

Vol 7 / Issue 12 / Oct-Nov 2017

The Intellect

Re-awakening to the
ideals of a Blessed Life

Al Quran
Surah Nisa – Part 5

Al Hadith
Sincerity in Action and
Single-Minded Devotion to Allah

The Awakening
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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

In history lessons at school we read the story of how a single, distressed Muslim lady's cry on the shores of Debal, prompted decisive action from Muhammad Bin Qasim, which eventually led to the conquest of Sindh.

Fast-forward to present times:

- Nearly one million Rohingya Muslims have fled Myanmar due to widespread persecution since the late 1970s; 87,000 fleeing between October 2016 and July 2017 alone.
- The recent violence that erupted on August 25, 2017 and resulted in a brutal crackdown has forced more than 300,000 Rohingyas to abandon their burning homes and take the dangerous sea route to Bangladesh and other countries.
- More than 1000 of them have been killed mercilessly.

(Source: Al-Jazeera)

- Those of the Rohingyas who have reached the shores of Cox's Bazaar and other cities, relate tales of horror and persecution; the final nail in the coffin being the increasing numbers maimed by landmines in their flight from the hellish fate back 'home'.

There are more than a billion Muslims living in 50+ Muslim-majority countries today. A number of these boast strong armies. Can not one leader from a single Muslim country at least attempt to emulate Muhammad Bin Qasim? Cannot some Muslims go beyond words to help out their brothers in faith?

Even pondering over this ongoing tragedy is painful.....our *Cover Story*, by Khalid Baig, says it all.

The urge and will of a *Mo'min* to help other Muslims in need, and its practical manifestation through action, has its seeds in the heart. That is why it is said that outward religiosity has to be accompanied by inner change. The two complement each other; sometimes one takes root first and at other times, the other. But where should a *Saalik* (seeker of the path) begin?

The starting point is true *tauba*, and a sincere determination to rectify past misdeeds. There is no ending point. It is 'work-in-progress'; an ongoing effort till one's last breath.



Though self-reformation can take many forms, but an area which needs dire attention these days is *Mu'ashrat* (our mutual/social dealings and communications). So where exactly are we lacking and are there areas we never even thought are a part of mu'ashrat? Read *Did You Know This?* in *Spirituality Matters*.

Intricately related to Batini (internal) metamorphosis is our vigilant control of the tongue – an organ with which other body parts plead each morning for guarded behavior; because if it falters, the rest follow suit. That is why Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddiq رضي الله عنه was seen holding and rebuking it and that is why the Messenger (SallAllahu alayhi wassalam) of Allah ﷻ, while bidding farewell to Sayyidina Ma'az ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه, asked him to be vigilant about it, as we will be held accountable for its utterances. This very topic is dealt with in *The Awakening*.

In *Parenting*, this time we have included two pieces, both very pertinent: *Cell-Phone Parenting* talks about how mobiles have completely taken over our lives as parents and *The Troubling Toddlers* outlines our dealing with kids in this very challenging age group.

Muharram being here, let us bid adieu with the vow of steering clear of all sorts of *bid'aat* and superstitions and let us fast on the 9th and 10th or the 10th and 11th of the month at least, to gain eternal Bitcoins!

Wassalam,
Zawjah Farid



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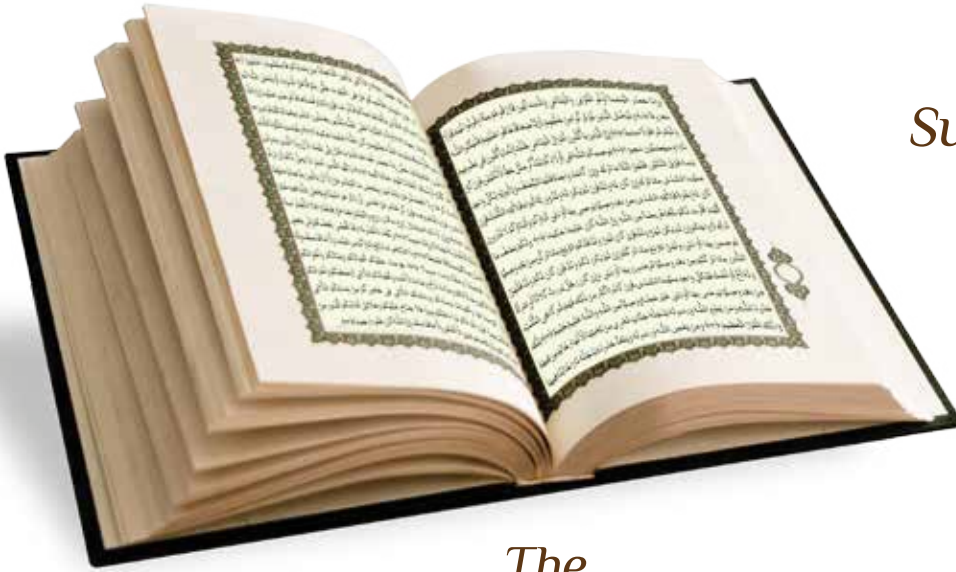


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Surah An-Nisa'

Translation with Arabic Text

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا نُهَيْتُمْ عَنْهُ نَكْفُرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

31. If you abstain from the major (sins) out of what you have been forbidden from, We shall write off your minor sins, and shall admit you to a noble entrance.

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۗ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبُوا وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَتَبْنَ ۗ وَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٢﴾

32. Do not covet something in which Allah has made some of you superior to others. For men there is a share of what they earned , and for women , a share of what they earned .(17)

Pray to Allah for His Grace. Surely,Allah is All-Aware of every thing.

وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوَالِي مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدْتُمْ أَيْمَانَكُمْ فَأْتَوْهُمْ نَصِيبتَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

33. For everyone We have made heirs in what the parents and the nearest of kin have left.As for those with whom you have made a pledge, give them their shares. (18) Surely, Allah is Witness over everything.

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ ۗ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۗ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ فَإِنْ أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

34. Men are caretakers of women, since Allah has made some of them excel the others, and because of the wealth they have spent . So, the righteous women are obedient, (and) guard (the property and honor of their husbands) in (their) absence with the protection given by Allah . As for women of whom you fear rebellion , convince them, and leave them apart in beds, and beat them. (19) Then, if they obey you, do not seek a way against them. Surely, Allah is the Highest , the Greatest.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَابْعَثُوا حَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِنْ أَهْلِهَا ۗ إِنْ يُرِيدَا إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقِ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

35. If you fear a split between them (the spouses), send one arbitrator from his people and one from her people. If they desire to set things right, Allah shall bring about harmony between them . Surely , Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَيَالِ الَّذِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْأَجْنَبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ
بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٦﴾

36. Worship Allah, and do not associate with Him anything, and be good to parents and to kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the close neighbor and the distant neighbor and the companion at your side (20) and the wayfarer and to those (slaves who are) owned by you. Surely, Allah does not like those who are arrogant, proud,

الَّذِينَ يَبْخَلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿٣٧﴾

37. __those who are miserly and bid people to be miserly, and conceal what Allah has given them of His grace--- and We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment,

وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَنْ يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا فَسَاءَ قَرِينًا ﴿٣٨﴾

38. And (for) those who spend their wealth only to show people, and do not believe in Allah and the Last Day. Anyone for whom satan is companion, evil he is as a companion.

وَمَاذَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٩﴾

39. What harm was there for them if they had believed in Allah and the Last Day, and and spent out of what Allah had given them. Allah knows all about them.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يَضَاعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

40. Surely, Allah does not wrong (anyone), even to the measure of a particle. If it is a good deed, He multiplies it, and gives a great reward out of His Own pleasure.

Explanation

17. Allah has created different people with different qualities according to His wisdom. There are some qualities that are beyond one's power and control, like manhood, physical health, strength, beauty, intelligence etc. These are the types of qualities that the verse forbids to covet. If someone is superior to another in some of these qualities, and the latter yearns to be like the former or even superior to him, it will result in nothing but remorse and jealousy. He must think that Allah has given to him some qualities that are missing in the other. However, there are some qualities that may be earned through one's effort and endeavor, like being pious, honest, hardworking, knowledgeable, generous, and so on. One should not only long for such qualities, but should make his best efforts to achieve them. The first sentence of the verse refers to the first kind of qualities, while the second sentence relates to the second kind. It is reported that some women in the days of the Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed the desire that if they had been men, they too would have been able to participate in jihad actively. Obviously, this desire related to the first kind. The present verse forbade them from such thoughts, but it clarified that their being female does not deprive them of the fruits of their good deeds. They will be entitled to what they earned, both in this world and in the hereafter.

18. When the sahabah ؓ of the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madinah, most of their relatives remained in Makkah. Therefore, it was ordained for some time that on the demise of an emigrant, his ally from Ansar (supporters) of madinah would be his legal heir. The present verse has abrogated that rule. It says that after the detailed law of inheritance laid down in verses 11 and 12 above, it is the parents and nearest of kin who will inherit the property of a deceased. However, if one, when entering into the fold of islam, has made a pledge with a muslim that they will inherit each other, then in the absence of any heir from the kinsmen, they may be regarded as the legal heirs of one another. The one who acquires the status of a legal heir through a pledge is termed as maual – muwalah.

19. These are three stages suggested for correcting the behavior of one's wife. When an earlier stage is sufficient, it is not allowed to resort to the next one. particularly, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has given clear directions about the third stage, (i.e. beating) that it should be the last resort in a very extreme situation. In a number of ahadith, he has condemned the practice of beating women. He is reported to have said, "Good people among you would never beat women." (Ruh-ul-Maani, from Baihaqi and Ibn Sa'd) No prophet has ever beaten a woman. Even in an extreme situation where the Holy Qur'an has allowed beating, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has, in its explanation, prohibited slapping on the face or any act that may leave a mark on the body.

20. This refers to a co-traveler, a person sitting on one's side in a gathering, or standing by him in a row etc. The verse signifies that one should have good and courteous behavior even with such a temporary neighbor or companion.

(Continued *insha'Allah*...)



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Sincerity in Action and Single-Minded Devotion to Allah

by Maulana Muhammad Manzoor No'mani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ



The moral guidance furnished to mankind by the sacred Prophet ﷺ attains fulfillment, in our humble view, in the teaching of *Ikhlas* (sincerity in action) and *Lillahiyat* (Single-minded devotion to Allah). Or in other words, sincerity and single-minded devotion to Allah mark the culminating lesson of the Book of Morality, and the highest stage of Moral and spiritual advancement.

What *Ikhlas* and *Lillahiyat* denote, in short, is that every good deed should be transformed for the sake of Allah for his propitiation, i.e., so that our Lord and Master might be pleased with us bestowed His good graces and we remained safe from His indignation.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has stressed that single-minded devotion is the most essential part – the inner reality – of all good and virtuous acts and behavior. Should the apparent good deeds and morals be bereft of the spirit of sincerity and soundness of intention and prompted by any other urge, desire or motive, apart from seeking Divine good pleasure and reward, such as, the earning name, they would carry no merit in the sight of Allah.

To put it differently, the countenance of the Lord and the reward of the Hereafter that are the real fruit and outcome of all good deeds and ought to be the chief aim and objective of all believing men and women are not gained simply on good-doing, but when these acts, also are performed with the intention of earning the favour of Allah and the reward of the Hereafter. It could, of course, not be otherwise, for do we not follow the same principle in our affairs? Suppose anyone serves us devotedly and does all sorts of things for our comfort, but somehow, we realize that there is no sincerity in his heart and his attachment and dutifulness are motivated by selfish desire, will it make a favourable impression on us? The same is the case with Allah with the added difference that while do not know what is hidden in the hearts, Allah is present everywhere, at once, and sees all things. Thus, He only accepts the deeds of bondsmen who perform good and virtuous acts for His sake and confers His blessings on them, and the full display of His mercy

and benevolence will take place in the Hereafter which is place of Final Requital. On the contrary, those who practice virtue and do good deeds to make a name or similar purpose may gain their objects in this world but they will remain deprived of the beneficence of the Lord and it will be made wholly manifest on the Last Day.

Of fundamental significance, in this regard, is the well-known saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "Actions are but judged according to the intentions." We have placed it at the head of the present book along with detailed explanatory note. It will be necessary to go over it here, once again, but a few other Traditions of like nature are reproduced below.

Allah Regards what Lies in the Hearts

(391/151) It is related by Abu Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Allah does not regard your fine visages or wealth, but of your hearts and deeds." [Muslim]

Commentary: It shows that Divine favour or acceptance does not depend on anyone's form and figure and wealth, but on the state of his heart and mind. Allah judges and requites only on the basis of our motives and intentions. In some other versions of the same Tradition, it is stated a little more candidly:

"Allah is regardful not of your form and figure and apparent deeds but of your hearts."

[Jam'a-ul-Fawayid, v.2, p.160]

It makes it abundantly clear that goodness or badness, and acceptability or otherwise of a deed is dependent on the intention, and however good and noble an act may apparently be, it is worthless in the judgement of the Lord if the heart is lacking in earnestness, and the aim wholly, in not His propitiation.

(Continued, insha'Allah...)

(Excerpted from 'Ma'arif ul Hadith', Maulana Muhammad Manzoor No'mani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ, published by Darul-Isha'at)

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Internet Purchases

By Mufti Taqi Usmani حفظہ اللہ

Q. My sheikh, Nuh Keller, has said, "If you want to know what your sheikh says about an economics issue, he says whatever Mufti Taqi Usmani says." So, I would like to know what Mufti Taqi Usmani (may Allah preserve him) says about Internet transactions. I have not found any discussion by him regarding such transactions, which are an extremely pressing issue in today's world. Are such transactions *halal*? There is no *majlis*. There is high risk of being cheated. Are there other concerns which may jeopardize the validity of such transactions? [Mostafa Azzam. Amman, Jordan.]

A. Buying and selling through Internet is not impermissible in itself. However, all the basic conditions for a valid sale must be present. Therefore, one cannot sell what he does not own and possess. If you have purchased some shares or any commodity through the Internet you cannot sell it unless you have taken its delivery in a manner that its risk has been transferred to you. After you have taken delivery you can sell it at any price you agree with your purchaser even though it is through the Internet.



Stories of Near-Death Experiences

Q. I wanted to know if it is all right to read and trust stories of people on the web who have had near death experiences (NDE). Can you recommend any safe site where one may read about such trustworthy experiences and take admonition from them? [Bilal Khaliq, Pakistan].

A. The following comments by Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in introduction to an article in Rabi-ul-Awwal 1422 (June 2001) issue of Albalagh Urdu answer the question.

"The most authentic means of learning about the life after death are Qur'an and Sunnah. What we learn from the Qur'an and Sunnah is true and correct and anything beyond that based on observations and experiences cannot be used as *hujjat* (argument). However if any such observation or experience is in accordance with anything described in Qur'an and Hadith then one should take admonition from it." [Translated by Khalid Baig]

That issue also contains an article reporting two such incidents experienced by the author Dr. Amjad Ali Jafferri. In addition, the Urdu book *Zikr-o-Fikr* by Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ contains some NDE stories.



Guarding the Tongue

By Maulana Abdus Sattar حفظه الله



وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّعْنَةِ مَغْرُؤُونَ

Surah Al-Muminun 23: 3

Significance of the 'Tongue'

Allah ﷻ has made up the human body with different types of organs, each having its own importance and significance. The eye, for example, is important in its own right - those without sight realise its worth; the ear has its own essentiality - those deprived of the power of hearing realise its value. Similarly, the tongue (power of speech) is also a great blessing of Allah ﷻ. The purpose of all these blessings is that they be used in a manner and for works that please Allah ﷻ.

All body parts have their own significance but two organs, the heart and the tongue, are such that if used for good, nothing can be better than these and if used for evil, nothing could be worse. A person moves into a life of purity from an impure way of living when he employs his tongue to proclaim the *kalimah*, even if he has spent a hundred years in infidelity. Though only words, their worth can be ascertained by the fact that this declaration of a single line washes away sins of a hundred years.

A Hadith relates that on Doomsday a person would have only this deed to put forth, i.e., the proclamation of the *Kalimah*, and when placed in his list of deeds, it alone would suffice for his salvation. This explains the value of these words.

The Ills of Misusing the Tongue

If, however, God forbid, this very tongue is used inappropriately, despite having neared paradise, a person may be thrown into the pit of hell.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Undoubtedly a person says something that pleases Allah ﷻ (i.e. states something with his tongue that makes Allah ﷻ happy) unknowingly (i.e. doesn't realize its importance while saying it) but Allah ﷻ elevates his rank in Jannah because of it. (In contrast, at times) words that are displeasing to Allah ﷻ escape a person's tongue; he says it in carelessness and they land him in hell" (Bukhari, Bab Hifz-Al-Lisan, Vol. 2, Pg.959).

Especially in these seditious times, when ignorance reigns and the ignorant are not ready to admit their lack of knowledge and understanding, the ill-use of this tongue can take one far away from Allah ﷻ. For elucidation, take an example: a person says to another, "this thing should be done in this manner as per the *Shariah*," and the other replies, "away with your *Shariah*!" (Nauzubillah), so the latter may have said it lightly, yet it pushes him out of Islam into infidelity. That is why misuse of one's tongue (even if one makes light of it) can change one's fortune: from proximity to *Jannah* to falling into *Jahannum*.

Salvation lies in Silence

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

“The one who remained quiet, succeeded”

(Mishkat, Bab Hifz Al-Lisan, Pg.413).

At another place the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

“The one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter, he should take care of his guest; and the one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter should not bother his neighbor; and the one who believes in Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter should say either good things or remain quiet.”

(Bukhari, Bab Man Kaana Youman Billah wal Yaum-ul-Aakhir, Vol.2, Pg. 889)

The Benefits of Keeping Quiet

A wise man once said that silence has seven thousand benefits which are gathered into seven sentences of a thousand benefits each:

- Silence is worship without labor
- Silence is beauty without jewelry
- Silence is awe without sultanate
- Silence is a fort without walls
- One who adopts silence is not forced to seek forgiveness from others
- Silence is comfort for the Karaman Katibeen (the Angels noting down our deeds)
- Silence is a screen for shortcomings

(Tanbeeh-ul-Ghafilien, Bab Hifz-Al-Lisaan, Pg.122)

Hazrat Luqman Hakeem used to say that I have only regretted when I spoke, never when I remained quiet.

Tongue - personality's representative

A person's tongue is his representative; his words reflect his inner being. That is why the Prophet ﷺ said:

“A true Momin does not rebuke, does not curse and does not say indecent or bad things.”

(Tirmidhi, Bab Ma'ja Fil-La'nah, Vol.2, Pg.18)

A Momin's personality is therefore preconditioned with the purity of his tongue because the tongue represents his inner being.

The Path to Salvation

Once Hazrat Uqba Bin Aamir ؓ came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said: “O Prophet of Allah! What is the path of salvation?” The Prophet ﷺ replied: “For one, don't leave your house unnecessarily,” i.e. spend most of your time at home.

Today's unaware man roams around everywhere in search of peace and comfort, yet, peace and comfort elude him. On the contrary, all he finds around him is darkness, obscurity and sedition. Even

though peace and comfort come from within, as ingrained in all humans by Allah ﷻ, yet this neglectful man seeks it externally. Resultantly, the more he looks for it, the more it escapes him.

Allah ﷻ has placed peace in everyone's heart. Why? Because it is the need of all humans, be they rich or poor, villagers or city dwellers, learned or ignorant. Allah ﷻ kept peace accessible, right within a human's heart, so that he can find it with ease. Today's man, however, doesn't find any peace and comfort at home.

Home, the Best Place of Refuge

The best place to safeguard oneself from all kinds of evils is one's home; it's a safe haven and the best place for refuge.

Allah ﷻ says:

وَاللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ بُيُوتِكُمْ سَكَنًا

“And Allah has made for you in your homes an abode (place of comfort)” (Surah An-Nahl 16: 80).

The fact is that when a person fails to acknowledge the blessings bestowed upon him by Allah ﷻ, then, at times, He takes away its benefits and the blessing remains with the person in appearance only. Along the same lines, when Allah's ﷻ disobedience is rampant at home, it only remains a house in shape and structure, i.e., in outward appearance, but its comfort and tranquility are taken away.

Value Blessings

Having a respectable source of income is a big blessing of Allah ﷻ but once it begins to cross over into His disobedience and breaking of His laws, then, it only outwardly appears as a blessing - its innate purpose is lost.

Similarly, when parents displease Allah ﷻ in grooming their kids, the façade of the blessing in the form of children is there, but in reality the children become a bane in their parents' life.

So what I am trying to instill is that the homes that were once a place of refuge for Muslims, where their faith was safe, where they safeguarded their beliefs, where they would find peace, tranquility and comfort after a day's hard work, are no longer those abodes of comfort. Now, a Muslim doesn't feel like staying at home; he wants to head out in search of recreation and leisure; he runs from pillar to post to find peace and comfort and to wash away his unhappiness. When he gets back home, his sadness, unease and discomfort multiply manifold; he realizes that his effort to relax was in vain; he returns in gloom and with a heavy heart.

(To be continued, insha'Allah)

BURMA

WHERE WERE THE MUSLIMS?

By Khalid Baig

Just imagine the year is 2100 CE, long after we are all dead. A school child is studying Muslim history of the last century. He finds extremely disturbing events that took place at the beginning of that century. More than a million people were persecuted with murders, expulsions from homes, and dishonoring of Muslim women. The most disturbing fact is that it was not that Muslim armies fought and lost; these were simply one-sided battles with armies of murderers, rapists, and thugs victimizing innocent and helpless people.

Where were the Muslims, he wonders. He finds that despite a successful effort by their adversaries to reduce their numbers through birth control, there were still 1.2 billion of them in the world. They were on all continents, in all countries. More than 50 countries in the world had majority Muslim populations and Muslim rulers. Did they have no armies or weapons? Actually, they had big armies and lots of weapons. One country was even a nuclear power and had successfully developed ballistic missiles that could hit faraway targets. Another Muslim country with a big army was just next to the troubled area. Some of the countries were very rich. Together, they had sufficient resources to stop the atrocities.

Maybe they did not get the news of the tragic events in time. Actually, they did have good communication equipment. Although they did not really control that equipment and those controlling it used to color and distort things a lot, yet Muslims everywhere were able to hear and see the horrors faced by their fellow brothers and sisters as they were taking place. *They saw their plight, they heard their cries, but not a soldier moved from the Muslim world to help those whose lives, honors, and properties were being trampled simply because they were Muslims.*



Maybe they had become totally indifferent to the plight of their fellows. Maybe they had lost their faith - no, lost their soul - so they just did not care. Actually, despite all their problems, individual Muslims all over the world were still deeply concerned about their fellows. They talked about them. They raised money for them. They prayed for them. They desperately petitioned whoever they thought could help.

Then what was happening? The student is perplexed. As he continues to dig through historical accounts, he finds something curious. As the massacres were continuing in Burma, a big army assembled by Saudi Arabia was busy attacking Muslims in Yemen.

Their enemies had certainly done their part in igniting the flames of those internecine wars, but they had tried that throughout history. The intriguing development that facilitated this fiasco was a strange new ideology that had gripped the Muslim world. The devastating ideology was that of the nation-state. According to it each Muslim country was an independent nation. And so they became. Each with its own national flag, national anthem, national days, and national interests. As Muslim governments took legitimacy from the concept of nation-state, they owed their allegiance to it also - when they did not owe their allegiance to their foreign masters. In the halls of power, the *ummah* died. Muslim leaders did talk about the *ummah* but only as a remote, ceremonial entity. The governments and armies were there to protect the national boundaries and national interests; nobody looked after the boundaries or interests of the *ummah*.

The murders, arsons, and dishonoring of women in Kashmir was not the concern of anyone except Pakistan. The brutalization of Muslims in Palestine was not the concern of anyone except the Palestinians themselves. Even Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa had become Palestinian problems. *Burma was responsibility of no one, because it did not exist at all on the new maps of national interests.*

It was a bizarre ideology, exported by the colonial powers so their hold would remain strong even after they had formally given up the colonies. But in those strange days people normally had one of two reactions to almost anything that came from their former colonial masters; they either welcomed it, thinking it would bring them progress and happiness, or they became resigned to it, thinking it inevitable. However, the ideology of nation-states was exactly opposed to the Islamic idea of one *ummah* and life was torn between the conflicting concepts. *Hajj* symbolized the dichotomy. It was the annual reminder that Muslims are one people, as believers from all over the world wore the same two-sheet dress, circumambulated the same Ka'ba, making the same commitment "O Allah ﷻ I am here". It had also been turned into a reminder of the most important belonging of a pilgrim: his passport. Without that certificate of belonging to a nation-state no one could perform *Hajj* or even move from one point to another in the sacred land.

The student finally understands the ideological trap that guaranteed the tragedies of Burma and Bosnia and Kosova and Iraq and Afghanistan and ... and... an endless list. But he cannot figure out why did Muslims of the period allow themselves to be so trapped. Did they not remember the Qur'anic declaration, "The Believers are but a Single Brotherhood." [Al-Hujarat, 49:10]. Did they not remember the Qur'anic command, "Hold fast together the Rope that Allah has extended for you and do not dispute among yourselves." [Aal-e-Imran, 3:103]. Did they not remember the Hadith, "Muslims are one body. If any part of the body is suffering the whole body feels the pain." Did they not know that the devastating idea of nation-states was actually the idea of creating permanent divisions in the *ummah*? What was going through their minds? Why did they allow themselves to be imprisoned in the cage of that stinking nationalism?

He gives up. History is so full of intrigues!

Two Weeks in the West

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مولانا محمد تقی عثمانی
Translated by Bint Akram

I had been away for almost a month and a half, and during this time, I travelled around nine countries including Qatar, Holland, Canada, America, West Indies, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Reunion and South Africa. I hope that my impressions of these travels and information about these countries would interest and benefit my readers.

I had to reach Canada and America in the second week of December after having spent two days in Qatar. On my way, for a day, I stayed in Amsterdam, a famous city in Holland, so I could save myself from the fatigue of such a long travel. It was an opportunity to visit this unique city of the world, which could be labelled as the city of canals. One could easily tour this city in a boat as the canals that emerged from River Amstel ran through the entire city. Many of its citizens had taken their permanent abodes in boats that were seen anchored in the canals.

After staying for thirty-two hours in Amsterdam, I travelled to North America, where I got a chance to spend a week in Toronto, and then New York, the largest cities in Canada and America, respectively. I had often been to America earlier as well, and since 1978 till date, the Muslim community there seemed

to have significantly progressed in terms of their living circumstances and activities. The number of Muslims, their religious activities, and the number of religious institutions was on the rise. Just two days before I reached Canada, the famous publication of California, *Los Angeles Times*, had already published a comprehensive survey report on the condition of Muslims in the West. The headline read that Islam was the fastest growing religion in the United States of America and Canada as compared to other religions. So far many estimates had been made with respect to the number of Muslims in the United States, and the number of Muslims was said to be somewhere between to six to eight million. *Los Angeles Times*, however, had reported that none of these estimates were based on scientific evidence. As per its own survey, the number of Muslims was only half a million. The report, however, clearly said that its findings only took into account those Muslims who regularly prayed in the American mosques. The researchers had approached the caretakers of around one-thousand-and-forty-six mosques in America to inquire about the number of people who regularly prayed over there. The findings revealed that, on an average, four-hundred-and-sixty-five people attended each mosque for regular prayers. The survey also stated that only ten percent of the entire population of Muslims prayed regularly in mosques; hence, the actual population of Muslims was no less than five million.



It does not seem correct to conclude that the ninety percent of the population that did not pray regularly in the mosques had completely forsaken its prayers. Actually in the US, the mosques are found to be at long distances, due to which it is not possible for everyone to reach a mosque for their prayers. Therefore, many Muslims choose to pray in their homes, and many have appointed certain prayer areas, which are not mosques as such, but people gather over there to pray in congregation.

The survey in *The Los Angeles Times* also stated that every year around one-hundred-and-twenty-thousand Muslims were being added to America's population; this number included the immigrants and also the locals who were accepting Islam. The report further claimed that if the number of Muslims continued to increase in the same manner, then, by the beginning of the next century, Muslims would outnumber the Jews, and Islam would become the second largest religion in America after Christianity.

Some Muslim circles in the US have questioned the authenticity of this particular survey of *The Los Angeles Times*. They claim that the survey does not show the actual number of Muslims in America, and that it is already greater than that of the Jews at present. Now, even if we consider the report of this particular publication to be true, the fact of the matter is, that the fast pace at which the number of Muslims in America is increasing, is enough to startle the Western media. The result of this growing number of Muslims is that in the previous century, almost in all parts of America, many grand mosques have been constructed, and a number of centers for religious education of children have also been made. In general, the number of Islamic centers has also been on the rise.

Now this was a report coming from a known publication. Coincidentally, just a year before this survey appeared, a famous English daily, *Times*, had also printed a comprehensive article on the spreading of Islam in the United Kingdom (November 09, 1993). The title of this article was, '*Why British Women are Turning to Islam*'. The piece also contained a subheading, '*Muslim Faith is winning Western admirers despite hostile media coverage*'. The interesting thing is that the majority

of these people who were converting comprise women. The paper further stated that even in the US, the number of women converting to Islam was four times greater than that of men. "It is even more ironic that most British converts should be women, given the widespread view in the west that Islam treats women poorly," the article said. It also expressed several views as to why Islam was becoming the fastest growing religion in the West. One of these views was that this happened particularly after the Salman Rushdie incident, after which many people started to study Islam seriously. Second, the Gulf War and the poor condition of Muslims in the war-torn Bosnia also helped develop a sentiment of sympathy towards Muslims. Moreover, the study of comparative religions had also been on the rise in the Western universities, as a result of which, many people embraced Islam. Apart from all this, the negative propaganda against Islam, and the portrayal of everything Islamic as being evil, by the British media also resulted in people turning towards Islam rather than moving away from it. In the conclusion, the newspaper wrote: "Westerners despairing of their own society - rising in crime, family breakdown, drugs and alcoholism - have come to admire the discipline and security of Islam."

To be continued, insha'Allah



Did You Know This?

By Zawjah Farid

Maulana Mufti Taqi Usmani's *اصلاحی خطبات* eighteen volumes of *Islahi Khutbat* are a treasure trove for both novices and the spiritually accomplished. The topics are varied and the issues addressed intriguingly fresh. One cannot but be startled by one's ignorance of a number of important but relatively lesser-known injunctions spelled out by Islam, especially in the branches pertaining to *mu'ashrat* (social etiquettes) and *mu'amalat* (mutual dealings and transactions).

Many principles related to the "rights of people" elucidated in *Islahi Khutbat* have been summarized into three volumes of *Huqooq-ul-Ibaad* by Maulana Ishaq Multani and a major chunk of this writing encompasses some pertinent points from its first volume *Huqooq-ul-Ibad aur Mua'malat*.

Appended below thus, is a revised extract (not exhaustive by any means) of 'ordinary'/ day-to-day things, the instructions pertaining to which are very important nevertheless, and go on to affirm the holistic nature of Islam:

- While visiting someone's place, causally looking

through or taking any of their personal items without their permission, as harmless and 'normal' as it may seem, is not allowed e.g. you are waiting for an acquaintance to show up, and you see a book with an inviting cover on their lounge table; simply picking it up to look through it, without first asking them, is not permitted.

- Similarly, taking something from a friend, sibling, spouse or even parents, if they are not willing to lend or gift it with an open heart, is not permitted. Acquiring anything in such a manner would be tantamount to coercing the other against their free will, because many a times people hand over things because they feel bound to do so and embarrassed if they don't, though inside their hearts they may be a bit reluctant to give it out. (The exception to this rule is if you are one hundred percent sure that you enjoy the kind of closeness with the other that he / she will actually be happy by giving it you!)
- (Attention ladies!) It is not allowed to haggle

unendingly with shopkeepers. If they finally agree to sell something at the price you desire, but one they were absolutely forced to fix, the item will not be *halal* for you!

On the flip side: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah ﷻ will forgive the sins of a person who agrees to take back something he has sold to his brother." (Hadith narrated by Sayyidina Abu Shareeh رضي الله عنه; *Tibrani*)

- Calling on someone at an odd time, whether in person or through telephone is another act we must be careful about. Disturbing people at rest time or turning up unannounced is unacceptable, leave alone nagging them by ringing the bell umpteen times till the door is opened or the phone is picked up. These things are unacceptable in Islam. In fact, we are told not to feel bad in returning home if the third bell remains unanswered.

(This would also apply by default to Whatsapp groups! Forwarding irrelevant messages and videos on a group that has over a hundred participants is akin to disturbing a hundred people in one go. What is worse is troubling Ulema / scholars unnecessarily, when we know well that their time is already constrained by public and personal engagements. As an example, Mufti Taqi Sb رحمته الله عليه relates how he once got a phone call from a gentleman in the middle of the night asking him the color of Ashab-e-Kahf's dog! Another time, after a bayan, he was left earnestly searching for his shoes when he had to catch a flight because someone, in an act of self-taught *taazeem*, had insisted on 'carrying them for him', despite his explicit instructions not to do so!)

- Leaving the toilet un-flushed is a *kabira gunah* (major sin) as it undoubtedly repulses the next user. (The ruling is drawn from the command that hurting the sentiments of another Muslim is a major sin).

In one of his travelogues, Maulana Taqi Sb رحمته الله عليه relates how a foreign lady kept standing outside a washroom in a stationary train for a long time, waiting to flush the toilet, because it was impermissible to do so while the train was at the platform. Only when the train started moving did she flush it and let another person use the washroom! These are traits that Muslims should

exhibit. In contrast, despite knowing that *cleanliness is half of faith*, it is most repulsive even to pass by public washrooms in a Muslim-majority country like Pakistan.

- Peeping into the neighbor's house, listening at key-holes or reading someone's private correspondence are also sins.
- There is nothing shameful in talking about 'inheritance' right after a person dies. In fact, Islam ordains us to divide the deceased person's possessions among the heirs as soon as a person dies i.e. right after the funeral rites. No one should term a person who proposes this as greedy or unashamed as he would be following the commandments of Allah ﷻ. Only timely distribution saves future disgruntling and fights. Plus it is the heirs' right.
- We all know that any earning that hinges on interest, bribery and the like is haram but do we also know that the specific part of the earning of a halal job which is spent on doing a private chore or conversing with friends over the phone is also *haram*?
- "Amanat" (trust) does not only refer to a valuable or other possession placed with you by someone for safekeeping. It refers to all shapes of trust e.g. as elucidated above, office timings are a trust. So anyone who does personal work during office time is doing *khayanah*. Similarly, official stationery such as pens, official notepads etc, if used for private work, or an office car used in a manner that is disallowed by the employer is also *khayanah*. Dishes and bowls borrowed from neighbors and books borrowed from friends cannot be used in a manner that is disliked or unapproved by the owner and are to be returned right after use; misuse of official medical facility, forging medical certificates to extend vacations, providing a character certificate to a little known person and adding credentials to unread books is also *haram*. Further, things said in a gathering are an *amanah* and so are secrets.
- Jumping over people's heads and trampling on their feet in order to get the best, front seat at a gathering is disallowed.
- Dirtying buses, thoroughfares, footpaths and flouting traffic rules is *wada khilafi*, a sign of