it, follows a combination of both emotional and intellectual training. It involves careful weighing of words you speak, and requires immense self-control. This is actually filtering from what you see on the TV or read on your Facebook newsfeed. At times, it may require you to stop watching your favourite shows as well. A pretty tough task, indeed!

Having done these exercises, it is then time to move towards the intellectual aspect. The first intellectual exercise requires that you study your cultural legacy. Know and understand the worth of your language and its literature. Read some books if you can; it will give you a good understanding of the grammatical conventions of your language. Befriend a dictionary. If, at any time in history, your country has been under colonial rule, inspect your behaviour towards your language for any corrupting influences that may have come down with your colonial genes and may have crept into your speech. Try to do away with them. Also study the phases of development your language has gone through: it is definitely going to develop in you a sense of ownership for your language, and with that sense of ownership will come a renewed interest in doing away with the errors that have been present for so long.

I also highlighted the religious aspect of the fault in our alfaaz. This intellectual exercise requires that you learn the correct pronunciation and meanings of the commonly used Arabic words, and phrases, like *AssalamuAlaikum*, *JazakAllah* and so on. Learning the

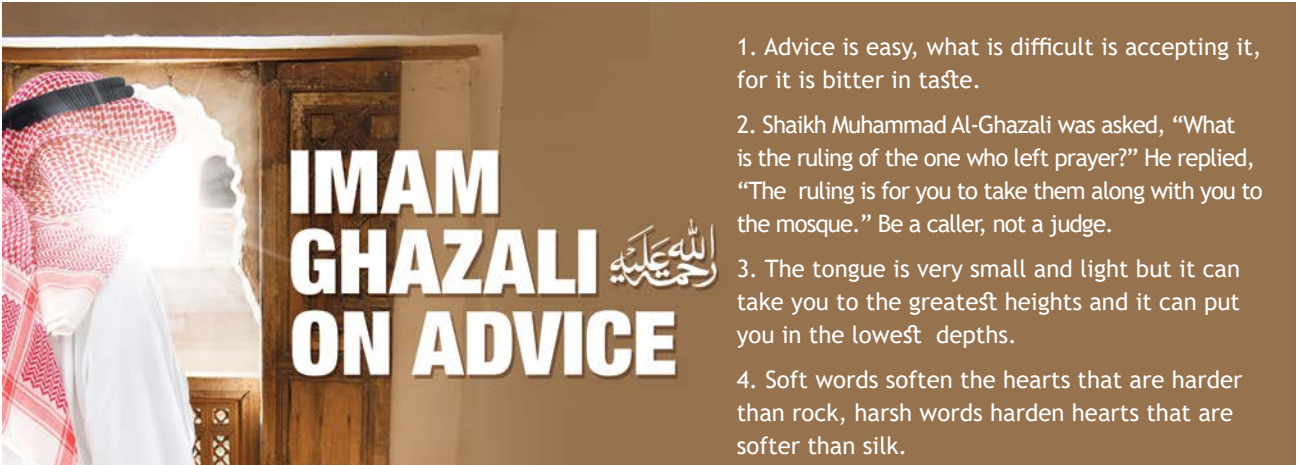
meanings of the commonly mispronounced versions of these words will also help in avoiding their prevalent incorrect versions.

During the process, you may also have to fight your ego a number of times. This final emotional exercise is aimed towards developing this. *Do not* get impulsive or uncomfortable if someone corrects your grammar or pronunciation. Remind yourself that you are trying to turn over a new leaf, and the person correcting is just trying to help you in your objective. Okay, their method might be incorrect, but they are helping you nevertheless, isn't it?

If you are well-versed in the language, excellent job! Your emotional exercise is in resisting any desires to sway away from the linguistic norms and your intellectual exercise is correcting your understanding of the word "cute". It is natural for little children to pronounce words incorrectly, but *do not* appreciate it, no matter how cute it sounds. Appreciation gives the children, or anyone for that matter, the impression that what they are doing is right, and chances are that they will continue with it. *Do not* downright condemn either, or you will end up frightening them. Instead, you must not relinquish the correct pronunciation while talking to them.

It must be clear by now that your responsibility is more communal than individual. Correct people in your circle of influence who speak incorrectly. But this is where the test of your prudence comes in. A small mistake can trigger the stubborn child inside the person who you had corrected out of your goodwill, and can badly discourage a person trying to change. One thing, however, is certain: never correct people in public! The goodwill can often be confused for humiliation, which hardly will ever be helpful in achieving your goal.

Let me end on a hopeful note that our sense of identity and our ownership for our language will soon return, and that the faults in our alfaaz will be little more than a distant memory, a bad turn in history that we successfully fought against.



1. Advice is easy, what is difficult is accepting it, for it is bitter in taste.

2. Shaikh Muhammad Al-Ghazali was asked, "What is the ruling of the one who left prayer?" He replied, "The ruling is for you to take them along with you to the mosque." Be a caller, not a judge.

3. The tongue is very small and light but it can take you to the greatest heights and it can put you in the lowest depths.

4. Soft words soften the hearts that are harder than rock, harsh words harden hearts that are softer than silk.

The Aims of Education

By Professor Syed Ali Ashraf (late)

The aims and objectives of education can be stated after defining the difference between education and instruction. Education helps in the complete growth of an individual's personality, whereas instruction merely trains an individual or a group in the efficient performance of some task. A human being may be a great general, an efficient carpenter or a first-class pilot, a lawyer, a mechanic or a pathologist, a renowned doctor, a chemical engineer or a chartered accountant, but still remain a semi-educated, ill-mannered, immoral, unrighteous or unjust person. Similarly, someone may be a very fine painter, a good poet; or possess a love of beauty which is highly delicate and sensitive, but may, at the same time, be cruel or brutal, or an untruthful, unsocial individual, who deliberately ignores his or her duty towards neighbours or even spouse and children. We can say that people who have specialized in certain educational fields are well-instructed individuals, but we cannot necessarily regard them as truly educated. On the other hand, someone who knows and performs his or her duty towards self, family, neighbours and humanity, and at the same time has acquired a basic knowledge about how to earn a livelihood honestly and live a decent life, should be called an educated person. Such a person may not have specialized in a particular field of knowledge, but lack of expertise does not automatically prevent him or her from being recognised as an excellent human being.

Good people are not necessarily complete people. In fact, no-one around us can be regarded as complete, because there is no end to the growth of human personality. A wide knowledge of many subjects helps in the growth of personality provided that we know how to adjust our knowledge to our behaviour, and how knowledge and action are to be integrated into a broad, total framework of life. The outlook of an educated person is not static, but is modified and mellowed as he or she applies principles to practice and acquires an outlook enriched by experience.

In order to achieve such integration, we need some basic values, and the society in which we live needs some basic, unquestioned assumptions. The human being is both an individual and a member of a community. One cannot be separated from the other without destroying something vital in both. The individualism that stresses complete freedom from any kind of so-

cial control is in practice impossible because it leads to the disintegration of society and gives complete licence to the individual to break or make social institutions at will, and overthrow the ideals and value-as-



sumptions of the community according to whatever individual whims dictate. Similarly, a complete social control that represses the creative and critical urge of the individual cripples the spirit, and leads society either to degeneration and stagnation or to sudden and violent social upheaval. Education preserves the basic structure of society by conserving all that is worthwhile in basic values and institutions, by transmitting them to the next generation and by renewing culture afresh whenever degeneration, stagnation, or loss of values occur. At the same time, the job of education is, to use the words of Professor Jeffreys, 'the nurture of personal growth.' It is through this nurture of the individual and the preservation and transmission of culture that both the individual and society attain a 'quality of life', which as Whitehead says, 'lies always beyond the mere facts of life'. Education conveys this sense of quality to pupils, the quality that has an objective status beyond any subjective assumptions and assertions, but which requires individual cognition if individuals are to grow as full men and women. There are various interpretations of this quality of life. The most significant are the secularist-modernist, the hu-

manist, and the religious. As the system of education depends on these interpretations, it is necessary for scholars to take them into account in order to emphasize and be appreciative of the typically Muslim point of view.

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Secularist-modernists do not distinguish conceptually and practically between education and instruction but regard education not as a conservator of human values - the guardian of tradition - but as a process of change and a venture into the unknown. 'Organisation of new knowledge' seems more important than the preservation of knowledge already acquired. The modernist concept, stated clearly and forcibly by John Vaizey in *Education in the Modern World*, does not draw any distinction between the universal and the absolute, and the local and relative, between revealed knowledge (*ilm naqli*) that a Muslim believer derives as a direct gift from God, and acquired knowledge (*ilm kasbi*) that human intelligence and imagination have succeeded in accumulating. Vaizey goes further, and points out that even this accumulated knowledge which for generations past scholars and thinkers analyzed, classified and graded with reference to the 'liberal' concept of man, and values that humanist believe in (which even a modern non-Christian or anti-religious thinker like Bernard Russell used to stress), is of arguable relevance. This conclusion has been reached by secularist-modernists only because they

animal enjoyment into a quality of living.

The unfortunate thing about this attitude is its vagueness. It considers education as having 'no ends beyond itself'. It makes a person, as Newman rightly pointed out, into 'a gentleman' and not necessarily 'a religious man'. The spiritual world or the world after death do not have any relevance to the process of cultivating this quality. 'Humanistic thinking,' as another humanist, Laszlo Versenyi in his book, *Socratic Humanism* has said, 'is the cultivation of man, his self-cultivation and self-unfolding into full humanity.' What this cultivation of self means to a modern humanist has been explained by William D. Hitt in his book entitled, *Education as a Human Enterprise*. It means the cultivation of a scientific attitude of a kind which demands rejection of dogma, and questions absolutes, and, instead of faith, demands a reliance on 'reason' alone. It stresses 'human values' and the complementary roles of science and those human values.

It is this concept of man which humanists preach that differs fundamentally from the concept of man that religion gives us. Insofar as values are concerned, there appears to be a good deal of similarity. Both humanists and religious thinkers agree on the 'objective' status of values, but humanists think that through man's efforts the value concept has emerged

and human rationality has succeeded in formulating an objective concept of man. But there is a possibility of further improvement, modification and change. The religious thinker, on the other hand, says, 'It stands to reason that if education is supremely concerned with the quality of people, it needs the inspiration of some vision of what human beings ought to be - some notion of what is a good kind of person. This is a moral and spiritual quality and one to which it is very difficult to get a clear and united answer in these days of confused and disintegrating values' (M.V.C. Jeffreys, *The Aims of Education (Glaucon)*). The humanist approach is ineffective in such crucial days as ours only because if man is the sole arbiter of his own destiny and vision, if human beings are imposing their own purposes on life, there is no reason why they cannot change them and imprint upon life a completely new purpose and thus discard the old purpose altogether. The disintegration of values can be justified from this point of view. If nothing is absolute, constant change and fluctuation of aims and purposes is the logical outcome. It is obvious that here humanists suffer a defeat at the hands of the secularist modernists, and then must emphasise only the rational element in man, or like Russell, fall back on certain values which they choose to consider as genuinely 'human'. Religion, on the other hand, places the human creature in a very large perspective - the perspective of eternity and infinity. Human beings partake of that eternity and infinity through their spirits, which alone are regarded as custodians of eternal Truth. This philosophy has a longstanding tradition, and has proved its worth by creating those saintly men and women whose character and action have earned the reverence of good people in all places and ages.

Religion thus provides an all-comprehensive norm of the human creature, and an all-inclusive goal for education. This norm has a stability because the values are regarded as absolutes derived from the absolute attributes of God, which are being continually realized in a relative context in time and space. Contextual change only leads to a change in emphasis and focus, with the modification, and alteration of stress, of the relative importance of certain values in different periods and cultures. It does not entail any change in values themselves. Religion, in this way, furnishes education with a meaningful goal. According to religion, this goal has been revealed to humanity, and thus possesses an objective status. It is not concocted by wilful human beings, or just derived from experience. All experience is tied to time and space, and is hence relative. By contrast, the goal of religious education is verified by experience as the most desirable one because it has succeeded in transforming barbarous people like the pre-Islamic Arabs into the most advanced, civilized and cultured peoples of the world, and produced individuals of outstanding depth of character.

Islam has thus established a goal which is uniquely integrative, balanced and comprehensive. The human

being is regarded as potentially the vicegerent (khalīfa) of God on earth. God has given humans authority over the entirety of creation. In order to realise this responsibly, they must acquire the wisdom which will transform them into good men and women, and therefore into wise custodians of the earth. Education is that process which helps us to acquire this wisdom. It is therefore an all-inclusive process because it trains emotional, intellectual and sensual faculties simultaneously. God has revealed the nature of humanity to humanity, together with the laws which lead us to the total flowering of our personalities. We are expected to learn through experiments and work out the details of that process whose broad foundations are given to us in the Holy Qur'an, and whose human example is historically preserved in the life, activities and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

One great advantage that this concept has over the humanistic concept is that it provides a supreme ideal and a stable norm for educationists to aim at when they plan an educational system and work out its methodology. It saves the human subject from drifting. It possesses, also, a remarkable advantage over apparently similar definitions of humanity given in other religions because Islam presents a universal and rationally acceptable norm. It offers the concept of one God, one humanity, and one religion which has existed since the days of Adam. As such, the norm of human values is considered to be the same for all humanity in all ages. Moreover, it saves human beings from arrogance, by teaching them that all their power over nature or themselves is a power delegated to them by God. It is not their own. This wisdom leads them to a deeper understanding of others, and to peace and happiness among nations and races.

Last, and not least: the total framework of values is also dependent on the principle of faith in the hereafter. Men and women are to consider this life not as an end in itself, but as a process that leads to a complete and better life which is to come. Thus the attitude that is cultivated is one of acceptance of faith and action according to a norm. In order that action may lead to greater human and social contentment, a methodology of self-analysis and criticism, and also social criticism, is taught which generates acutely sensitive individuals fully aware of rights, duties and responsibilities, and thoroughly conscious of their own shortcomings. As love of God and the Prophet are the major means of acquiring this sensitivity, this methodology includes both intellectual awareness and an innate response. Moreover, as the whole of creation is regarded as potentially under the custodianship of humanity, science and values are made to play inseparably complementary roles, with values providing overarching guidance and purpose. This is far more satisfying than the dry intellectualism of humanism, because it gives cardinal importance to love, and hence to the deepest human sensibilities.

Haseen Habib pg 29



Peer Pressure

By Khalid Baig

What will the people say? Will they approve of it? Will they laugh at it? It seems that such concerns influence our actions - especially our public conduct - more than anything else. Social pressure is a powerful force. It works by appealing to our desire not to be insulted, ridiculed, or criticized. In a righteous society it could also be a force for good, as some people will avoid a bad name more than they would a bad action. But in the real world out there it mostly turns into an evil force, pressuring people into doing things they know are wrong or keeping them from doing what they know are right. The question of right and wrong is changed into a question of acceptable and unacceptable to this evil force.

In some cases we recognize it easily. Nearly every parent in the West today seems to be concerned about peer pressure, especially on the teenagers. There is hardly a sin that attracts teenagers - drugs, violence, lewdness, fornication, gangs - that does not have peer

pressure as its main or major cause. Countless lives have been turned upside down or totally destroyed by it. But is the teen peer pressure an anomaly in an otherwise healthy society? Obviously not. It attracts our attention because of the scale of destruction it causes but the general trend is not different in other segments of the society.

In many cases the same Muslim parents who are genuinely worried about the teen peer pressure, themselves seem to be giving in to the pressures for conformance. Some trade their names for meaningless but more "acceptable" constructions. Some will participate, say, in the office Christmas party, so that they are not discovered. Some admit to being Muslim but an "open-minded" one ("Actually Islam is a very progressive religion. It allows us to do everything that the society asks us to do. Too bad most Muslims are so ignorant about their own religion.").

The phenomenon is not limited to the Western world

either.

Unfortunately today most Muslim countries at many times seem to be putting their weight on the side of wrong. There, un-Islamic traditions, innovations (*bidaat*), and outright evils flourish under social pressures. The most visible symbols of an Islamic life are generally also the favorite targets of this pressure. Thus we see that in many Muslim countries even such a simple act as growing beard (or observing hijab for women) are treated as crimes punishable by public ridicule! (Of course in a country like Egypt, the same act calls for investigation, on pain of torture, by secret agencies. But that is an altogether different story). To go beyond that and challenge any of the established un-Islamic practices qualifies one to be labeled as a fanatic!

Actually there is nothing new in all of this. This psychological warfare is as old as the struggle between good and evil! The Qur'an tells us that all the Prophets were insulted and ridiculed by the very people they were trying to save from the eternal punishment. They were called liars and sorcerers; they were ridiculed for being "too pious"; they were laughed at for being "crazy."

The story of Prophet Noah is so telling here. His final act of building the ark was considered proof-positive by his people of him being out of his mind. Building a ship in an area nearly a thousand miles away from the sea! What could be crazier than that! The Qur'an mentions: "And he was building the Ark and every time that the chieftains of his people passed by him, they threw ridicule at him. He said:

قَالَ إِن تَسخَرُوا مِنِّي فَإِنَّا نَسخَرُ مِنكُمْ كَمَا تَسخَرُونَ

"If you ridicule us now, we in our turn, can look down on you with ridicule likewise" [Hood, 11:38].

They were having a great time, making fun of Prophet Noah. Little did they realize that soon the Flood would wash away all of their ignorant self-assurance. One can imagine their horror when the end finally came, for it must have been in proportion to their

delusion till that point.

Such is the story of the struggle between Truth and Falsehood. Truth will eventually triumph. But Falsehood has great fun before that, ridiculing the Truth. That is why Truth attracts people with foresight and patience, courage and determination. They have their eyes set on the final outcome. They are not deterred by the flood of insults and false propaganda that they are sure to face. That is why the Qur'an mentions that one of the qualities of the believers whom Allah loves and who love Allah is that

وَلَا يَخْفُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ

"They fear not the blame of any blamer" [Maida 5:54].

That must be so because we must realize that the most ridiculous thing would be for anyone to leave the Straight Path for fear of being ridiculed by those who are happily rushing on their path to eternal doom. The most laughable act is to trade truth for Falsehood for fear of being laughed at. The craziest deed would be to knowingly disobey Allah for fear of being called crazy!

The Qur'an assures us, and history confirms it, that it is not a reasonable goal for a believer that he or she should be able to go through life without ever being subjected to mockery and ridicule. Such expectations produce failure at the first instant, when the rubber meets the road, and apologists personify such failure. Unfortunately, but understandably, in the age of the mega propaganda machine we see too many of them.

When their laughter becomes too loud, we should remember that the chieftains of the people of Noah were also laughing at one time. But who had the last laugh?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يَضْحَكُونَ (29) وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَرُونَ (30) وَإِذَا انْقَلَبُوا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ انْقَلَبُوا فَكِهِينَ (31) وَإِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَضَالُّونَ (32) وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِظِينَ (33) فَالْيَوْمَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ يَضْحَكُونَ (34)

"The guilty used to laugh at those who believed. And whenever they passed by them, used to wink at each other in mockery. And when they returned to their own people, they returned jesting. And whenever they saw them they would say: 'They have gone astray.' But they had not been sent as keepers over them. But on this day the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers" [Mutaffifeen, 83:29-34].

RIZQ

Contributed and adapted by Bint Akram

A slave once remained absent from work. His master thought that his wages should be increased so that he could work with keen interest and does not take off from work. The following day, the slave received more than what he usually got; he quietly took his wages without acknowledging the increment in his salary. After a couple of days, the slave took another day off from work. This angered the master and he immediately decided to cancel the increment that was made in the slave's salary. Next day, when the slave was given the amount that was previously paid to him, he again silently kept it without complaining. Now the master was surprised. "How come you never said a word when I increased your wages, and now when I have taken my decision back to do so, you still remain silent?" Asked the master. Now the slave finally spoke: "the reason for my first absence from work was the birth

of my son. When you increased my wages, I considered that to be the *rizq* that was destined for my son from Allah c. The reason for my second absence was the death of my mother. The consequent decrease in my salary was the rizq that was destined for my mother, and which was taken back along with her passing away. Why should I, therefore, worry about the rizq, the matters of which are directly controlled by Allah c."



THE PASSING TRAVELLER

By Hafsa Kamal

Encircled in mystic fog of nostalgia,
Seeing the hazy past through a deeply-fixed camera,
Reeling pictures behind the heavy lid,
Vivid images flitting by in a transitioning grid,
Induce pangs of lonely wistfulness,
Of days long gone in listlessness...

The question oft-asked in silent wonderment,
How days flew by, how life is spent,
The heart unravels the changing temperament,
The lone heart thinks over how life was spent...

For there were days in glorious rays of pristine peace,
And yet, some frothed with fighting against fatigue,
The moments of happiness and celebration spun into years,
Of a family bound arm in arm together in timely tears.

Days when one felt at their life's peak,
The heroic status of a relation, the engaging occupation,
Running from errand to another, life ticked away,
Then knocked in the realization,
On one place one can not stay.

Then the glitz and glitter reduced to dust,
The shine of the silver turned into rust,
The stamina and celebrations gave way to reality,
Ruminating over the true purpose and life's uncertainty,
A shuddering thought jolts one's veins,
Oh, but resentment and regret over squandered time, remains.

If only had I kept the end in mind sooner than this,
I could have used all my energy in spiritual bliss,
Of struggling with the right intentions and the right things,
Perhaps it's not too late, the hope still clings...

All logic surpasses the reason of origin and death,
Thinking about why and how, will get us caught in the inevitable net,
Kneel down and pray, feel it yourself,
How can one move on in life without Allah's help?

It was after dinner when Ayza's mother received the phone call. The loud FaceTime ringtone indicated a call from her best friend in Jeddah. Ayza groaned loudly, knowing her mom wouldn't be coming out of her room until she had discussed anything and everything with her friend. Much to her amazement she emerged from the room minutes later, excitedly telling her that her friend's daughter Sophia, whom she hadn't met since they were kids, was coming to Pakistan for an extended visit. Not having any close relatives nearby, she had longed for someone her age who could be both sister and friend to her. Needless to say, she began anticipating her arrival and making plans, not realizing that she could be far from the ideal, potential-confidante Ayza was expecting her to be.

She brought another prayer mat to her room and made a special 'Jummah Package' for Sophia with a *miswaak* and a beautiful *tasbeeh* since she was arriving on a Thursday and she could surprise her the next morning. Within three days, all of Ayza's preparations were complete and while she could feel the trepidation at meeting a total stranger gradually seeping in, her inherent positive nature was more intent upon focusing on the 'how cool was everything going to be.'

And then Thursday arrived. Ayza's mother was working on last minute dishes while she dashed around

the house tidying up any mess that had been overlooked. The hours passed and then a call from the car that had gone to pick Sophia up informed them that *Alhamdulillah* she had landed safely and would reach home in ten minutes.

Shortly, a car drove into the driveway and Ayza excitedly waited at the door. A petite figure of around eighteen years with black hair cut in a trendy bob sauntered in; clad in a fuchsia sparkling tank-top and jeans. She looked confusedly at Ayza and her mom who were both wearing their dupattas on their head.

'Assalam u Alaikum, beti, I hope the flight went well, would you like to freshen up before dinner?'

'Hi Aunty, flight was cool; I just wanna hit the bed right now,' that was all Ayza heard Sophia say until she turned her head towards her to say,

'So you gonna show me my bedroom or what?'

'Oh yes, come along, I'm Ayza, so nice to finally meet you. I've been so excited these past few days!'

'Oh yeah? Well just so there are no misunderstandings, I was hardly excited at the prospect of being thrown into a *Maulvi* prison,' Sophie muttered making

sure Ayza heard her. That was the beginning of the insults and derogatory remarks that Ayza would listen to as Sophia's animosity towards her would increase. It seemed that anything remotely related to religion was distasteful to her and mostly she would simply enjoy mocking Ayza over her *hijab*, her prayers and any other *ibadat* she would do. She had made her own friends from the area and would spend hours outside hanging out with them. Ayza's parents had also resorted to maintaining a polite, silent relationship with the girl since her own parents had asked them to 'let her have fun'.

It was a week after Sophia's arrival. 'Sophia beta just tell us with whom are you going out,' Ayza's mom inquired with a frown, torn between not wanting to make her feel constrained and yet worried about allowing her to leave after *Maghrib*.

'Khala just chill, it's just a couple of friends I made on the plane. It's all cool, don't stay up 'cause of me. Bye!' with that said, Sophia breezed out of the door, oblivious to her aunt's distress.

Minutes later, Sophia was in the car with her new friends Zara, Haya and Haider, singing along with them at the top of her voice as the wind from the lowered windows ripped through their hair, making the care-free group a symbol of attention to the passing traffic.

Sophia skipped out of the car as they reached their destination, a seemingly ramshackle house in a deserted locale which behind its façade, concealed one of the most popular clubs of the city where teenagers went to 'hang out' in a relaxed environment with a dash of thrill. Sophia had been looking forward to it since the day she had sat beside Haya and Haider in the plane and they had promised to take her there. Music thundered from inside as Sophia entered through the dilapidated door, directing her towards the main part of the club.

And then she was pulled by a random arm and found herself surrounded by swaying bodies on all sides as the loud music blared through. Her friends had been similarly swallowed by the crowd since she couldn't catch a glimpse of any of them. The room was dimly lit with occasional laser beam lights that would illuminate the area making it luminously iridescent aided by stray whorls of colored smoke. While it may have been intended to imbue a certain mysterious element in the atmosphere, Sophia found it unusually eerie. The air was thick with smoke and odors that seemed to be a mingled form of sweat and perfumes. Slipping between the people around her, Sophia started towards a relatively uncrowded corner inadvertently drawing attention to herself. Recognizing a newbie, the throng near to her shamelessly stared at her semi clad state and started a series of whistles and catcalling, making her instinctively draw back to a safer region where she could at least blend in with the crowd.

'Hey, you new here? Come let me help you out,' heavily kohl-ed eyes looked back at her as a girl

around her age with facial piercings pulled her out of the crowd before she could even reply in the affirmative. A series of swift rapid movements followed, terminating with Sophia being hurled onto a leather seat. It could have been within ten minutes, five minutes or twenty minutes. For Sophia it was a matter of seconds in which under the pretext of 'help' she was ushered out of a back door, blindfolded and gagged and ruthlessly thrown into a van. Seconds, in which a life's transition took place. The formerly self-assured, confident and haughty Sophia found herself in a life threatening position where nothing could save her and the future seemed to promise nothing but dread and anxiety and a long list of possibilities she shuddered to envision. There was no hope. No one knew where she was and she had a sinking feeling that her new 'friends' would probably not even notice she was gone. "Ayza!" she mentally groaned. She wished she had an amiable relationship with her so at least she could've shared with her where she was going. With every kilometer the car covered, Sophia felt more and more suffocated. This could be death she thought. This could be worse. In the middle of all the morbid scenarios she had been imagining, Ayza's face kept coming up. Suddenly she knew why. There was one escape route. One route heavy over all other routes. One Call she could make that held much more assurance compared to a call made to any mortal. She shut her eyes against the blindfold and begged Allah c,

'O Allah, if You see me now, if You hear me now then save me, for I have no one to turn to. Give me a chance to live once again and I will not stray, Allah, I will not stray. Ayza says you can make miracles happen, Allah, why can't this miracle happen to me? I want to go home, Allah and experience what it's like to pray and ask and ask and keep asking from you since everyone at home says you listen to everything. Allah grant me a miracle now please and I will live for *deen*, Allah. I don't know if you forgive sinners like me, Allah but I promise to reform myself if I get out of this alive and safe...' The tears came out freely and the blindfold became sodden yet her words kept coming, garbled and incoherent, but sincere pleas from a desperate heart.

It seemed like eternity; yet she never lost hope. The car sped along until it came to a halt at a local checkpoint. She heard voices in hushed tones, voices that turned heated as someone from the outside insisted upon the driver to let the car undergo inspection. There were thuds and silence. And then she heard the sound of a car door being opened and within seconds blinding lights came into vision as she instinctively scrunched her eyes but not before ensuring that the man in front of her was clad in a police uniform. There were questions which she answered. She would later have no recollection of what she was answering and to whom; she only knew she had been rescued. From what fate, she didn't want to know. Her spine hurt from being so callously hurled into the car. Her head was throbbing because it had struck the door when she was thrown. Yet it was the mental state, empty and hollow, that made her lose consciousness...

Allah c has innumerable ways through which he can change a person's heart. An hour later an amazed Ayza and her mom witnessed Sophia waking up at the hos-

Towards the Light

By Mariam Majid Sharif



pital fervently whispering the words “Thank you Allah, thank you!” She could not communicate with them. In silence she took the blanket Ayza had brought and draped it around herself. She couldn’t bear to be seen then. The drive back to the house was silent. Mumbling a thank you for everything to Ayza and her mom, she went upstairs to the room and simply laid down to sleep.

It was nearing dawn when Sophia woke up. She groaned as she tried to turn over, sparks of pain shooting all over body. She tried to focus as she rubbed her eyes but everything seemed blurry. In a corner of the room which Ayza had reserved for her prayers, she could see a huddled figure deep in supplication. While it had been almost a fortnight since her arrival, she had never paid any attention to what Ayza did despite being in the same room. She had continued loudly on her phone calls, laughing and swearing when Ayza used to recite her Qur’an everyday, making the other girl quietly exit the room rather than asking her to

I doubt I can be nice to someone I can’t tolerate,’ while significantly looking at her so she couldn’t miss the jab. Ironically Ayza smiled-again.

‘Not really. I do that as part of the religion. For the simple reason that emulating the Prophet ﷺ (*sallallahu alayhi wassalam*) gives me *sawab*. It doesn’t cost me anything but grants me...’

She remembered how she had stopped her with ‘dude, please, I ain’t got time for no lectures,’ thrown her empty coke can into her lap and walked away. She shut her eyes, trying to ward off the memory of her own exaggerated swagger and Ayza’s pained expression. She opened her eyes and looked again at the corner where Ayza prayed. Is that why she’s always so serene,’ she mused, ‘because she’s calling out to Allah ﷻ more often than not? She took a deep breath. ‘Maybe. Maybe I’m not that far gone. Maybe I can connect with Allah ﷻ too. Will he forgive my transgressions? Will I get a chance at redemption?’The

And then it was just her and Allah ﷻ She spoke more with tears than with words. Her heart was more eloquent than her tongue. And when she couldn’t cry anymore, she pleaded for forgiveness. She begged for the *nur* of her religion to permeate her soul. She asked repeatedly for a chance to redeem herself.



lower her volume. On the wall behind the door Sophie had decided to put up a poster of one of her favorite male celebrities not only because she simply wanted to but also for the purpose of annoying Ayza. But Ayza, upon discovering the poster, had merely flinched and left the room. Now as Sophia looked at the poster, she saw that Ayza had placed a cloth over it and guiltily slid further down and pulled the coverlet on her face. ‘Was I really that bad?’ ‘Did I really do stuff just to provoke her into reacting and to disrupt her prayers?’ ‘Was I truly the one mocking her for staying true to her religion while I had spent my days wrecking whatever remnants of *Iman* I had in my heart from my childhood’. ‘Iman - what a foreign word,’ she reflected, slowly becoming oblivious to her surroundings. Iman. Belief. It was only during the darkest moment of her life that she had called out to her Creator, her Sustainer, her Savior. When all had left her, when she had nothing to hang on to, when *Dunya* had left her, some ancient, ravaged and previously-never-heard part of her heart told her to call Him. She may have gotten disconnected from everywhere, driven off to some unknown territory where God knows what awaited her, that formerly disillusioned part of her had spoken out hoarsely. To call Allah ﷻ. Sophia now realised that that was the moment when she had felt what Iman was and she wanted more of it now. She wanted her heart and her mind to have it perpetually seared that Allah ﷻ is there waiting to be called upon. That no matter how slim the chances of getting saved are, there is one Allah ﷻ who can lift you right from the jaws of danger itself. If this spiritual feeling wasn’t enough, she was humbled by the treatment she had received from Ayza and her family. She recalled a conversation she had had with Ayza a week ago where Sophia had asked with genuine curiosity: ‘How can you even do that anyway, this constant smiling and eager to please attitude. Doesn’t it make you sick?

questions queued up in her mind but she wasn’t giving in to doubt. Soundlessly she walked to the bathroom and haltingly performed the *wudu* as she tried to recall her Qur’an *Baji*’s instructions from ten years ago. Once she was done, Sophia slowly walked to the Prayer Corner with trepidation in every step she took and took out the prayer mat Ayza had gotten for her. She could feel Ayza’s eyes at the back of her head but she ignored them. Hands trembling she reached for the extra *khimar*, mindful of her uncovered wrists and arms and then she fell in *Sujood*.

And then it was just her and Allah ﷻ. She spoke more with tears than with words. Her heart was more eloquent than her tongue. And when she couldn’t cry anymore, she pleaded for forgiveness. She begged for the *nur* of her religion to permeate her soul. She asked repeatedly for a chance to redeem herself. Unbeknownst to her, there was someone sitting beside her, tears rapidly falling down her face as she watched Sophia prostrated in front of her ﷻ stripped of all hauteur, arrogance and pride. Ayza could see the sincerity in her actions and words and it dawned upon her that while the incident may have left an indelible mark Sophia would never be able to erase from her memory, it had restored her connection to Allah ﷻ, something many, including Sophia’s parents, had assumed would be impossible. Yet, Allah ﷻ chose her. Allah ﷻ chose her for His religion because He wanted her to repent and Allah ﷻ loves those who repent. Soundlessly, Ayza stood and went to the dresser to pour out a glass of water and then waited for Sophia. It was half an hour later when a subdued Sophia lifted her head.

‘Here take this, it’ll help.’ As Ayza handed Sophia the glass, she couldn’t help noticing how tranquil she

looked despite the exhaustion that was clearly etched on her face.

‘Ayza...,’ Sophia’s voice brought her out of her scrutiny and as she turned towards her, Sophia’s words came tumbling out incoherent and pleading

‘...I’m sorry for how I behaved, for everything I did, so sorry, I never realised not until last night, if you could ever forgive...’

Without saying a word, Ayza pulled her into a hug, letting her dampen her hijab with her tears, cry to her heart’s content and knowing that a new bond had been forged between the two at that very moment.

A YEAR LATER

A bleary eyed Ayza reached for her phone as it continually rang, waking her up from a deep sleep. Groggily, she accepted the call without checking the number and said salaam.

‘Wa’alaikum us salam, Ayza you simply won’t believe this! Someone told me about these *Tafseer* classes in the local area by an *Aalima* and I attended one today and guess which Surah they were doing? Oh I’ll tell you anyway, it was Surah *Noor* my favorite! I don’t even have words to tell you how amazing it was to go into the depth of those beautiful words,”

‘Sophia, would you let me speak?’ Ayza started, amused at her friend’s enthusiasm, ‘I’m really happy for you,”

‘Yes, yes, but first let me complete. I haven’t even started on *the news* yet! So listen. I just couldn’t

stop asking questions during class and later the *Baji* comes to me and asks if I want to join the six years *Aalima* course in her *madrassa*. I didn’t know what to say Ayza, I mean it’s such a big thing and...’, her voice began to falter ‘do you think I’m even worthy of it? She concluded in a small voice.

‘Sophia? Allah ﷻ wants you to have this *Ilm*, this *Baji* came and addressed you especially because she could see the genuine ‘*talab*’, the desire to learn and to know in you. Don’t let *Shaytan* fill your mind with doubt and insecurities. Allah ﷻ does not choose just anyone to learn his *Deen*. Consider this a privilege and ensure that you give these studies all that you can because that’s where you have to be worthy of it. Your past is what it was and that’s where it will remain. Again I repeat. Allah ﷻ has chosen you. Why should you not agree to this?’

There was silence on the other end. It took Sophia a couple of minutes to pull herself together and reply. ‘*Jazakillah*, Ayza, for then and for now. *Jazakillah* for being the source of my guidance. I will *inshaAllah* do *istikhara* and call *Baji* tomorrow - oh wait is it, 1 a.m. there?’

‘It’s alright Sophia, just keep me posted okay? I’ll call you after *Ishraq*, *InshaAllah* and we can talk about this when I am actually in possession of my complete faculties.’

‘Okay, I’ve got to go now, sorry again. Tomorrow, *Insha’Allah*, then.’

The girls ended their calls and both went to bed with their hearts grateful to Allah ﷻ and with prayers for each other before they went off to sleep.

IMPERIAL SCHOOLING



The paramount system of education throughout the Muslim world is the system of western education introduced by the imperial powers: The British in the subcontinent, Palestine, Sudan, Egypt, Iraq, and elsewhere; the French in Algeria, Lebanon, Syria, Tunis and Morocco; the Italians in Libya; and so on. These imperial powers methodically worked to destroy the system of education they found in the conquered territories and confer all the power and prestige on the implanted system.

Their main purpose was to control the minds of their subject people. It is instructive to note that the first three universities established in India (Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras) did not do any teaching at all when established or for decades after that. They were established in 1857 and their task was to conduct examinations for the students in their vast areas of jurisdiction, thereby controlling education throughout India. In other words their prestige was not due to their excellent teaching—as there was none—but due to their monopoly over the granting of certificates and degrees which could be cashed through government employment ... The immediate purpose of the schools and colleges established by the imperial government was the production of junior functionaries for running its affairs. Their products were required to be cogs in the wheels of the exploitative and repressive imperial machinery. For this they had to be convinced of the superiority of their masters, their language, their manners, their knowledge, their system of government, their culture and their history while disdaining their own history and civilization and questioning their religion. Prayers in a textbook used in Libya by the Italians sums up the plan: “O God! Help me to be a good Italian. O God! Help me to love Italy, my second fatherland.”

- Khalid Baig, ‘Rethinking Education’

Eva oil
pg38

On Suspicion

By **Hakeem Shamim Ahmad**

Translation by **Syeda Samar Mubashir**

One of the letters written to a daughter by her loving father ...

My beloved daughter! Lots of warm wishes!

It was a pleasure to read your letter. I do remember the date decided for your marriage, and as soon as my request for a leave is approved, I will inform you about my arrival. You said that your grandmother and aunt were telling you that so many years passed by but they never witnessed any kind of discord or use of any abusive language between your father and mother, and you were asking where I learned that from... and then you also said that it gives you a shiver to see marriages break-up. Only a few days pass by and the quarrels begin and go on to such an extent that marriage ties break-up.

I asked your mother the same question, that how did you win the hearts of your mother-in-law, father-in-law, and other family members so quickly? Now everyone in the house is fond of you. Where did you learn this art from? She told me that, thanks to Allah, I was raised in a religious family. And by the time girls reach maturity in our family, they are taught Surah An-Nisa and Surah An-Noor with meanings and explanation. And they are commanded to obey

each and every verse of these Surahs. It is the blessing of the word of Allah ﷻ that made me humble-minded, clement, and well-mannered. These are the traits without which homes break up rather than building up. I will elaborate it to you in my letter.

1. The most important reason of these break-ups is that we have gone further away from the Qur'an. Learning the Qur'an brings piety. Backbiting and misgiving thoughts about other people are two major diseases in the society which if not cured will increase hatred and discord to the extent of ruining happily established homes.

An old friend of mine once told me his story crying over what happened in his home. It was so heart-wrenching that it brought tears in my eyes too.

Even though he is a very religious person and his family understands the religion quite well, the devil succeeded in creating misunderstanding around the house and led to divorce between his son and daughter-in-law. He had a beautiful grand-daughter whom he was very fond of. He used to praise his daughter-in-law and grand-daughter. It so happened that my friend's wife



was diagnosed as suffering from cancer. A *pir* told her that she was plagued with cancer through black magic. Incidentally, the daughter-in-law had gone to visit her family in those days. Eventually, she was suspected as the doer of this black deed. Son and daughters, all went against the girl and began to hate her thinking that she had done it. My friend tried to explain that she is not the cause, but nobody listened, and eventually my friend's son gave divorce to his wife.

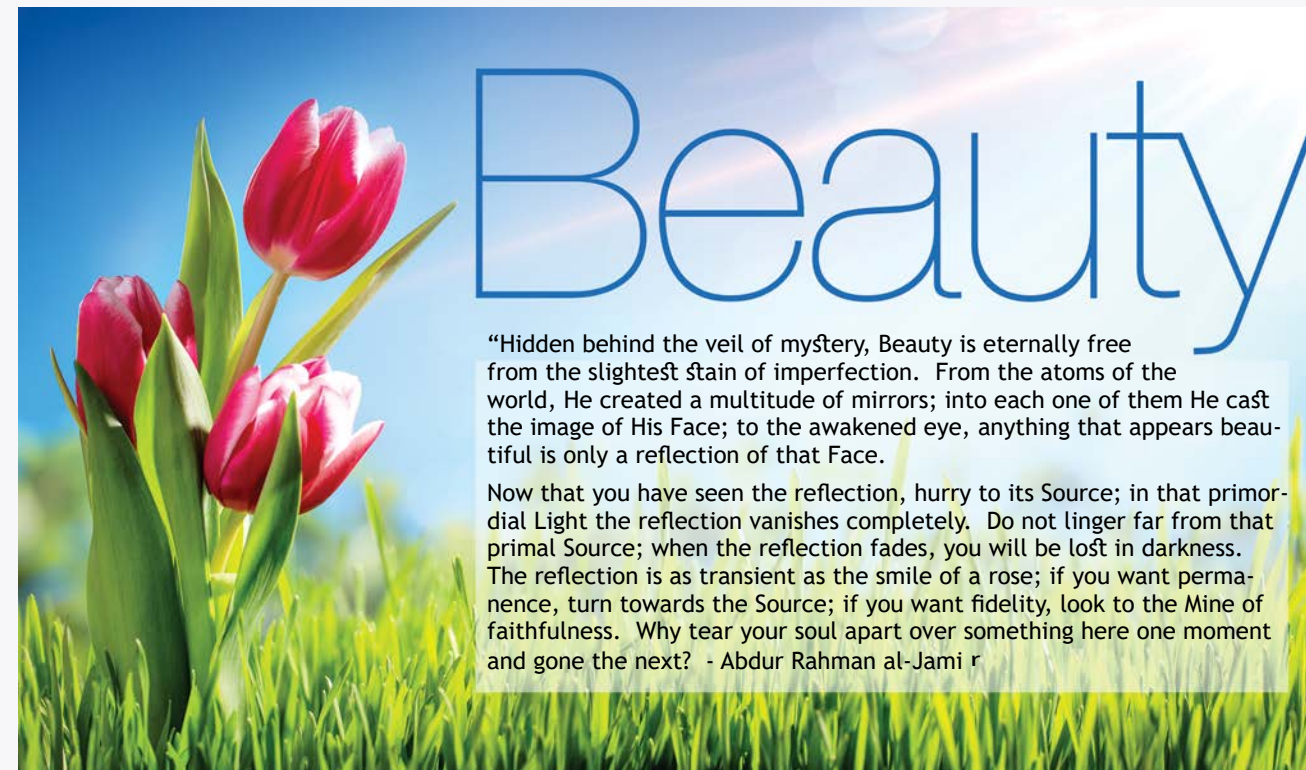
2. Wrong or improper usage of mobile phones is also a reason behind the destruction of households. Nowadays, girls talk to their family and friends for hours on their cell phones, and keep reporting to them about each and everything. The rest of the time is spent in watching TV dramas. Neither the husband nor the in-laws can tolerate this attitude. Eventually the husband is compelled to say that you have got married to the cell phone and TV, and not me. The wife dislikes this statement so much that instead of correcting her behavior she says, "I don't like restrictions." And this leads to separation and divorce. Parents should advise their daughters to avoid talking excessively on the cell phone. Talking too much is also a bad habit. They should treasure time and spend their time doing something constructive.

There is no exaggerating about the fact that the major cause of disputes, clashes and resentments between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law is also the cell phone. A house where three or four daughters-in-law are living together, mobile phone is used as a means of letting out anger. When one of the daughters-in-law hears something from the mother-in-law about the other daughter-in-law, she instantly whis-

pers to the second daughter-in-law through cell phone with exaggeration that the mother-in-law is saying such and such about you. So the second daughter-in-law becomes angry. If the second daughter-in-law would not listen to whatever the first daughter-in-law tells her, and says whatever you want to say, say it in front of mother, because I don't like backbiting, and Allah c has warned us about terrible punishment for the backbiters, in this way, the whole matter would be subdued. However, God-forbid, if this practice of whispering to each other against the mother-in-law becomes a norm amongst the daughters-in-law, then they create a battlefield for the mother-in-law, and it becomes such a huge temptation that leads to complete destruction of the families. Firstly, the mother-in-law should complain in front of the daughter-in-law with whom the complaint is associated so that daughters-in-law cannot whisper to each other. Secondly, daughters-in-law should give their mother-in-law the stature of a real mother. And mothers-in-law should give daughters-in-law the stature of real daughters. This is the only way that both sides can harmoniously conform to each other. Otherwise the house would become uprooted due to fights and debates.

It is a common observation that everyone talks about getting their rights. But when it comes to the duties, no one cares. Sons demand their right from the father; wife demands her rights from the husband that she wants all the comforts and luxuries in life, but doesn't care even a little bit about what her duties and obligations are.

Your well-wisher,
Your father.



Beauty

"Hidden behind the veil of mystery, Beauty is eternally free from the slightest stain of imperfection. From the atoms of the world, He created a multitude of mirrors; into each one of them He cast the image of His Face; to the awakened eye, anything that appears beautiful is only a reflection of that Face.

Now that you have seen the reflection, hurry to its Source; in that primordial Light the reflection vanishes completely. Do not linger far from that primal Source; when the reflection fades, you will be lost in darkness. The reflection is as transient as the smile of a rose; if you want permanence, turn towards the Source; if you want fidelity, look to the Mine of faithfulness. Why tear your soul apart over something here one moment and gone the next? - Abdur Rahman al-Jami r

A Point Lost

By Zawjah Zia

is wrong. May it be a social front or a domestic one, hours and hours of our daily lives are lost on (pointless) analysis. There are those doing the analysis and those who listen to and are hooked to this 'juicy' description. But tons of analysis, thousands of debates and countless critical dialogues later, we are as drenched in strife as ever; without a solution. 'Why?' is the big question.

Sincerely pointing out the shortcomings of our fellow beings has been regarded as a noble and constructive trait in our Deen. It is mentioned in a Hadith: "A believer (*mu'min*) is a mirror to another believer" (Abu Dawud). If a person has a spot on his face and stands



Politicians are corrupt. These religious people are so judgmental and rigid. The people related to media are evil and scheming. These elites and civil society people are so big-headed and egoistic, with a lot of complexes. Men are prejudiced. Women are defiant. Our youth are rebellious. We are bad people!

Criticism for the sake of criticism is the norm today. Our intellectual and objective resources are being spent in trying to prove that the one who opposes us

in front of a mirror, the mirror will reflect that spot. The mirror is showing him his defects. In the same way, a believer is also a mirror to another believer. When a believer sees another with a defect, he should inform him with love and affection, that you have this certain weakness in you, work on it.

Sayyidina Umar bin Khattab h used to say that, 'I shall supplicate for the forgiveness of the person who brings me the gift of my shortcomings.' The point to ponder over is that why the same 'pointing out faults' is fruitless and even detrimental for us today.

The reason is that our actions may be noble, but our intentions are hugely contaminated. May be, our motives behind criticizing people are to degrade, malign and ridicule them, rather than to help them reform or improve. As a result, we indulge in all sorts of spiritual ills (slandering, backbiting, malice, jealousy, anger and pride); all that this finger-pointing makes us give and get is hatred.

What does my heart want? This is the first thing we need to ask ourselves before we utter a single word of criticism against anyone. Do I want to say what I am about to say because I want to help the other person reform or is it just my prejudice that is seeking a vent through my words?

This is important because, for sure, our actions only depend on what we intend for. There are a few obvious differences between criticism with pure intentions and the one driven by a false intent.

A sincere critic would never want to widely publicize the faults of others. Rather he'd try to deliver his

spising the people under discussion more than their sin. Broadly speaking, the purpose is to point out and correct the sins, wrong-doings and misbehaviors. But taking names takes our focus away from the sin and makes us divert our hatred towards the sinner. Consequently, the sinner is reprimanded, disgraced and even made victim of personal prejudices, while the sin and its causes remain unattended and thus the problem remains unresolved.

Here, it is vital to understand that if the 'fault' in point is not a mistake or weakness but a proven and deliberate evil of a miscreant, then it would be absolutely important to clearly warn the masses against the sin and the sinner.

- The beloved Prophet ﷺ said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or the oppressed one". People asked, "O Allah's Apostle! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "By preventing him from oppressing others." [Sahih Bukhari]

Criticism for the sake of criticism is the norm today. Our intellectual and objective resources are being spent in trying to prove that the one who opposes us is wrong. May it be a social front or a domestic one, hours and hours of our daily lives are lost on (pointless) analysis. There are those doing the analysis and those who listen to and are hooked to this 'juicy' description. But tons of analysis, thousands of debates and countless critical dialogues later, we are as drenched in strife as ever; without a solution. 'Why?' is the big question.



'duty' in as secret and confined a manner as possible. Discussing or even speaking about anyone's faults before others is anything but constructive.

- The criticism that is fair and reasonable is exclusive of unjust and inciting words. You say only what is 'just enough' and in a manner that is kind and not hurtful for the other person.
- Someone who is actually sincere in helping others to rectify their faults does not stop at merely pointing out the faults but then offers all kinds of practical help as much as possible.

Having cited the above criteria, it is important to note that it applies to the case of individuals criticizing (for the sake of correcting) individuals. But at times, there are ills in a society that need to be pointed out and corrected and in such a situation, secrecy can be damaging. However, there are a few ethical standards that need to be followed, besides the ones stated above, when it is necessary to indulge in open criticism.

- People are not bad, their deeds are. Therefore, it would be very wrong to say 'so and so did such and such bad deed'. For one, it would be equal to indulging in sins like backbiting or slandering. Secondly, it will lead us and the people listening to us into de-

These wise words hold the message of absolute goodwill and wellbeing for all of us. Even the one at fault is to be taken as someone who deserves our help rather than only condemnation. Moreover, 'preventing him from oppressing others' tells us that it is a call for practical steps to stop a sin, not just empty mockery and criticism for the sinner.

When the angel asked the beloved Prophet's ﷺ permission to destroy the people of Taa'if after they had rejected and wounded him blatantly, he ﷺ prevented it from happening only with the hope that Allah ﷻ may grant guidance to their future generations, even if they remained misguided. And then he even made Dua' for them.

That is the model of absolute *khayr* and tolerance that our beloved Prophet ﷺ has taught us.

Our duty as believers is to bring the best out of people and not to shun them and give up on them. The world says that we are an intolerant lot. Well, it is sad, it is offending, but it is true; there's no point in denying that. Rather, the wiser stance would be to acknowledge it, accept it, look for the causes and then do the mending where it is due; lest we continue our ranting campaigns against each other and keep missing the point.

Parus Plastic pg43



Contributed by G.M. Surriya

THE LAST MAN OF JAHANNAM

Sayyidna Abdullah bin Masood h says that a person came to Rasulallah g and asked, "O Rasulallah! Will anyone from among the monotheists be in Jahannam? He replied, "Yes. There would be a person in the lowest layer of Jahannam and would be screaming 'Ya Hannan Ya Mannan' all the time." Jibrael m would happen to pass by and would hear him cry. He would be astonished to hear this voice, calling for help of Allah c from Jahannam; He would straight away go to the Throne of Allah c and would fall in prostration. Allah c would ask him to lift his head up.

He, being aware of everything, would ask him whether he had seen something strange. He would say that he had heard a person yelling "Ya Hannan, Ya Mannan" from the lowest part of Jahannam and he was surprised to notice it. Allah c would order him to go and ask, Maalik, the in-charge of Jahannam, to take out this person from there. He would go and knock at one of the doors of Jahannam. Maalik m would come out and Jibrael m would convey the message of Allah c to bring out that person from Jahannam, who is shouting "Ya Hannan, Ya Mannan." Malik m would

enter Jahannam but despite his search, he would not find that man, even though Maalik m knows all of the dwellers of Jahannam, more than a mother knows about her children. Maalik m would come back and say that the fire was blazing so intensely that it was hard for him to distinguish between stone and iron and iron and men.

Jibrael m would return to Throne of Allah c and would fall in prostration. Allah c would ask him to raise his head and would say, "Why didn't you bring my slave." He would say, 'O My Rabb! Maalik was telling me that the fire was blazing so hard that it was difficult for him to discriminate between stone and iron and iron and men. Allah c would say, "Go and tell Maalik that My slave is lying in such and such corner, under such and such veil and in such and such layer of Jahannam."

Jibrael m would go back to Maalik m and would tell him the whereabouts of this man. Malik m would go to the place and would find him in a condition that his detested and cursed forehead is tied with his legs and his hands tied with his neck. Serpents and scorpions would have taken him in their grip. Maalik m would draw this man towards him, these creatures would fall off; when he would pull for the second time, the handcuffs and chains would break by themselves and fall off. He would then take him and make him dive in the river of life and then, would hand him over to Jibrael m.

Jibrael m would drag him by his forehead throughout the way towards the Throne of Allah c. On their way, they would pass through many groups of angels, who would be lamenting over him. They would reach the Throne of Allah c and Jibrael m would fall in prostration. Allah c would ask him to raise his head up and would then turn His attention towards His slave and would say,

"O my slave! Had I not created you in the best shape!

"Didn't I send My messenger towards you!"

"Didn't he recite My book to you!"

"Didn't he enjoin you good and forbid evil!"

The man would say "Yes" to all these questions. Thereafter, Allah c would ask him what prompted him to do such and such evil deeds. He would say, "I had wronged all my life for which I had to stay in Jahannam for such a long time." He would further say, "I was, however, highly hopeful all the time and that was the reason for crying out, "Ya Hannan, Ya Mannan." You have now, by Your Mercy, taken me out of Jahannam and shown Mercy to me." Allah c would say, "O Angels! Be a witness that I have forgiven him."

(Ad-dawah, July 2014)

In a World of Ease and Hardship...



"Allah c has names of Beauty: the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Gentle, and many others. But He also has Names of Rigour: the Overwhelming, the Just, the Avenger. The world in which we live exists as the interaction and the manifestation of all of the divine attributes. Hence it is a place of ease and of hardship, of joy and of sorrow. It has to be this way: a world in which there was only ease could not be a place in which we can discover ourselves to be true human beings. It is only by experiencing hardship, and loss, and bereavement, and disease, that we rise above our egos, and show that we can live for others, and for principles, rather than only for ourselves."

— Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad



By Khalid Baig

MEDICINE AND MUSLIMS THE ROAD AHEAD

(Talk delivered at the 28th Annual convention of the Islamic Medical Association of South Africa. Durban, 6 July 2008)

I am thankful to the IMA for this opportunity to share with this distinguished gathering some thoughts about medicine and where we should be going with it in the future. Although I am in that stage of life where a person's medical knowledge increases rapidly as he hears new concerns, new tests and new names of diseases from his doctor or his reference age group, the perspective I want to share is not based solely on personal experience. It is also built on study and reflection on the history of medicine and the interplay of various forces that determined the path of this history.

I graduated from engineering college about thirty-five years ago. When I went for my MBA studies in Canada some years later, my perspective on some of the things I had learnt earlier changed. It was there, for example, that I learnt that "An apple a day, keeps

the doctor away" was a marketing slogan coined by farmers in the US as the demand for apples went down during Prohibition years. It was also there that I learnt something new about Frederick Taylor. In the engineering college I had learnt that Taylor was a genius who revolutionized manufacturing through his scientific management. He was called as the father of scientific management. A great man. A benefactor of humanity who helped usher in the new era of abundant and cheap manufactured goods. Naturally, when I found his original monograph on scientific management in the library, I read it with great enthusiasm.

It was a shocking experience. In the monograph he described his experiment with a laborer whose productivity he increased, and expressed his thoughts on the subject. He asked the laborer whether he was a good man and defined a good man to be one who stood up when he was asked to stand up, sat down when he was told to sit down, lifted a load when he was asked to lift, took a step with it when he was told

to do so. In other words his good man was not a man but a perfect robot. He also described his scientific management philosophy: "Now one of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type. The man who is mentally alert and intelligent is for this very reason entirely unsuited to what would, for him, be the grinding monotony of work of this character. Therefore the workman who is best suited to handling pig iron is unable to understand the real science of doing this class of work." (Frederick Taylor. Principles of Scientific Management, 1911)

Very scientific. In fact father of scientific --- management.

I mention Taylor here for two reasons. One is that the engineering college had given me a distorted picture of the man and the discipline he founded. That applied to many other things as well. It is not that the things I learnt about thermodynamics, heat transfer, metallurgy, strength of materials, theory of machines, electrical technology, production techniques, and dozens of other subjects were wrong. It was that there were other things about the rise of the factory, its social, cultural, and economic impact on the society, the struggles between segments of the society, and the role of the factory in helping some of these warring sections and exploiting others --- all of these were never discussed. We saw some of the trees but not the forest. As engineers we were only interested in mastering the technical details. And technology, we had firm belief, was perfectly neutral. No one could argue with science or technology. These other issues could be of interest to the lesser people who could not get admission in the engineering college and had to pursue a study in humanities.

Taylor did improve manufacturing efficiency. But he did it at tremendous cost to the society. He had successfully developed a method for the social control of the society and facilitated a brutal exploitation. But bright engineering graduates who would be implementing his techniques would not have any idea of what they were doing. They, themselves were the "good men" as he defined, obeying his commands without question.

This technical mindset is not limited to engineering. In medicine also subjects like biology, anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, etc. are very important and wonderful subjects. But there are other non-technical subjects like the interplay of economic, social and political forces that have a tremendous impact on the development and availability of therapies, which may be ignored by our focus on the technical.

Rise of Medicine in the West

The second reason I mention him is that there are parallels between the "scientific management" that



he championed and the "scientific medicine" that arose at the same time. Our life was changed for good or for bad by the industrial revolution. This also applies to modern medicine. I am not sure this history of modern medicine is covered in medical schools. But it is important both for the physician and the patient to know it to understand why things are happening the way they are happening today and find an alternative. It is that perspective that I wish to share with you today.

The phenomenal rise of medical science is of recent vintage. Much of it took place in Taylor's homeland and under the patronage of the same class of people whom he served. In the nineteenth century the US was far behind Europe in medicine. To earn respect and greater fees, an aspiring US doctor had to travel to Edinburgh to get good medical education. At the same time, different sects like homeopaths, ecclesiastics, and herbal healers had an equal claim to medical expertise. It changed in the twentieth century with the US getting an uncontested lead and allopathic medicine emerging as the preeminent authority for medical questions.

The history of this revolution is fascinating. As Richard Brown documented it in his *Rockefeller Medicine Men - Medicine and Capitalism in America*, this happy result was not an accident but the result of a carefully thought out and executed strategy on the part of the people with money. Between 1910 and 1930 the big philanthropic foundations, led by the Rockefeller, gave a total of \$300M to medical education and research. This staggering fund gave them much say in determining the direction of these institutions.

Capitalism put allopathic medicine on steroids.

Capital Intensive Medicine

No doubt providing a healthy workforce was a goal of their campaign just as providing cheaper goods to the masses was a goal of their factories. But this was not the only goal or the only result. It also laid

the foundations for the development of technological medicine and what came to be called as the medical industrial complex. It was medicine dominated by hospitals, drug companies, laboratories, doctors, insurance companies, even banks, joined together by pursuit of profit from people's pains.

It was expensive medicine because of the very expensive machines and devices which became indispensable for doctors and hospitals as a result of these efforts. This was by design for they were looking for products and techniques that could assure nice returns on big investments. Bruce C. Vladeck, professor of Health Policy and Geriatrics, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, stated the obvious when he said: "Modern medicine and medical science have really accomplished some extraordinary things, but some of them are very expensive." (http://www.pbs.org/healthcarecrisis/Expts_intrvw/b_vladeck.htm)

It was no longer possible for most people to pay for the medical care when it was needed. A system of health insurance was thus necessitated so every healthy person would keep on paying for the healthcare every month so he would not be bankrupted by a sudden illness or injury. The insurance industry--- that adds no medical value but adds to a significant part of the costs --- thus came into being. (According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (2003) administration consumed 31.0 percent of U.S. health spending).

The result has been a huge marketing success. If healthcare is a market then the more that is spent in the market, the better it is for the marketers. And the amount has been increasing greatly with no end in sight. In 2007 healthcare spending in the United States alone reached \$2.3 trillion. Those \$2.3 trillion are certainly going to somebody. The winners are the insurance and pharmaceutical companies, which have been some of the most profitable businesses in the US. In 2007 prescription drug sales totaled \$286 billion in the US and \$712 billion worldwide.

If they were selling ice-cream or cosmetics, we could congratulate the entrepreneurs on their great achievement. But a sick person, a person in pain, is the farthest from the rational decision-maker that the free-market model presupposes. We are dealing with an unsuspecting, rather trusting, and vulnerable clientele that can be manipulated into buying useless and even harmful therapies. And manipulate it did, in all ways conceivable....

Drug Company Game

In her book on the drug industry, Marcia Angell, former Editor-in-Chief, *New England Journal of Medicine* says: "This book will expose the real pharmaceutical industry - an industry that over the past two decades has moved very far from its original high purpose of discovering and producing useful new drugs. ...Now primarily a marketing machine to sell drugs of dubi-

ous benefit this industry uses its wealth and power to co-opt every institution that might stand in its way, including the U.S. Congress, the Food and Drug Administration, academic medical centers and the medical profession itself. Most of its marketing efforts are focused on influencing doctors, since they must write the prescriptions. (Marcia Angell, *The Truth about the Drug Companies: How they deceive us and what to do about it*, Random House, 2004).

Families USA, a watchdog group, documents some of the methods used by this industry: "The drug industry files bogus patents, buries its competition-generic manufacturers-in frivolous lawsuits, and even colludes with those manufacturers to keep lower-priced generics off the market. The industry also engages in fraudulent drug pricing and deceptive marketing, and it funds groups that claim to represent consumers opposed to strategies aimed at putting a lid on prescription drug prices." (<http://www.familiesusa.org/resources/tools-for-advocates/tips/han-newsletter-june-2002.html>)

Even the health guidelines that the whole world may assume represent sound science, may have a hidden business agenda behind them. Moynihan, a health journalist for the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *Lancet*, and Cassels, a Canadian science writer, explain the simple mechanism through which sales of statins were increased worldwide. Statins are in the five top selling drug categories in the world. They reported: "Eight of the nine specialists who wrote the 2004 federal guideline on high cholesterol, which substantially increased the number of people in that category, had multiple financial ties to drug manufacturers." (Ray Moynihan, Alan Cassels, *Selling Sickness: How the World's Biggest Pharmaceutical Companies Are Turning Us All Into Patients*, Nation Books, 2005)

Greed and Disease

Marcia Angell mentioned expensive drugs of dubious quality. It gets worse than that, though. The robber barons of the medical frontier demonstrated that they were not above knowingly selling harmful medicines if they could get away with it.

Iconoclastic thinker and social critic Ivan Illitch, in his famous book *Medical Nemesis* has described some of these horror stories. I will mention just one here. During the 1960s chloramphenicol, packaged as Chloromycetin by Parke-Davis, brought in about one-third of the company's over-all profits. By then it had been known for several years that people who take this drug stand a certain chance of dying of aplastic anemia. Some of them would die within days. Others a year or more after its administration was stopped. Despite that through the late fifties and early sixties Parke-Davis spent large sums to promote it. Doctors in the United States prescribed chloramphenicol to almost four million people per year to treat them for acne, sore throat, the common cold, and even such

trifles as infected hangnail. According to Illitch, in the United States hundreds of them died undiagnosed.

This mad rush was stopped only after the facts were brought up in a congressional hearing. Within two months after that hearing, the use of chloramphenicol in the United States dwindled. Parke-Davis was forced to insert strict warnings of hazards and cautionary statements about the use of this drug into every package. But these warnings did not extend to exports.

Oral chloramphenicol has not been manufactured in the USA since 1991. Its use even on animals that produce human food is banned. As the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) warns, "The potential for aplastic anemia must be considered whenever chloramphenicol is used, regardless of the route of administration." (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/3055188>) But it is probably still being used in many parts of the world for conditions other than the typhoid which does not respond to safer antibiotics.

Healthcare Crisis

The cumulative result of these and other practices that resulted from the association of healing arts with and ---their subservience to ---capitalism is now a full blown disaster.

Today, despite the phenomenal success that resulted in the "medicalization" of not only the Western world but also big parts of the non-Western world, Western medicine is facing unexpected problems in its own home. The word used by serious analysts to describe the situation in the US is crisis. From the media to the physicians to the churches, people are talking about the healthcare crisis in the USA.

Says Marcia Angell: "We certainly are in a health care crisis. If we had set out to design the worst system that we could imagine, we couldn't have imagined on as bad as we have... Our health care system is based on the premise that health care is a commodity like VCRs or computers and that it should be distributed according to the ability to pay in the same way that consumer goods are. ... And that market ideology is what has made the health care system so dreadful, so bad at what it does." (Marcia Angell, http://www.pbs.org/healthcarecrisis/Expts_intrvw/m_angell.htm). This healthcare crisis has many dimensions.

Unaffordable Medicine

1. There are millions of people who can get no medical care because they cannot afford it. There are about 47 million uninsured and another 50 million underinsured people in the USA.

According to the National Coalition on Health Care, in a Wall Street Journal-NBC Survey almost 50 percent of the American public said the cost of health care was their number one economic concern. (<http://www.nchc.org/facts/coft.shtml>) In a survey by Deloitte's health research center, only 7 percent of Americans

said they felt financially prepared for their future health care needs. ("Even the Insured Feel Strain of Health Costs," NY Times, 4 May 2008). According to David Himmelstein, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School, about half of the 1.5 million families that declared bankruptcy in the US in 2001 did it because of medical causes. (David U. Himmelstein, et al., *Illness and Injury as Contributors to Bankruptcy*, 2005) The economics of medical education assures that, left to itself, this cycle will continue. A medical student in the US is on the average \$140,000 in debt upon graduation. Some have as much as \$300,000 or even more. The number one goal they have is to pay back this huge debt. A doctor under those pressures cannot be expected to spend an hour with a patient talking about lifestyle improvements for which he will get no extra money rather than propose a stent insertion for which he will get a few thousand dollars.

This reminds me of the surgeon who said he did not believe in unnecessary surgery; he only operated when he really needed the money. But that surgeon lived in earlier times in the USA. Today he constantly needs money, which explains the well-known over-prescription of surgery here.

Drug Discovery Procedures

There are other factors leading to the run-away escalation of medical costs. One of them is the current drug discovery procedures, which are normally considered to be the best that science could offer. I will leave that for you to decide but I can see the economics of it. The idea that randomized, double blind, placebo controlled trials are the only way to determine the safety and efficacy of a new drug serves the capitalist enterprise just fine. It erects the barrier to entry so necessary for maintaining monopolies and oligopolies. It takes \$100 million to \$1 billion to discover and test a new drug. Who will be investing that kind of money to discover therapeutic benefits of a non-patentable herb that one could buy from any herbalist for a small amount of money?

This "scientific" idea resulted in throwing all the medicines that were discovered over thousands of years into the dust bin. Ibn Sina's Cannon was used for five hundred years in Europe and for a longer period in the Muslim world. On the other hand the billion dollar R&D funds produce drugs whose side effects and problems start to show in a few years, although the drug companies have made their profits in those years and they can move on to the next drug. And the cycle continues.

No More Magic Pills

2. But even when we ignore the economic dimension of this problem, the therapeutic dimension is also significant.

a. There are problems with the quality of care. This includes errors as well as drug interactions and the ever-present and often ignored side-effects. The total

number of deaths caused by hospitals and physicians in the US get the third rank after cancer and heart problems. There were 225,000 such deaths in 2006. Injuries and loss of limbs or function are in addition to this.

a. There are no cures for many problems. Medicine, which seemed to promise a magic pill for every ailment the day it developed penicillin, today seems to have lost its magic tricks. For countless ailments from arthritis to common cold to cancer, to hypertension to urticaria it has no cure. Unfortunately the previously available alternate cures were thrown out with the success of penicillin. Penicillin was scientific medicine while others were the relics of the dark age of medicine.

Western Medicine in Muslim Countries

The situation in the poor countries, including all the Muslim countries is much worse.

The introduction of Western medicine was aimed at undermining Islamic values as well as the centuries old Islamic medicine. It was a “civilizing” mission. Thus we see that that much celebrated nurse Florence Nightingale considered creation of a public health department for India as part of a mission to bring higher civilization there. (Roy McLeod (Editor), Disease, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion). And the proposal for a medical college in Bombay in the 1830s was very clear about the goal: it was to wipe out the existing medicine there. Robert Grant wrote that the goal was: “To give to the people of western India a practical and well trained body of medical practitioners who by the skillful and conscientious exercise of the art would so recommend themselves to their countrymen as in time to take the place of *hakims* and *vaidis*, who for want of adequate education must necessarily be incompetent to exercise healing art with safety and success.” It is also very instructive that the entrance exam for the first batch of students for this college in 1848 consisted solely of questions about Paradise Lost. The purpose clearly was to create an elite class of slaves who would love to ape the maser and serve his interest whole-heartedly.

To destroy Islamic medicine, colonial powers cut off its sources of funding, blocked the efforts to regulate it through registration so fake healers would crowd the market and bring a bad name to the discipline, and carefully nurtured Muslim doctors who would perceive it to be in their own interest to oppose Islamic medicine. They used the prestige of science to relegate other medical systems including Islamic medicine to the realm of folk medicine worthy of no more attention than the old wives’ tales. And they succeeded considerably.

Differences between Islamic Medicine and Western Medicine

Muslims had imported medical knowledge in the past. During their golden era they relied on Greek, Persian,

Indian, and Syrian medicine. The hospitals in Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, Marrakesh and elsewhere had recruited doctors from all these places. The hospital in Jundishapur in Persia was the source for the staff of the celebrated Baghdad hospital under Harun al-Rashid. But importing the medical expertise and medical theories then did not create the problems that we see now.

What is different now from then? This is a question in history, sociology, and power relations.

When Harun al-Rashid built the splendid hospital in Baghdad, Muslims were in charge. They imported everything on their own terms. They assimilated it into their value system.

The hospitals in Baghdad as those throughout the Muslim world were Islamic institutions. At these hospitals they had separate wards for men and women. The treatment and stay was free as was the medicine for the outpatients. They even gave a gift of money to the patient upon discharge so he would not have to immediately start working after leaving the hospital. The doors of these hospitals were open to all: rich and poor, Muslim or non-Muslim, local or foreigner. These free hospitals maintained a very high standard of care. They were clean and large. There were lecture halls, libraries, and *masajid* in every hospital. Food was plentiful and prepared under the physicians instructions for each patient. The rulers visited the hospital to learn firsthand how they were running.

Did they have a hospital like that at Jundishapur? These defining features were not imported. These were dictated by the Islamic civilization. Whether the physicians were Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, the hospital was an Islamic institution.

In contrast when under colonial rule Western medicine started to take hold of Muslim lands beginning in the nineteenth century, Muslims were not in charge. What were transplanted were not just the techniques and medical knowledge but also the values and worldview. Muslim may have been working there but these were not Islamic institutions. And we lost a lot in the process.

Islamic World View

The greatest and the least discussed attack was on the worldview of the Muslim physician. In Islamic medicine the physician turned to Allah c to seek cure for the patient. He wrote *huwa al-Shafi* (He (Allah) is the healer) on every prescription and while writing that he said,

Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed You are the Knowledgeable, the Wise. [Al-Baqarah, 2:32]

The act connected both the patient and the physician to Allah, for He alone can cure.

“When I fall sick, He heals me.” Al-Shu’ra, 26:80

But these words were meaningless to a Western science that did not know God. As he was quietly indoctrinated into the secular humanistic worldview of this science, the Muslim physician dropped the use of these healing words, which used to set the tone for his entire treatment. Instead he wrote Rx, an apparently benign symbol, which is rooted in paganism. According to some accounts Rx refers to the eye of an Egyptian god Horus and it was worn as an amulet to ensure good health and ward off sickness. According to others it refers to the Greek god Jupiter. Haggard writes: “Rx is not, as is frequently supposed, an abbreviation of a Latin word meaning recipe or compound, but is an invocation to Jupiter, a prayer for his aid to make the treatment effective...” (Howard W. Haggard, Devils, Drugs, and Doctors, (1929))

There is another symbol that reminds us of the pagan connections of Western medicine. It is the staff of a Greek god surrounded by one or two snakes. It is there on the logos of World Health Organization as well as leading medical associations of USA, Canada, New Zealand, and others.



In the logos of World Health Organization, American Medical Association, and World Medical Association, the staff of the Greek god Caduceus and the snake around it are quite visible.

(Note: Images were taken from their own respective websites. They were also rescaled.)

It is certainly not that Muslim physicians hold these beliefs. But that they dropped the Islamic symbol and replaced it with a pagan symbol is in itself symbolic of the problem caused by Western medicine.

Exploitation of Fear

Islam taught us to give hope to the patient. But the capitalistic model of healthcare they imported used a marketing strategy based on exploitation of fear.

Medicine for the Rich

Islamic medicine provided free or low cost treatment for everyone without distinction. With western medicine care became a privilege to be enjoyed by the rich. And poverty became sentence to a life of sickness and misery.

Class Consciousness in Healing

In Islamic hospitals they did not have private rooms for the rich only. All facilities were equally for all. Now hospitals reflect the class structure of the society. What is more, the poor become hospital’s research and teaching material.

Value of Life

In the Islamic world all human life was important. In capitalism a person’s worth is accurately calculated by the accountants.

The capitalistic model is now firmly in place in countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. I have even seen ads in Pakistan promising professional training for doctors and hospital personnel by “experts” in “creative billing.”

The cost structures there now require a system of health insurance as well but the availability of such insurance is much more limited. In case of a serious illness, injury or medical emergency, a person may lose his life savings. In most heart wrenching stories of poverty, the beginning point is a health problem with the sole breadwinner for the family, which means he cannot even provide for the food for the family leave alone for his expensive treatment.

Holistic vs. Reductionist

In Islamic medicine, treatment was a holistic task aimed at restoring balance and harmony. Under Western medicine it became an engineering task aimed at fixing mechanical problems with the body.

Women’s Dignity

Islamic medicine protected women’s dignity and their

right to privacy. It went away with the coming of the Western medicine. From co-education that was purposely introduced in the medical colleges from the beginning to deliberate disregard for their privacy in the hospitals all have contributed to a very sorry state.

Like all imported problems, those related to health-care are worse in the poor countries where even the safeguards that may have been developed in the rich countries take a longer time to reach and where the counter balancing forces are generally absent.

The Road Ahead

As the undisputed leader of the world in medical science, America represents the best and the worst that modern medicine has to offer.

Famous thinker and social critic Ivan Illitch said that Western medicine was the cause of modern diseases. He talked about iatrogenesis: not just medical iatrogenesis (7% of patients suffer injuries due to doctor or medical staff error or toxic or ineffective drugs) but also social (More and more of life's problems are seen as amenable to medical intervention. Pharmaceutical companies develop expensive treatments for non-diseases) and cultural iatrogenesis that has made it impossible for one to be born at home or die at home. Richard Smith, editor of the British Medical Journal, commented that Illitch's radical polemic of 1975 had by 2002 become almost mainstream.

But we do not have to accept everything he said to recognize that the healing profession is sick and it does not have the tools with which to heal itself.

The problems are philosophic, economical, and social. They arise from the worldview of Western medicine. Their solution lies in bringing the Islamic worldview to the entire practice of medicine.

We have to rid modern medicine of paganism, scientism, and capitalism. Paganism is in its symbols. Scientism is in its outlook. Capitalism is its driving mechanism. Together they have created millions for the few and misery for the millions. Those millions - both Muslims and non-Muslims - are now looking for a way out of this misery.

Countering Paganism and Cultural Subversion

Recognition of the cultural subversion that Western medicine caused ---by design---in Muslim countries should lead to a strong counter campaign. This requires bringing Islamic worldview and its symbols to our teaching and practice of medicine. We should shed the slightest link to paganism, which requires being sensitive to all its pervasive symbols in the medical establishment and replacing them with Islamic symbols with full consciousness. A Muslim doctor should be writing *Huwa Al-Shafi* with the full force of conviction and deep humility to Allah c, Who alone can heal.

Countering Scientism

It is scientism that seeks answers and solutions from science for social, economic, or spiritual problems. We do need to work toward the demedicalization of society. Most of the health problems, say in a country like Pakistan, will go away if we provided clean air, water, sanitation, safe roads and cities, and Islamic lifestyles. Currently these are not emphasized because there is no money in it. But we need to produce physicians who have a different calling.

Overcoming Medical Sectarianism

Our physicians should rise above medical sectarianism and redefine themselves as practitioners of the healing arts instead of being just allopathic doctors. They should look at each therapy that works as a blessing of Allah c. An antibiotic, when used appropriately is a blessing of Allah c. So is a heart-lung machine. So is a simple herb like garlic or ginger or black seed or honey.

They should be eager to learn and teach Islamic medicine.

To some extent it is happening in the West. Frustrated patients are rushing towards what is now being called Complementary and Alternate Medicine (CAM). The therapies that were considered unscientific, and therefore bogus, are being looked at again. According to a 2002 survey in the US, 74.6% of patients had used some form of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). In response many medical schools have attempted to incorporate CAM education as elective courses. Recent studies report that 75% of U.S. medical schools offer such courses, while two hospitals (in Arizona and New York) have become centers for Integrated Medicine. The Association of American Medical Colleges now calls for physicians to be sufficiently knowledgeable about both conventional and non-conventional modes of care.

Why should we be waiting for Western universities to discover Islamic medicine before we do it? Muslim physicians need to take a lead in the movement for Integrated Medicine.

Islamic Medical Ethics

Islamic medical ethics should be a topic of ongoing discussion by physicians and ulama. South Africa is the right place to sow the seeds of this revolution because of your unique circumstances and the close association between the medical profession and Islamic scholarship. I cannot overemphasize the value of this association.

Leadership for the World: AIDS

We need to set mechanisms in place for providing leadership to the entire humanity on burning health issues of the day. There is much confusion about the AIDS industry that is selling very expensive medicine of probably dubious quality and promoting condom culture.

Aim High: The World is Waiting

It is a sorry spectacle that thousands of Muslim physicians throughout the world are unaware of the Prophetic medicine and totally disconnected from the rich heritage of Islamic medicine.

On the other hand it is heartening to see that both in its oath and its statement of objectives the Islamic Medical Association of South Africa has shown a keen awareness of these issues. But your efforts need to increase in proportion to the size of the task at hand.

Revival of any Islamic science is part of the revival of Islamic civilization and will pave the way for the revival of other sciences as well. But unlike other Islamic sciences, Islamic medicine has the distinction that despite all the efforts to wipe it out --- many at the hands of Muslims themselves---it is still a living tradition, unlike physics and chemistry. Reviving it is thus easier.

There are things our physicians can do individually. Our physicians need to recognize the great and unique

opportunity that they have for doing good not only for the body but also for the soul of their patients. Doctors are in the best position to promote Islamic lifestyle, which is the best protection against the diseases brought on by our modern lifestyles. This refers to diseases of all kinds--- physical, mental, and spiritual, although the last one is not always recognized. Today we are more concerned about the hardening of the arteries than we are about the hardening of the hearts. But Muslim physicians can furnish treatments for both.

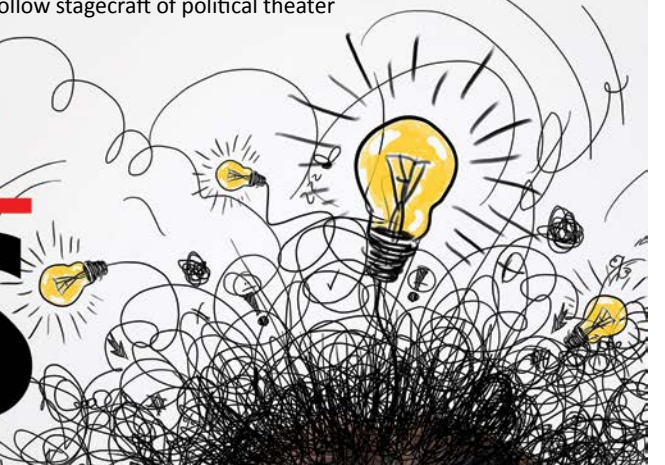
And there are things they can do collectively.

We should set our sights at building hospital like the ones that were built in Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Aleppo, Marrakech etc. Then we won't have to tell the world that we built great hospitals in the past. Even the Western doctors will be going to Karachi, Kuala Lumpur or Jeddah, or wherever to learn something about Islamic medicine because their patients will be going there anyway.

Following are excerpts from Chris Hedges' book, Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle, a scathing critique of the American culture, which is fast consuming the cultures of other societies too.

1. "We've bought into the idea that education is about training and "success", defined monetarily, rather than learning to think critically and to challenge. We should not forget that the true purpose of education is to make minds, not careers. A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, which fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death."
2. "A culture that does not grasp the vital interplay between morality and power, which mistakes management techniques for wisdom, and fails to understand that the measure of a civilization is its compassion, not its speed or ability to consume, condemns itself to death."
3. "Sadism dominates the culture. It runs like an electric current through reality television and trash-talk programs, is at the core of pornography, and fuels the compliant, corporate collective. Corporatism is about crushing the capacity for moral choice and diminishing the individual to force him or her into an ostensibly harmonious collective. This hypermasculinity has its logical fruition in Abu Ghraib, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and our lack of compassion for our homeless, our poor, the mentally ill, the unemployed, and the sick. ... We accept the system handed to us and seek to find a comfortable place within it. We retreat into the narrow, confined ghettos created for us and shut our eyes to the deadly superstructure of the corporate state."
4. "The words consent of the governed have become an empty phrase. Our textbooks on political science and economics are obsolete. Our nation has been hijacked by oligarchs, corporations, and a narrow, selfish, political, and economic elite, a small and privileged group that governs, and often steals, on behalf of moneyed interests. This elite, in the name of patriotism and democracy, in the name of all the values that were once part of the American system and defined the Protestant work ethic, has systematically destroyed our manufacturing sector, looted the treasury, corrupted our democracy, and trashed the financial system. During this plundering we remained passive, mesmerized by the enticing shadows on the wall, assured our tickets to success, prosperity, and happiness were waiting around the corner."
5. "Washington has become our Versailles. We are ruled, entertained, and informed by courtiers -- and the media has evolved into a class of courtiers. The Democrats, like the Republicans, are mostly courtiers. Our pundits and experts, at least those with prominent public platforms, are courtiers. We are captivated by the hollow stagecraft of political theater as we are ruthlessly stripped of power. It is smoke and mirrors, tricks and con games, and the purpose behind it is deception."

CRITICAL NOTES



THE LADY KNIGHT

By Salwa Siddiqua Abbasi

Kaan Ya Makaan, Fee Qadeem Al-Zamaan...There was a Place, in Times of Old...

A little distance away from Madina, a few forts were scattered about, where the women and children of the Muslim warriors took refuge. This was the time of Ghazawa Al-Khandaq/Al-Ahzab also known as the Battle of Trench/Factions.

To their dismay Muslims learnt that their sworn ally Bani Quraiza, the Israelite tribe had damaged the long-standing alliance with the Quresh and their allies. Consequently, Muslims were being attacked from both inside and outside of Madina. They did their best to safeguard their homes and families. A great trench was dug between Madina and its approaching enemies. Women and children were given protection in the fort.

In one of these forts, lived Safiya bint Abd Al-Muttalib known for her valiance and decisiveness. She was the aunt of Prophet Muhammad and was an elderly lady. Once, despite her weathering limbs she was patrolling relentlessly at the top of the fort. She was watching over her people like a lioness and at the same time keeping an eye on the warriors at a distance to see how the Muslims were faring. Suddenly her glance went down at the base of the fort spotting a Bani Quraiza warrior circling the fort looking for a sign of weak security so that he could breach the walls separating him from the susceptible Muslim lot. Little did he know about Safiya who was curling her lips in disgust amazed by his audacity knowing that he was a foresworn alliance-breaker. This man had crept away from war to attack the women and children. Such cowardice was condescending for Safiya to digest and she turned to Hassan bin Thabit, the only man in the fort who was a poet. She told him of the cowardly warrior and said, "Go kill him." Hassan bin Sabit looked at Safiya speechlessly and expressed his helplessness as he was not a warrior.

"I'm a poet! If I were capable of that, I would be out there fighting!" he said.

Without any delay she took hold of the nearest wooden pole to use as a weapon and rushed down to kill the man who was hoping to prey on the women and children. She was exasperated to have been cornered like that. Maybe somewhere at the back of her mind

Beautiful Life



she thought she was heading towards her own death but she brushed the idea out of her head and continued descending the fort. It took her a single deep breath and a few swings before she bludgeoned her enemy who fell on the ground, shocked and lifeless.

Imagine the strength a middle aged woman carried in her heart. Shaking with adrenaline she re-entered the fort leaving the dead body where it lay. The women stared at her in approbation. She had killed someone for the first time. She couldn't imagine what he could have done had she not made this move. She let go of all the thoughts once again and resumed her position. If she had to protect the people with vigilance once again, she told herself, so be it.

Source:
Al-Dhahabi, A. (2004 AD). سير أعلام النبلاء [Biographies of Notable Nobles]. Beirut: International Ideas Home. Volume 2. Page 2034-2035

Power Cement pg55



THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

By Dr Asad Zaman

For thousands of years, the question of existence of God has occupied a central place in philosophy and theology, because how we structure our lives depends so heavily on the answer. The existence of God provides meaning to life, and assurance that despite the rough and tumble we see in the world around us, perfect justice and mercy will prevail in the end. God watches over us, and we are responsible for our actions. On the other hand, the stark consequences of non-existence of God have been vividly portrayed by arch-atheist Bertrand Russell: “(Man’s) origin, his hopes and fears, ... are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system ... only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.”

Despite the central importance of this question, it became marginalized in the 20th century due to a

major philosophical blunder. The philosophy of Logical Positivism, which became widely accepted, denied any meaning to sentences containing unobservables, and hence discussions of the existence of God fell out of fashion. Logical Positivism had a spectacular crash when it was realized that electrons, gravity, magnetic forces, etc. etc. were all unobservable but nonetheless meaningfully discussed by physicists. So in recent times, the question of God’s existence has once again become a topic of interest. Here we briefly review a few of the main arguments.

New life has been breathed into the ancient cosmological argument which asks “Who created the universe?” Atheists used to answer by saying that the universe has always been there, and so it was not created. An alternative answer was “Who created God?” However, these answers are no longer tenable in the light of the discovery that the universe came into existence with the Big Bang. The creation of the universe requires a Creator. At the same time, since God is eternal and uncreated, He does not require a cause. Current atheist response to this is that they do not know who created the universe; they think God is not a plausible answer, and they are confident that they will find a better answer in due time. Thus, atheists have *faith* that they will find some answer to a question which seems virtually impossible to resolve, at the same time they ridicule those who have *faith* in God for believing in the unseen; but they have even greater belief in their finding currently unseen reasons for existence of life!

Another major argument for the existence of God says that if we find a perfectly designed watch with beautifully inter-meshing gears, which work together in perfect harmony, we can infer the existence of a watchmaker. Similarly, our beautifully designed universe proves the existence of a Designer. Even atheists like Stephen Hawking have acknowledged that “The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron. ... The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.” The simplest life form, the cell, is so fantastically complicated that there is universal agreement that it could not have emerged through chance, as an accidental collocation of atoms. Currently, scientists do not have a clue as to how the cell could have originated without having been created by a designer. Similarly, confirmed atheist Crick, who discovered the double helix structure of DNA, was led to remark that ‘An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going.’ Crick’s fierce commitment to atheism, combined with his realization that life was too complex to have originated spontaneously, led him to the bizarre theory of “panspermia”: apparently advanced extra-terrestrial alien life forms with a desire to propagate life sent out rocket ships with microbes

to provide seeds for the origins of life on our planet! If the heart does not want to believe, no amount of evidence for creation can convince us.

Let us, therefore turn to the ‘reasons of the heart’ which provide evidence for God. Throughout the ages, the primary reason for people coming to believe in God has been the trustworthy character of the Messengers ﷺ . As the Quran states, our Prophet ﷺ was sent as a Mercy for all Mankind, and it was his kindness which attracted people towards him; his generosity, humility, benevolence and compassion, even in the face of terrible persecution, draws no parallels in history. Today, as always, people will be attracted to religion if they see the effects of these beliefs in the form of an extra-ordinary character. To the extent, that religion fosters character and creates spiritual growth, hearts will be attracted towards it. It is a sad truth that one can find extremes of corruption among people who are supposed to be religious leaders in most faith traditions. To counter this, one can easily find equally corrupt people among the secular leaders, who have bombed and killed millions of innocent civilians for the sake of profits, politics and power. In fact, the amount of killing / torture done by secular atheists is far greater than the amount of killing done by religious fanatics; forty million in Iraq, and many million others all over the world; these are like the ocean compared with a drop. However, this is hardly an argument to favor religion. More convincing for modern secular mindsets are the arguments of Aldous Huxley in *The Perennial Philosophy*. Huxley shows that transformational experiences of unity and harmony with all of the Creation and God are the common goals and outcomes of all spiritual traditions.

Awareness of thousands of cases of medical malpractice does not prevent us from seeking medical help. In an exactly similar fashion, malpractice of religion should not prevent us from pursuing our own quest for answers. Perhaps the best way to find convincing evidence for God is to ask Him directly for guidance, as Ibrahim ﷺ did. It is a promise of God to those who seek Him with sincerity and humility that He will surely respond to their prayer in a way which will eliminate all doubt.

Postscript

A theist would be more than willing to make a prayer of guidance from God. Even an agnostic might consider the same. But would an ardent atheist consider doing so when he doesn’t believe in God in the first place?

The answer to this is simple. Can anyone be 100% sure of the non-existence of God? Empirical evidence shows that when people feel 100% sure of something, they are right about 80% of the time; this is called the over-confidence bias.

An important issue in making this prayer for guidance is that you have to offer something; if God gives you a signal, then you will do something meaningful and thorny in return. Anyone who seriously makes this prayer with sufficient intensity will see results, it is guaranteed.

When the Heart was at Peace

By Mariam Majid Sharif

Several months have passed since that April morning. All this time, I have kept my feelings and thoughts close to me as if guarding a deep secret, not revealing them, not speaking of them for fear of losing what they stand for to me. In the long hours of the night, they bring me peace for I let myself be overwhelmed by them as they envelope me and I find myself free from the demons that plague my mind throughout the day.

It was no different from what so many others go through after graduation. After spending days and nights on literature books and never ending reading, I was suddenly facing a blank road ahead. Everyone around me was occupied with one thing or the other and I was trying to find a madrassah where I could actually fit in. My days were a series of hours where I would either reminisce over the university time or talk to friends who were either still studying or teaching. Except that wasn't where I stopped. Having an overthinking mind can sometimes be a definite pain. I thought. I reflected. I pondered. I obsessed. I thought over the emptiness my life had become, the abyss I was buried into; the nonexistence of light in whatever I desperately reached for and the sheer reality of the fact that I had lost my ability to write.

I detested meeting people because the incessant questioning would always include queries about what I was currently doing and what are my plans for the future. Then one day, I realized even if I can't reach for peace in my prayers there is still one thing left. I asked my dad to take me for *Umrah*. I still marvel over how that worked out. There were troubles, problems and issues. There were lengthy, excruciating hours of the desperate search for accommodation and flight availability yet it was Allah's decree and then 11th April came. You know the feeling when sometimes everything seems to be going smoothly and you can't just stop going all apprehensive that it could all go wrong any moment? From the moment we left the house (half enshrouded by darkness; courtesy, load-shedding and a crashed UPS) I was constantly hounded by fears and apprehensions and what ifs. Did it seem like a dream? It was that and more. To accept and acknowledge the blessings Allah was granting us was overwhelming to say the least. And so our journey started, beginning from Islamabad, through Dubai and then finally reaching Jeddah.

The walk towards *Al Haram* for Umrah was when it started to sink in that after six years of waiting we

were finally here again. It was the same place but, oh, how the heart had changed. How different was the impact from the previous visits. How more meaningful was the realization of '*Alhamdulillah*, I am finally here'. However, the entire tranquil, serene feeling was marred by the construction that was then in progress. Only a part of one side of the *Kaaba* was visible from where we were to enter the *Mutaaf*. Apart from that, the *Tawaaf* very quickly became more of an exercise to 'avoid collisions with males and selfie-takers' rather than being an *Ibadah*. May Allah guide us all towards the straight path and grant us spirituality in our *ibadah*. Ameen.

Words have always mattered to me. Words and feelings and labelling the latter. Even after the Umrah, I wasn't exactly able to reconcile myself to the sheer reality of actually being there, at least not until the *Maghreb Salah* a day after we had reached. As the *Iqamah* drew to a conclusion, Imam Sudais's recitation resonated within the *Haram* courtyard as a cool breeze engulfed us, finally pulling me out of my trance and bringing me to the real world. *Alhamdulillah*, was all I could say and think after that.

Five days are nothing. No sooner had we gotten adjusted to the routine than we found ourselves on the road to *Medinah*. Needless to say, the heart felt deprived. The momentary tranquility the spirit had experienced was snatched away from it within the span of days. But there was hope, hope for making the next few days more meaningful. In *Makkah* there is this awe borne out of the majesty and grandeur enshrouding the *Haram* region. The focus is primarily on doing *Tawaaf* or at the very least, simply sitting and looking at the *Kaaba* and all these related acts instill this overwhelming feeling inside you that compels you to just simply continue without stopping. In *Medinah*, the moment you close your eyes, it is as if you can picture the region during the Prophet's time and

Words have always mattered to me. Words and feelings and labelling the latter. Even after the Umrah, I wasn't exactly able to reconcile myself to the sheer reality of actually being there, at least not until the *Maghreb Salah* a day after we had reached. As the *Iqamah* drew to a conclusion, Imam Sudais's recitation resonated within the *Haram* courtyard as a cool breeze engulfed us, finally pulling me out of my trance and bringing me to the real world. *Alhamdulillah*, was all I could say and think after that.



that's when you are overcome with the veneration the city has and deserves, that it's impossible not to thank Allah over and over again for granting you the honor of visiting the Prophet's city despite the mortifying state of our *Aa'maal*. Even merely sitting outside the doors of the *Masjid* is peaceful, not just ambience-wise but the way it affects your heart. Peace, Serenity, Tranquility. One can keep looking up words but still be unable to actually put a name to the atmosphere that the reverent place has. Moreover, what I still find unforgettable is how there are no boundaries between people. Under the vast label of the Muslim *Ummah*, the world congregates and you are not only praying with Arabs, but Indonesians,

South Africans, Indians and several other nationalities. I still recall how once in a desperate move to pray *Nafal Rakats* in *Riyadh-ul-Jannah*, I got backhanded by a Pakistani lady whom I was planning to request to let me pray in her place and then pulled to an empty space earlier occupied by an Indian. Somehow, one always ends up being pleasantly surprised. Eight days. Eight memorable days that have left an indelible mark on me. I can describe each day with precision but what I am finding impossible to do is to describe feelings. How it was and what I felt but then I believe, that's for the heart and the self to know. While and after we were in *Madinah*, I heard this Urdu *Nasheed* about *Madinah* which was beautiful, something that I could feel despite my inability to comprehend all the words and its concluding lines were so apt in their content that I kept listening to them until it was as if the lines had been engraved inside my head.

ایک خواب سے گویا اٹھا کچھ ایسی سکینٹ طاری تھی
بیرت سے ان آنکھوں کو اپنی مٹائی کیلٹائی کیا

(It seemed as if I had woken up from a dream, such was the tranquility that had engulfed me. All I did was to rub my eyes in amazement)

Allah has blessed my family with the opportunity for Umrah several times but this return was unlike the ones I had before. Maybe because this trip was borne out of *Talab* more than the past visits or maybe it was just the state of the heart and mind that received the impact of those places. I don't know. But to me, it was as if I was constantly accompanied by the apprehension that my memories would simply slip through, leaving me without the solace they have been giving me and abandoning me to the emptiness that had so recently been an integral part of me. I held on to them fast, like a child clutches its favorite toy while sleeping. But it's not only the memories. Since the re-

turn, I've often reflected over why I feel so different this time; why I keep glancing back. Surprisingly, I got my answer from another Umrah account (*The Slave Returns but the Heart Stays*) printed in the June/July 2016 issue of *The Intellect*. In an overpowering recounting that literally pulls at the heartstrings, *Zawjah Ammar* puts into words what I've been attempting to label for the past three months, '*I left my heart back at a place which felt like my home away from home.*'

When I read that, I knew I had finally placed a label on the turbulence I have been experiencing since the end of April. May Allah grant us all the opportunity to visit the *Haramain*, *Insha'Allah*.

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By Dr. Asad Zaman

The Truth about the **Enlightenment**

In continuation of the previous part, Part 3 of the article, "Is Development Accumulation of Wealth?" dispels further conventional 'myths' in explaining the reasons behind real development and advancement, by replacing these with alternative, eye-opening "truths"...

European Conquest of the Globe

All of us who have had a western education directly or indirectly have absorbed certain key tenets of the dominant western world view. Biases in western accounts have now received wide recognition, and

are labeled as "Eurocentric" ideas. We will label these ideas as 'myths', even though they are perfectly valid and justifiable within their own context. This is because these ideas are extremely harmful to any genuine prospects for development for Muslim countries. We will focus on three central ideas, even though there are many other candidates, and many other ways of classification.

Myth 4: The Enlightenment

European historians tell us that the history of mankind begins in the 1650's in Europe with the Enlighten-

ment. Before this, mankind as a whole was immature and ignorant, in a childlike state - the Dark Ages. The Age of Reason lifted the curtains of darkness in Europe, where mankind first learned how to think for themselves, and to understand the world around us. As a result, science, technology, democracy, and virtually all good things known to mankind were invented in Europe. Blaut (2000) has documented that popular and influential thinkers and historians like Weber, White, Mann, Hall, and Landes agree on the idea that "Europeans were uniquely capable of creative and scientific thought." Muslims see no reason to doubt these accounts, since Europeans are manifestly wealthier and more powerful than the rest of the world, and evidence of their technological prowess surrounds us in our daily lives, in the form of countless inventions. Believing these Eurocentric accounts of history leads to a serious inferiority complex. Salman Rushdie provides a perfect illustration: in his book called "Shame" he denigrates his family. In "Midnight's Children," he denigrates his country and culture holding them up to public ridicule. In "Satanic Verses" he denigrates his religion and heritage. Cure for the "Rushdie Complex" lies in learning more about the Enlightenment and its consequences.

Truth 4: All Humans Participated in Creation of History

There are many ways to get a broader perspective on history, which provides deeper insights. It is impossible to cover these perspectives within a short essay, so we highlight some aspects of crucial importance for our present purposes. In the first subsection below, we discuss how the Eurocentric account seriously neglects the contributions of other civilizations. The second subsection highlights the Islamic contribution, as especially relevant to the project of re-writing history from an Islamic point of view.

Global Systems: World Systems point of view developed by Immanuel Wallerstein and others stresses the linkages between all the human beings living on the planet, as well as the linkages between the artificially separated spheres of knowledge of society, politics, and economy. The one-sided Eurocentric view can be replaced by a much richer picture of the joint contributions of all humans in weaving the complex fabric of the current society.

In *The Theft of History*, Jack Goody (2012) documents how Europeans borrowed and adopted inventions of other civilizations, and claimed them as their own. The Incas were master botanists and created maize by cultivating and cross breeding inedible and poisonous plants. Their inventions continue to feed the planet. Four great Chinese inventions of compass, gunpowder, paper, and printing have had a lasting impact on human history. Indian contributions in arithmetic, philosophy, manufacture of sugar, have been largely forgotten. Muslim discoveries in cartography, heliocentric astronomy, physics, optics, pharmacopeia and

surgery have been largely suppressed, and European imitators have been put forth as originators of these ideas in current histories.

Islam sparks the Re-naissance: The Crusades created hostility to Islam and Muslims in Europe which has survived to this day. The recent western wars against "terrorism" - modern euphemism for Islam - have been recognized and named as the modern crusades by many. While one dimension of these wars is the physical combat, perhaps the more important dimension is the ideological warfare against Islam, which creates doubts, shame, and loss of self-confidence among Muslims. Part of an antidote is to re-emphasize the Islamic contributions to the world. This involves reclaiming the treasures stolen via the *Theft of History* mentioned earlier. It also involves remembering the forgotten heritage of the Islamic civilization. A clue as to how this might be done is furnished by the following passage, taken from an introduction to Graham (2006)

In the Middle Ages, while Europe was mired in superstition and feudal chaos, Baghdad was the intellectual center of the world. It was there that an army of translators and scholars took the wisdom of the Greeks and combined it with their own cultural traditions to create a scientific, mathematical and philosophical golden age. Their accomplishments were staggering, including the development of modern medicine, chemistry, and algebra. Muslim scientists correctly calculated the circumference of the globe in the tenth century. Muslim musicians introduced the guitar and musical notation to the Europe. And Muslim philosophers invented the scientific method and paved the way for the Enlightenment. At the dawn of the Renaissance, Christian Europe was wearing Persian clothes, singing Arab songs, reading Spanish Muslim philosophy and eating off Mamluk Turkish brassware. This is the story of how Muslims taught Europe to live well and think clearly. It is the story of how Islam created the Modern World.


Morgan (2008) highlights Muslim contributions which most Muslims do not know today, as they have forgotten their heritage. Among the greatest inventions of the Muslims are ideas which have become marginalized due to the excessive worship of gold which has become the religion of the economists. These are the ideas of equality of human beings, brotherhood, and mutual responsibility. In "The Enlightenment Quran", Ziad El-Marsafy (2009) has documented the influence of the Quran on Rousseau and Voltaire, as well as

other Enlightenment thinkers. The slogans of "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality" of the French Revolution derive from the Quran. These ideas were implemented in Muslim societies in the form of equal opportunities for education and free health care by *waqf* institutions in a way that has only recently been matched in some, but not all, Western societies. After observing the senseless slaughter of millions in the two world wars, historian Toynbee (1960) was moved to say: "The extinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding moral achievements of Islam. In the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue ... of tolerance and peace"

Myth 5: The White Man's Burden

By the late nineteenth century, people of European origins had control of about 90% of the planet Earth. Why and how did this happen? The answer to this question is crucial to understanding the world we live in today. The standard story, which is widely believed, ties in to the Enlightenment myth. After having been given the gifts of reason, science, technology, democracy, and other treasures, the Europeans looked around them and saw that the entire world was in

The science of hadith is one of the sciences with which Allah ﷻ has inspired this *Ummah* - right at the beginning and immediately after the death of its Prophet (peace and blessings upon him) - He inspired them to be concerned about it, and to struggle in the path of memorising them, recording, transmitting and publishing them, labouring to receive them and gather them together, competing with each other in being exact and precise about them, concerned about all the sciences and arts connected with them.



darkness. Ignorance, cruelty, superstition, despotism, and all kinds of evil were spread throughout the world. The Europeans had grown up, while all other human beings were in the stage of infancy. Like Prometheus, they felt burdened by the responsibility of taking these gifts of the gods to the entire mankind. Out of this sense of responsibility, they sacrificed the comforts and luxuries of their homes, and undertook the hardships of strenuous journeys to all corners of the globe in a noble effort to spread these benefits to all of mankind. Ignorant barbarians who resisted these advances were eliminated in the "savage wars" to bring peace and enlightenment to the planet.

Truth 5: Loot and Pillage of the World

The announced purposes of the US Invasion of Iraq were to free the populace from the clutches of an evil dictator, to bring them democracy and good governance, as well as to protect the world from Weapons of Mass Destruction in the hands of a madman. Senior White House officials like Henry Kissinger, Paul O'Neill and Alan Greenspan have stated that the Iraq war was planned for the control of the vast oil reserves of Iraq;

see Weissman (2007) and Cohn (2013). The discrepancy between the announced goals, widely believed by the USA public, and the (not-so) hidden agenda corresponds closely to the discrepancy between the story of the White Man's Burden and the real objectives of colonization of the globe.

Finding overland trade routes blocked by powerful Islamic empires, Europeans sought sea routes to fabled lands of India, China and others. However, these European explorers were indifferent between murder, theft, piracy and trade as means to make a profit. When Columbus failed to find the gold he had promised to the financiers of his voyage, he captured slaves instead. When the East India trading company conquered Bengal using treachery and a hired army, they imposed heavy taxes leading to death by starvation of 10 million Bengalis. To bring them the benefits of European civilization, Belgian King Leopold taught the Congolese Western work ethics: the Belgians took wives and children hostage and kept them in subhuman conditions until their African husbands fulfilled their quotas harvesting rubber. Soldiers would torture, chop off hands, or kill the inhabitants if they faltered in their work. This resulted in the deaths of 4 to 8 million Africans in the Belgian Congo. This dirty work

was advertised as a Christian charity for the benefit of the Congolese natives by the Belgians.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Bengal was the most prosperous region in the area, with abundant crops and advanced industries in textile and steel. Following the British conquest at Plassey, within a period of ten years, rapacious tax policies led to death by starvation of more than one third of the population. The annual transfers of about 30 million pounds from India to the Empire, and prohibitions of development of industry, led to de-industrialization, and repeated famines in a once prosperous land. In real terms, revenues extracted from British India were far larger than those provided by the US to Europe under the Marshall Plan, which permitted European Economies to recover from the complete devastation created by World War II.

Similarly exploitation of Africa, led to complete destruction of several native empires and cultures. To the misfortune of Africa, they had no natural resources. As a result, the human beings were made the objects of a devastating slave trade. Numbers are in

dispute, but over 10 million human beings were transported to serve as slaves in Europe and America. It is estimated that for every person transported, about 10 died in the brutal processes of capture and transport. The social fabric of the cultures that constituted Africa was destroyed beyond the hope of reconstitution. Because materialists cannot see social capital, thousands of pages of contemporary journals research the mystery of exceedingly poor rates of economic development in Africa, without touching on its root causes. Similar fates met the indigenous peoples of Latin America, North America and Australia. The world was enslaved to serve as a production factory for European capitalists. For those with a conscience, the White Man's burden of guilt is heavy. Herder (2010, p 206) writes, ironically, that:

Savages all over the world will become ripe for conversion as they grow fonder of our brandy and our luxuries; they will soon approach our culture and become, so help me God, good, strong and happy men, just like us! ... In Europe slavery has been abolished Nonetheless this did not prevent our raiding three other continents for slaves, trading in them, banishing them to silver mines and sugar plantations. But then, they are not European, not Christian! What is more, we get silver, precious stones, spices, sugar and - secret diseases, in return.

Lesson 5: The Ethics of Imperialists

We have all absorbed the dominant myth, that we are now modern and "civilized" and far more advanced than any other civilizations of the past. It is time to take a deep breath and consider an alternative, frightening possibility. Temporarily forget current history and world situation and make your mind a blank slate. Consider for a moment, a situation where barbarians, like the Huns, and Visigoths and Mongols, who razed cities and enjoyed building mountains of skulls of innocent victims, take over the world. What kind of ethics would they promote? What would be their philosophy of life? In other words, what is the opposite of civilization?

A key element in a barbarian philosophy would be the law of the jungle: might makes right. If we can get it by force, then it is rightfully ours. Another element would be lack of compassion and sympathy; we cannot afford to feel pity for the victims of our loot and pillage. Destroying cities and nations, and killing millions of innocents should not disturb our conscience or cause loss of sleep. Another element would be that life is about gathering wealth and enjoying the luxuries and privileges that it entails, without any regard for others. Similarly, the philosophies of cut-throat

competition and let the best man win would be a good match for a barbarian life style. Betrayal of oaths of fidelity to intimate relations would be a joking matter, rather than a serious breach of integrity. Barbarian children would play games teaching them to shoot and kill and enjoy watching blood, gore and guts spill out of random strangers, or even friends. Movies and media would teach people to enjoy sadism and senseless violence, and to regard assassins, thieves, prostitutes and other highly immoral characters as normal human beings.

Now open your eyes and consider the world we live in. The world leader USA felt no compunction in launching the Iraq war under false pretenses which has resulted in the loss of more than a million civilian lives. Deliberate destruction of Iraqi infrastructure including hospitals, schools, and water/sanitation works, ruining the lives of millions of Iraqis, was carried out to create profitable business opportunities for the "re-construction" of Iraq. US Secretary Madeleine Albright stated on public TV that death of half a million Iraqi children was a price worth paying for achievement of US policy objectives. In the first lecture on Justice to the future world leaders in a Harvard undergraduate course, Professor Michael Sandel (2013) constructs complex artificial situations where it might be necessary to do murder or cannibalism for the greater good. He states that moral questions have been argued for thousands of years without reaching any resolution. The goal of the lecture is to show that there are no absolute standards for morality, and evil acts may be justified if they lead to larger benefits. This is essential training for future leaders who may have to condemn millions of innocents to violent deaths, in pursuit of higher goals like corporate profits. Dominant economic theories state that the object of life is to maximize consumption, without any regard for others. Thus we live in a world where 25,000 people die every day from diseases related to malnutrition, when the money spent on fighting obesity and obesity related diseases would be enough to end hunger on the planet. PhD economists learn to value academic careers, but do not learn anything about how to help improve the lives of the impoverished bottom billion. Leading textbooks in growth theory state that if we maximize the wealth for society as a whole, it will automatically trickle down to the poor - even though this has been repeatedly disproven empirically. Dominant economic theories hold that the best way to organize business is via cut-throat competition, as this will lead to maximum efficiency. Ruthless exploitation of the world by multinationals unrestrained by ethical concerns has brought the world to the brink of environmental catastrophe. These theories are currently being taught at leading universities throughout the world. The lessons thus absorbed create the world we see around us.

An essential element of the struggle for good must be to replace these barbaric theories by more humane alternatives. *Continued.....*

MUHARRAM BETWEEN FACT AND FICTION

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مدظلہ العالی

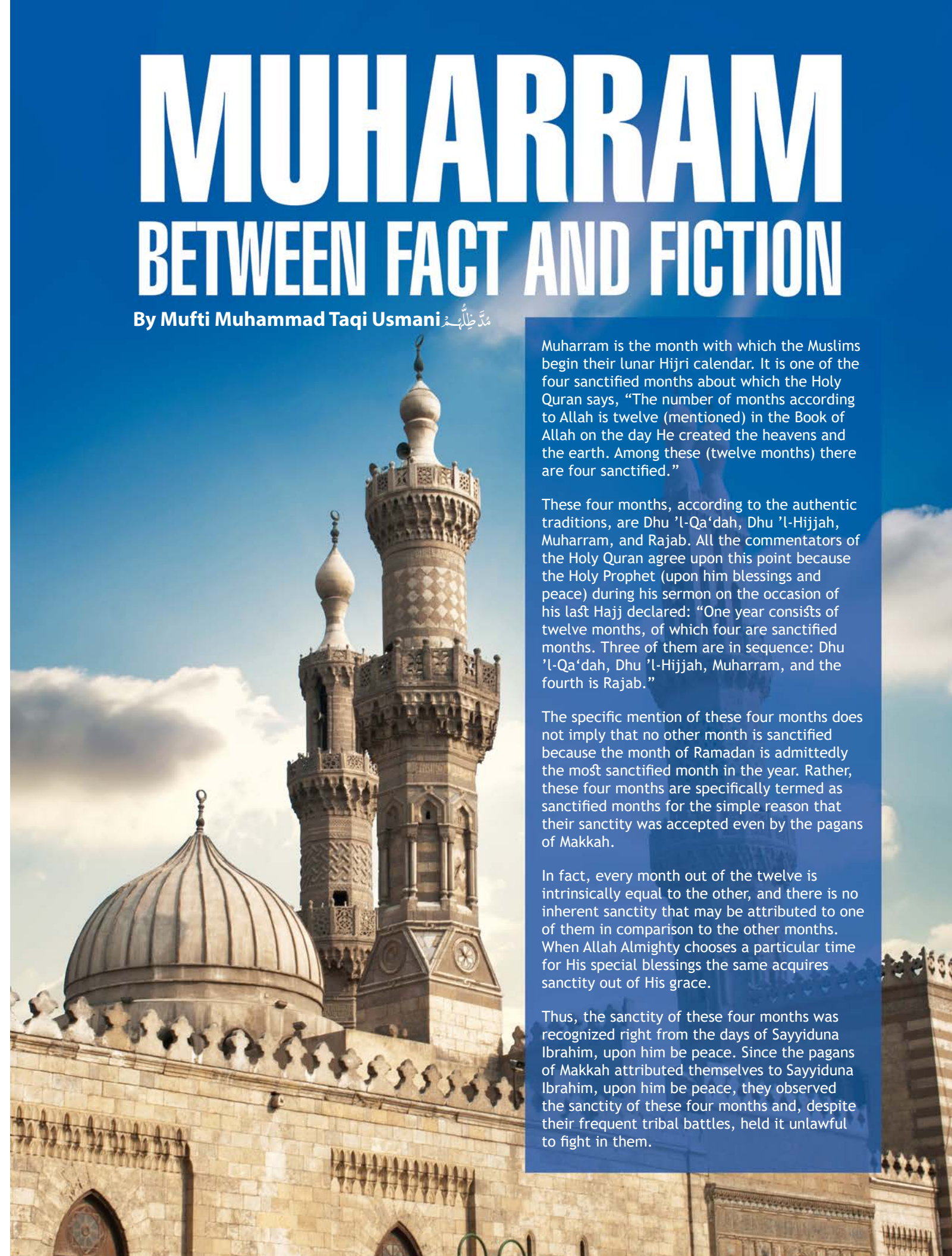
Muharram is the month with which the Muslims begin their lunar Hijri calendar. It is one of the four sanctified months about which the Holy Quran says, "The number of months according to Allah is twelve (mentioned) in the Book of Allah on the day He created the heavens and the earth. Among these (twelve months) there are four sanctified."

These four months, according to the authentic traditions, are Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, Dhu 'l-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab. All the commentators of the Holy Quran agree upon this point because the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) during his sermon on the occasion of his last Hajj declared: "One year consists of twelve months, of which four are sanctified months. Three of them are in sequence: Dhu 'l-Qa'dah, Dhu 'l-Hijjah, Muharram, and the fourth is Rajab."

The specific mention of these four months does not imply that no other month is sanctified because the month of Ramadan is admittedly the most sanctified month in the year. Rather, these four months are specifically termed as sanctified months for the simple reason that their sanctity was accepted even by the pagans of Makkah.

In fact, every month out of the twelve is intrinsically equal to the other, and there is no inherent sanctity that may be attributed to one of them in comparison to the other months. When Allah Almighty chooses a particular time for His special blessings the same acquires sanctity out of His grace.

Thus, the sanctity of these four months was recognized right from the days of Sayyiduna Ibrahim, upon him be peace. Since the pagans of Makkah attributed themselves to Sayyiduna Ibrahim, upon him be peace, they observed the sanctity of these four months and, despite their frequent tribal battles, held it unlawful to fight in them.



In the *Shari'ah* of our Noble Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, the sanctity of the months was upheld and the Holy Quran referred to them as the "sanctified months" (*ashhur hurum*).

Muharram has certain other characteristics special to it, which are specified below.

Fasting During the Month

The Noble Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, has said: "The best fasts after the fasts of Ramadan are those of the month of Muharram."

Although the fasts of the month of Muharram are not obligatory, yet one who fasts in these days out of his own will is entitled to a great reward by Allah Almighty.

The hadith cited above signifies that the fasts of the month of Muharram are the most rewarding of

"When the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, came to Madinah, he fasted on the day of 'Ashura and directed the people to fast. But when the fasts of Ramadan were made obligatory, the obligation of fasting was confined to Ramadan and the obligatory nature of the fast of 'Ashura was abandoned. Whoever so desires should fast on it and whoever so likes can avoid fasting on it" (Abu Dawud).

However, the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) used to fast on the day of 'Ashura even after the fasting of Ramadan was made obligatory. 'Abdullah ibn Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, reports that the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, preferred the fast of 'Ashura over the fasts of other days and preferred the fasts of Ramadan over the fast of 'Ashura (Bukhari and Muslim).

In short, it is established through a number of authentic hadith that fasting on the day of 'Ashura is a *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and

"When the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, came to Madinah, he fasted on the day of 'Ashura and directed the people to fast. But when the fasts of Ramadan were made obligatory, the obligation of fasting was confined to Ramadan and the obligatory nature of the fast of 'Ashura was abandoned. Whoever so desires should fast on it and whoever so likes can avoid fasting on it" (Abu Dawud).



the *nafl* (or voluntary) fasts. The hadith does not mean that the award promised for fasting in Muharram can be achieved only by fasting for the entire month. On the contrary, each fast during this month has merit. Therefore, one should avail of each opportunity as much as he can.

The Day of 'Ashura

Although Muharram is a sanctified month as a whole, the 10th day of Muharram is the most sacred of all its days. This day is called 'Ashurah. According to the noble Companion Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him), when the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) migrated to Madinah he found that the Jews of Madinah used to fast on the 10th day of Muharram. They said that it was the day on which the Holy Prophet Musa (Moses), upon him be peace, and his followers crossed the Red Sea miraculously and the Pharaoh was drowned in its waters. On hearing this from the Jews, the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, said, "We are certainly closer to Musa (upon him be peace) than you," and directed the Muslims to fast on the day of 'Ashura (Abu Dawud).

It is also reported in a number of authentic traditions that in the beginning, fasting on the day of 'Ashura was obligatory upon Muslims. It was only later that the fasts of Ramadan were made obligatory and the fast on the day of 'Ashura was made optional. Sayyidah 'A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, has said:

peace, and makes one entitled to a great reward.

According to another hadith, it is more advisable that the fast of 'Ashura either be preceded or followed by another fast. This means that one should fast two days: the 9th and 10th of Muharram, or the 10th and 11th. The reason for this additional fast as mentioned by the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, is that the Jews used to fast on the day of 'Ashura alone, and the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) wanted to distinguish between the Muslim method of fasting and that of the Jews. Therefore, he advised the Muslims to add another fast to that of 'Ashura.

Some traditions signify another feature of the day of 'Ashura. According to these traditions, one should be more generous to his family by providing more food to them on this day as compared to other days. These traditions are not rigorously authentic according to the principles of hadith criticism. Yet, some scholars like Bayhaqi and Ibn Hibban have accepted them as reliable.

What is mentioned above is all that is supported through authentic sources about 'Ashura.

Misconceptions and Baseless Traditions

There are some legends and misconceptions with regard to 'Ashura that have managed to find their way into the minds of the uneducated and have no support

from authentic Islamic sources. Some very common misconceptions amongst them include the idea that it is the day on which Adam (upon him be peace) was created. Or that it is the day when Ibrahim (upon him be peace) was born. Or that it is the day when Allah accepted the repentance of Sayyiduna Adam, upon him be peace. Or that it is the day when Qiyamah (Doomsday) will take place. Or, lastly, that whoever takes a bath on the day of 'Ashura will never get ill. All these and other similar whims and fancies are totally baseless and the traditions referred to in this respect are not worthy of any credit.

Some people take it as a sunnah to prepare a particular type of meal on the day of 'Ashura. This practice, too, has no basis in the authentic Islamic sources.

Some other people attribute the sanctity of 'Ashura to the martyrdom of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, during his battle with the Syrian army. No doubt, the martyrdom of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, is one of the most tragic episodes of our history. Yet, the sanctity of 'Ashura cannot be ascribed to this event for the simple reason that the sanctity of 'Ashura was established during the days of the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, much earlier than the birth of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him. On the contrary, it is one of the merits of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, that his martyrdom took place on the day of 'Ashura.

Another misconception about the month of Muharram is the idea that it is an evil or unlucky month because Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, was killed in it. It is due to this misconception that people avoid holding marriage ceremonies in the month of Muharram. This is again a baseless concept, which is contrary to the express teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah. If the death of an eminent person on a particular day renders that day unlucky for all times to come, one can hardly find a day of the year free from this bad luck because every day is associated with the demise of some eminent person. The Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet, upon

him blessings and peace, have liberated us from such superstitious beliefs.

Lamentations and Mourning

Another wrong practice related to this month is to hold lamentation and mourning ceremonies in the memory of the martyrdom of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him. As mentioned earlier, the event of Karbala is one of the most tragic events of our history, but the Holy Prophet (upon him blessings and peace) has forbidden us from holding mourning ceremonies on the death of any person. The people of Jahiliyyah (the days of ignorance) used to mourn their deceased through loud lamentations, tearing their clothes, and beating their cheeks and chests. The Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, prevented the Muslims from it all and directed them to observe patience by exclaiming "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un" (We are indeed Allah's and to Him shall we return). A number of authentic hadiths are available on the subject. To quote only one of them:

"He is not from us who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes, and cries in the manner of the people of Jahiliyyah (the Age of Ignorance)" (Sahih Bukhari).

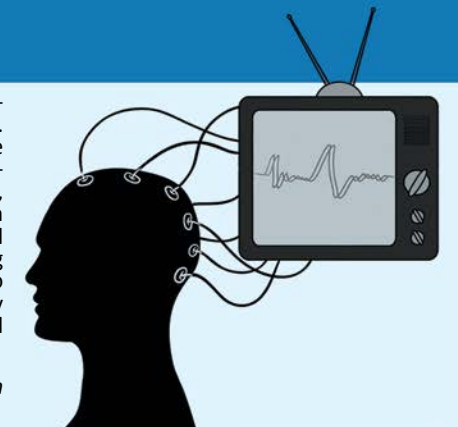
All the authentic jurists are unanimous on the point that the mourning of this type is impermissible. Even Sayyiduna Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him) shortly before his demise had advised his beloved sister Sayyidah Zaynab (may Allah be pleased with her) not to mourn over his death in this manner. He said, "My dear sister! I swear upon you that in case I die you shall not tear your clothes, nor scratch your face, nor curse anyone for me or pray for your death." (al-Kamil, Ibn al-Athir 4:24)

It is evident from this advice of Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him, that this type of mourning was condemned by even the same blessed person for the memory of whom these mourning ceremonies are held. Every Muslim should avoid this practice and abide by the teachings of the Holy Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, and his beloved grandchild Sayyiduna Husayn, may Allah be pleased with him.

The Elite Media

"The major media-particularly, the elite media that set the agenda that others generally follow-are corporations "selling" privileged audiences to other businesses. It would hardly come as a surprise if the picture of the world they present were to reflect the perspectives and interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product. Concentration of ownership of the media is high and increasing. Furthermore, those who occupy managerial positions in the media, or gain status within them as commentators, belong to the same privileged elites, and might be expected to share the perceptions, aspirations, and attitudes of their associates, reflecting their own class interests as well. Journalists entering the system are unlikely to make their way unless they conform to these ideological pressures, generally by internalizing the values; it is not easy to say one thing and believe another, and those who fail to conform will tend to be weeded out by familiar mechanisms."

- From 'Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies' by Noam Chomsky





LOYALTY TO OUR HOMELAND- A RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION

14th August 2016,
Dar ul Uloom Karachi

Speech by **By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani** مدظلہ
Translation: Umm e Tahir

Assalam o Alaikum wa Rehmatullah e wa Barakatuhu,

We are gathered here today to show gratitude to Allah ﷻ for this great blessing, “Pakistan”. Sixty-nine years ago, in the midst of extremely deplorable conditions, the Muslims of the Subcontinent were granted a vast, rich and fertile land at the foot of the Himalayas. Even though the non-Islamic powers were against this idea, by the help of the Almighty ﷻ, a new state was carved out on the map of the world; a nation that was created essentially, in the name of Islam.

Many of the veterans who belong to that period, would remember the slogans which were voiced passionately in those days like “Pakistan ka matlab kia? La illa’ha illAllah” in 1944 (“What does Pakistan denote? That there is no God but Allah ﷻ” and “Ban ke rahay ga Pakistan”, “Lay kay rahain gay Pakistan” (“Pakistan will surely be created”; ‘we shall certainly take Pakistan) and by His great benevolence, it did come into being.

It is part of a Muslim’s obligatory duties, that after loyalty to Allah ﷻ and the Prophet ﷺ, he should

be loyal to his homeland, whose bounties he enjoys. Especially so, when its naissance had been for the differentiation between Islam and *Kufr* (infidelity) and its foundation was laid in the name of Islam.

Thus, it is our religious obligation to be loyal to Pakistan, and to work diligently towards the progress of this nation.

Our talented students have shown their patriotism through their performances here today. I congratulate them and all the staff members who supervised the programs.

On this occasion, we must not forget one important thing: that at the birth of Pakistan and even before its creation, anti-Pakistan propagandas were rife. It was said that even if Pakistan came into existence, it would be a dysfunctional state; ‘Destitute Pakistan’, ‘Hungry Pakistan’ were the slogans raised against it.

I recall that when I migrated to Pakistan along with my father *Maulana Mufti Shafi Usmani* Sb. r, the authorities at the border check-post would always be on the lookout for fine cloth amongst people’s belongings for confiscation - to give practical shape to their slogan of ‘Destitute Pakistan’. So, though my father was very worried about his books, the border guards showed no interest in them; instead, they were out to take possession of fine cloth in whoever’s baggage they could find it!

Yet, by the Grace of Allah ﷻ, with little or no resources, this country appeared on the map of the world.

At that time, we hardly had any assets; sticks from trees were used in place of pens and offices were housed in open barracks; there was no equipment or furniture. Such were the conditions in which our homeland started its journey and the cries of ‘Destitute Pakistan’, ‘Hungry Pakistan’ were buried forever!

However, the propaganda against Pakistan continues even today.....it is badmouthed by people before Muslims of other countries and there is no end to maligning campaigns against it. And sadly enough, many Pakistanis living within and outside the country, frequently voice grievances against it. It is said that Pakistan is insecure, it is unsafe; it is not truly Islamic; it has very high inflation and so on.

But let me emphasize to you all, and I say this with full conviction, that despite all of these failings, problems and issues that we see prevalent in Pakistan today, this country is still the most ‘Islamic’, most stable and most beneficial country for the Muslims of the world.

Alhamdulillah, I’ve had the opportunity to visit almost all Islamic countries of the world and to closely observe their systems and societies. And I reiterate with full conviction that there is no country more benefi-

cial for Muslims all over the world like Pakistan.

The constitution of no other Muslim country (including Saudi Arabia) categorically declares in its ‘Objectives Resolution’ that Sovereignty belongs to Allah ﷻ alone and that all rules and regulations must comply with this basic principle (*Shariah*) and be guided by it.

It is also an exceptional right given to the people of Pakistan that any ordinary citizen can appeal to the court for the abolishment and change of any law that he may think is contradictory to the teachings of *Shariah*.

It is unfortunate though, that this very beneficial right stipulated by law, has not been exercised often or fully utilized by not only the Government but also citizens and even the *Ulema* community.

Those people who insist that Pakistan cannot be made to conform to Islamic laws without taking up arms are thus totally wrong in their propaganda. There are peaceful and nonviolent means available e.g. in the form of the law just described.

I have served for seventeen years in the Federal *Shariah* Court and the Supreme Court Appellate Bench, and *Alhamdulillah*, during this time we amended more than 200 laws to bring them into conformity with Islam through the court. But it is also a sad fact that no application was filed under this law for amendment of any clause by our *Deeni* circles, even though, I made earnest requests to them time and again to make use of this beneficial clause.

It is also said often that Pakistan is an expensive country. But if you compare Pakistan’s inflation rate with those of other comparable countries, it is even now one of the lowest.

In addition, Pakistanis enjoy the freedom of expression and speech unlike any other Muslim country’s citizens, where one cannot air one’s views as per one’s conscience without fear of reprisals.

So we all must first be grateful to Allah ﷻ for this great blessing bestowed upon us in the form of Pakistan and an important part of showing this gratefulness is not to spread despair amongst people and instead show them courage and hope.

Each individual should play his role in his own field and sphere by working with sincerity, loyalty, diligence and honesty keeping in mind that serving this country is actually a service to Islam, which in turn is a great *Sadqa-e-Ja’aria*. *InshAllah* this will lead to Pakistan’s progress and development and just like Allah ﷻ has averted many disasters from Pakistan in the past, He will continue to bless us in the future as well.

The founder of Dar-ul-Uloom Karachi, *Maulana Mufti Shafi Usmani* Sb. r not only took active part in Paki-

stan's freedom struggle but also made great sacrifices for it. And after Pakistan's creation, he, along with Allama Shabir Usmani Sb r, Maulana Zafar Usmani Sb. r and other scholars, played an important role in getting the Objectives Resolution accepted, which formed a basis for Pakistan's Islamic constitution.

That is why, Mufti Shafi Sb r did not lay the foundation of Dar-ul-Uloom just to fulfill the formality of forming a *Madrasa*, but in fact, his main aim was to prepare individuals who could help in guiding the nation not only through religious learning but also by diligently serving in different spheres of life through expertise gained in contemporary subjects.

Keeping this central objective in mind, we see today that a number of different institutions function inside Dar-ul-Uloom Karachi and students are enrolled in the Dars-e-Nizami and other programs, the Madrasatul Bannat, the Hira Foundation school (which has

mashAllah achieved a 100% result in their first sitting at O' Level examinations) etc.

May Allah c shower His blessings upon them all and accept their efforts, *Ameen* and may we be able to play that role for the building of this nation, which is expected of us.

We should be thankful to Allah c for all His blessings. Please remember, that it is nothing but Satan misguiding us, when we think that one institution or one individual can't make a difference. If we work hard we can bring about a definite change in society. One lamp lights up many others.

Let us thus pray to Allah c to lead us on to the right path and keep us firm in our efforts and; May Allah c grant great prosperity, stability and progress to Pakistan and give us the *taufeeq* to serve this nation as we ought to serve it and as it truly deserves. *Ameen*.

Burger Shack

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Traditional Islamic Seminaries

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته عليه has written regarding his journey to Baghdad:

"Baghdad is that city which for centuries had been at the center of the Islamic world. The mere sight of this city reminds one of the glorious days of the Abbāsi khilāfat. Upon reaching Baghdad I enquired whether there were any Madāris (seminaries) present in which Islamic knowledge is imparted in accordance with the ways of the pious predecessors. I was informed that all such Madāris had now been converted into schools and universities. Now, the knowledge of Deen can only be attained from university faculties, such places wherein Islam is taught as mere theory, similar to ancient philosophy. Islam can neither be seen in the lives of the students nor in the Ustādhs (teachers). Forget bring religious scholars, on seeing their appearance, one wonders if they are even Muslim.

"This is just like how orientalisists study Islam today, in the universities of America, Canada, and Europe. If you read their books and articles you will come across the names of such books that many of our Ulamā have never even heard about. It seems as if deep tahqīq (research) is being made. But [sadly], in spite of swimming in the ocean of Islamic knowledge from morning till evening, they return dry as bone. No effect of what they rigorously study can be seen in their lives. The soul of this knowledge has been destroyed. "

Mufti Taqi Uthmani thereafter asked if they could at least direct him to an Ālim (scholar) of the old school of thought, so that he could present himself at his service. He was directed to a Masjid close to the tomb of Shaykh `Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlani r, in which was a Maktab. Here he met an old pious-looking man. Mufti Taqi Usmani described his meeting with him in the following words:

"On seeing him, I felt as if I was in the presence of a pious Allah-fearing Ālim. He was sitting on a straw mat, dressed in coarse clothing, and eating dry bread. The light of the Sharī`ah could be discerned on his forehead.

"After making salaam, he enquired regarding my name and the place from which I had come. He also asked about the condition of the Madāris of our country, their syllabus, and the manner in which the kitābs (books) are taught. Tears flowed from his eyes as I mentioned the names of the kitābs found in the Dars-e-Nizami syllabus [the syllabus used by Islamic seminaries across the Indian subcontinent].

He asked, "Are these kitābs still being taught!?"

"I replied in the affirmative. He then explained, "Today, we have been deprived of even hearing the names of these kitābs. These kitābs create Allah-conscious men, they create true Muslims. In our country these books are no longer taught. I beg you to convey this message of mine to the Ulamā and the masses of your country, that for the sake of Allah subhāna wa ta`ālā, they should bear everything but should never allow the destruction of such Madāris wherein these kitābs are taught!" "

The enemies of Islam are fully conscious of the fact that as long as these simple Mawlānas, sitting on straw mats, are present in society, they cannot remove Imān (faith) from the hearts of the Muslims. Therefore the enemies of Islam are making all out effort to remove these Madāris.

Courtesy: ilmgate.org

c	(SWT)	c	(SWT)
g	(SAW)	g	(SAW)
m	(AS)	m	(AS)
h	(RAU)	h	(RAU)
i	(RAM)	i	(RAM)
j	(RAA)	j	(RAA)
r	(RH)	r	(RH)
مَدَنِيَّة	(MDM)	مَدَنِيَّة	(MDM)
سَمْعَانَ	(HAF)	سَمْعَانَ	(HAF)

Meat One

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