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RADIANT REALITY

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever.
Let us all follow him with utmost spirit.

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Question Answer



Question

I made a purchase online and my order did not arrive on time. I submitted a complaint to merchant for not receiving my order and they gave me a full refund for not receiving my order. After one month from submitting my complaint and receiving a full refund, my order was delivered to me. Can I keep my order and my refund?

Answer

In a sale transaction, if the seller fails to deliver the commodity to the buyer after mutually agreeing upon certain terms and conditions, the transaction terminates automatically and the seller will have to reimburse the buyer in full.

In an event where the commodity arrives later than the agreed upon date, the commodity will have to be returned to the seller.

However, the seller and buyer are at liberty to initiate a new transaction on the commodity of sale, if they wish to do so. In such a case, the matter may be resolved between the buyer and seller. (Badaai-us-Sanaai 5/238)

The same ruling will apply to any sales conducted online, or on eBay.

Hence, in the enquired situation, you cannot keep the commodity of sale without resolving the matter with the seller on eBay.com.

Mufti Ismael

Question

I have a few questions pertaining to having young kids in the masjid.

I understand it is nice that we bring our kids to the masjid so that they get used to the masjid environment especially in a Western country. But what happens to the salaah of the parent or the salaah of the musallees when their kid is either crying or running a muck due to not being attended to?

Would it be better if the parent stayed at home to take care of the child than to bring them to the masjid?

Also from what age should a parent start bring their child (male) to the masjid?

Answer

Generally, the Ulama advise the age of six or seven for bringing the child to the Masjid as this is the age when the child may be taught to understand the sanctity of the Masjid.

However, there are numerous Ahadith that show that even infants used to be brought to the Masjid and Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam would even shorten his Salaah due to the crying of infants. (Bukhari)

Similar are the Ahadith which show that Sayyiduna Hasan and Sayyiduna Husain Radhiyallahu Anhuma would climb on the back of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam dur-

ing him being the Imaam in Salaah. (Nasai)

Hence, it is not appropriate to impose an age restriction on children attending the Masjid.

However, what we can impose upon the parent/guardian, is that they take control of the children who they bring to the Masjid. They should take personal care of their children even if it means standing with them in the rear Saffs during Salaah.

If the parent/guardian refuses to look after their children and the children are causing a disturbance in the Masjid, then it is correct to disallow them into the Masjid.

Mufti Moosa

Question

Can I do a Nafl Tawaaf after the Tawaaf of Umrah and before the Sae' of Umrah? It is difficult to find place in the Mataaf for a Nafl Tawaaf with the construction in and around the Mataaf are

Answer

It is Sunnah to follow-up the Tawaaf of Umrah with the Sae' of Umrah without any delay. To delay the Sae' of Umrah by performing a Nafl Tawaaf after the Tawaaf of Umrah will be Makrooh. (Muallimul Hujjaaj 149)

As such, you will have to postpone the Nafl Tawaaf for a later stage and perform it on the Mataaf level or above it, whenever it is suitable.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

When performing Wajib or Nafl Tawaaf after completing the seventh circuit do I need to make the eight ISTILAM or just 7 ISLILAM?

Answer

It is Sunnah to commence and complete the Tawaaf with Istilaam. Hence, after completing the seventh circuit of Tawaaf, one will make Istilaam for the eighth time, whether one is in the state of Ihraam (i.e. one is doing the Tawaaf of Umrah/Hajj) or one is out of the state of Ihraam

(i.e. one is doing a Nafl Tawaaf). (Shaami 2/498)

Mufti Taahir

Question

I have been committing a major sin for the past seven years and I don't know how to stop. Every time I make taubah and promise never to do it again but I do. I hate myself for committing this sin. I read my 5 times Salaah, I read Quran every day, I make zikr every day, I go for 40 days every year but this one thing I cannot stop. I really want to. How can I stop? Will Allah forgive me? What can I do to make Allah happy with me and not angry with me?

Answer

It is in the nature of humankind to constantly slip and fall, to constantly err and sin. But it is the quality of the true Muslim that whenever he sins he makes Tawbah and tries to reform himself.

Consider a person whose occupation is working within a coal mine digging out coal through sweat and hard labour. At the end of every day, his body is blackened with soot from head to toe. Does he tell himself at the end of the day that I will be blackened again tomorrow so I don't have to wash off today's dirt and grime? No, he does not. Every evening, he bathes and cleans himself.

It is the same for us when we sin. The Believer cannot tolerate allowing the soot of sin to remain on his heart. So he washes it off with Tawbah.

Do not lose heart that you are unable to give up the sin. Rather, thank Allah that there are many who sin without remorse but Allah has blessed you with a remorseful heart that turns to Tawbah.

The addiction to a sin is like addiction to intoxicants. The main ingredient in kicking any addiction is WILLPOWER. It is difficult and it is a struggle, but it is a struggle that can be overcome. The key is to gradually wean yourself

off the sin. If it is done every few hours then strive to extend the hours between committing the sin. If it is done every few days then strive to extend the days between committing the sin. The hours will become days and days will become weeks and the weeks will become months until you are able to kick the sin out completely. Each step of progress is a milestone and a victory that you should celebrate and rejoice in. This will give you extra motivation to quit the sin. Even if it takes time to do, it's fine. Even if you falter and succumb to the sin again and again, do not give up. Do not give in to depression and weakness. That is what Shaytaan wants us to do. Pick yourself up, dust off the dirt with Tawbah and with renewed vigour continue your struggle. The main thing is that we must move forward and not backward.

Allah's door of forgiveness is always upon to us and Allah loves His servants who turn to Him in repentance. Sayyiduna Ans (Ra) said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (saws) saying, "Allah, the Exalted, has said:

"O son of Adam! I shall go on forgiving you so long as you pray to Me and aspire for My forgiveness whatever may be your sins. O son of Adam! I do not care even if your sins should pile up to the sky and should you beg pardon of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam! If you come to Me with sins as great as the earth and meet Me, not associating anything with Me in worship, I will certainly meet you with forgiveness as great as it." (At-Tirmidhi)

Mufti Moosa

Question

I own a supermarket, and many a times my customers give a few cents extra unknowingly to my cashiers at the till. At the end of the Month, this adds up to a large amount. Can I keep this money?

Answer

If it is found that the excess amount does not belong to the business and in fact, it belongs to the customers, then the customers will have to be located and the excess amount will have to be returned to them. If this is not possible, then the excess amount cannot be used or kept and will have to be dispensed of in charity.

It is not permissible to use the excess money without the permission and consent of the customers.

N.B. If a customer returns and the money has been dispensed in charity, the customer will have to still be reimbursed with the amount owed to him.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I have a cast over my arm after breaking a bone in my arm. What do I do in Wudhu? Do I wash the cast in Wudhu or leave it out?

Answer

It is not necessary to wash a cast placed on any of the organs during Wudhu/Ghusal. It will suffice for one to make Masah (passing of a wet hand) over the cast during Wudhu/Ghusal.

Masah of the cast will suffice only until such time that one recovers. Upon recovery, Masah will not suffice and washing of the organ during Wudhu/Ghusal will be necessary. (Shaami 1/278)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I am a housewife and I run an online store from home. Sometimes I have stock to supply my customers and sometimes I do not have stock. I know that I cannot sell stock that I do not own or stock that I do not possess. My customers know that often times I do not have stock and I source it for them. What is the correct way to go about it?

Answer

In the enquired situation, you may provide

the following two options to your customers purchasing from your online store:

Option 1: A sale of an item (In Stock/Possession – Bai’)

Option 2: A forward sale of an item (Out of Stock/Not in Possession- Salam)

In terms of option 1, it will not be permissible to sell an item which is not in stock/on hand or is not in your possession.

In terms of option 2, it will be permissible to offer a forward sale (Salam) if the item is not in stock/on hand or it is not in your possession.

A forward sale (Salam) refers to a sale whereby the seller undertakes to supply the buyer with specific items at a future date in exchange of an advanced price paid on spot.

This type of sale is subject to certain terms and conditions. By way of an example, if a seller sells bags on his online store and he does not have stock of it, he may post an advertisement on his online store stating that he does not have the item in his possession whilst also providing specifics of the item:

- (1) i.e. bags
- (2) type of the item i.e. backpack
- (3) quality of the item i.e. new
- (4) quantity of the item i.e. one
- (5) date of delivery of the item i.e. 30th of November 2017
- (6) the customer pays in full
- (7) the item can be sold on a deferred basis i.e. it is not gold or silver etc.

Based on the above specifications, it will be permissible to enter into a forward sale (Salam) transaction and the seller may source the item for the buyer. (Mukhtasarul-Qudoori 1/88)

Note: The above is a general guideline for conducting a forward sale (Salam). You may refer your case to a reliable Aalim for advice as each case may differ from the other.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question

I travel with a lift club daily. the lift club is

paid an x amount at the BEGINNING of the month.

1) Some months (e.g. January, June, July and December) i only travel 1 or 2 weeks out of the 4 weeks in the month with the lift club as it is the holidays and madrassah is closed. However, the lift club wants full payment for the month. Is this correct? can i pay her according to the number of days i will be travelling with her?

2) Some days the lift club is unable to pick me up. she does not arrange alternate transport nor refund me for those days. is this correct as i have paid in advance for the month ? (And it’s an added expense for me as i have to pay another lift club)

Answer

1) It is the general practice of lift clubs to charge a monthly fee irrespective of the actual days that they work. This is permissible to do. If you accept this agreement then you will have to pay the monthly fee even if the days are less.

2) It is the duty of the lift club to be present on every school/Madrasah day. If they are unavailable, it is their duty to either provide alternate arrangements or refund the money for the absent day/s. It is not permissible for them to withhold that money as they did not fulfil the duty for which they were paid. (Hindiyyah Vol. 4 page 437)

Mufti Moosa

Question

I have a question related to Salah. if for example in the prayer of Esha i joined Jamaat in 3rd rakah and once imam finished his Salah i will stand in order to complete my 2 rakahs which i missed with the imam, so here my question is, do i need to read only surah fatiha for these two rakahs or should i need to recite another surah as well after surah fatiha?

Answer

When you are completing your missed Rakaats, you will read Surah Fatiha and a Surah in both the first and second Rakaat that you read on your own.

If you missed two Rakaats or three Rakaats or came late in the 4th Rakaat, in all situations you will recite Surah Fatiha and a Surah in the first two Rakaats that you complete on your own as a Masbooq (latecomer).

If you are completing more than two Rakaats on your own, then in the 3rd and 4th Rakaats only Surah Fatiha will be recited.

Mufti Moosa

Question

There's this guy and girl who love each other. They left each other in order to abstain from Zina .. now the guy wants to make Nikah with the girl but his parents aren't happy about the fact he's bringing a girl home and it's not someone of their choice. So now when they want to do the right thing it's still wrong. What's the way forward

Answer

The way forward would be for the boy to find someone senior and respected, like an elder in the family or a reputable Aalim to discuss the matter with his parents in order to find a suitable outcome.

It should also be noted that besides the reason given for the parents not wanting that particular girl, there may be other reasons for which the parents are unhappy.

Parents who have sacrificed their life to raise their children most definitely desire to see them happy and successful. But to have all those sacrifices thrown back in their faces because their child has fallen in love is not an easy pill to swallow. Love is one of the most powerful emotions but it can also be a very foolish emotion. The idea that love will make everything right works very well in fairy tales but rarely as well in real life. It makes sensible people do very

foolish things, the results of which can haunt a person for many years later.

From amongst the reasons that Islam encourages marriage, love is not considered a factor. The person you love today can easily be the person you hate tomorrow. Relationships come and go but family remains family. Burning your family bridges does not make for a successful and happy marriage.

We advise the boy to think very carefully before he sacrifices his parents' happiness and their many favours upon him for the sake of something as fickle as love.

Mufti Moosa

Question

I have read in Ma'ariful Quraan (English) under the verse of "wal Aamileena alayha" that zakaat can be given to those collecting the zakaat on behalf of the state.

Nowadays, many organisations in non-Muslim countries also collect zakaat on behalf of the organisation and then distribute it to its recipients.

My question is: Can the person appointed on behalf of the organization to collect zakaat be paid his salary from the zakaat money?

Answer

The law explained in this Ayat pertains to a zakaat collector who is appointed on behalf of the Islamic State. This Ayat does not apply to a non-Muslim state. Hence, in a non-Muslim state, it will not be permissible for an Islamic organisation to pay a zakaat collector from the zakaat funds. Furthermore, if this had to be allowed in a non-Muslim state, it would create a lot of complications and problems. Every person may start collecting zakaat to distribute among the poor and take a portion of the zakaat funds as his wages with the justification that he is a zakaat collector.

Mufti Zakaria

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



*So, it is through
mercy from Allah
that you are gentle
to them. Had
you been rough and
hard-hearted, they
would have dispersed
from around you.*

*So, pardon them
and seek forgiveness
for them. And
consult them in the
matter, and once you
have taken a deci-
sion, place your trust
in Allah. Surely,
Allah loves those
who place their trust
in Him. [3:159]*

Consultation of the Prophet with his Companions

The verse under discussion here orders the Holy Prophet (saws) to consult his Companions (R.A). This raises a certain difficulty here. Isn't it that he is the Messenger of Allah and the blessed recipient of revelation? Why, then, should he need to consult anyone? Since, everything can come to his knowledge through the medium of revelation from Allah Almighty, some scholars interpret this command to consult by saying that the Messenger of Allah was neither in need to be counselled, nor anything he did depended on such counsel. The command to consult given to him is simply to honour the blessed Companions and mollify their broken hearts. But, Imam Abu Bakr al-Jassas does not agree with this view. According to him this is not correct, for being involved in consultation - while knowing that one's counsel will not be acted upon, nor would it affect any proceedings of the agenda - will make the whole thing ineffectual. If so, no heart will be mollified and no honour will be sustained. Instead, the truth of the matter is that a course of action to be taken by the Messenger of Allah is identified through revelation directly by Allah Almighty. This holds good in all general matters. But, there are certain matters which, under the dictates of the wisdom and mercy of Allah Almighty, are left to the opinion and discretion of the Holy Prophet (saws). It is in such matters alone where consultation is needed, and these are the kind of matters in which he has been commanded to seek consultation. The history of the consultative sittings of the Messenger of Allah confirms this view.

When the Holy Prophet (saws) consulted with the Companions about the battle of Badr, they said that should he ask them to jump into a river, they would do just that; and if he commanded them to march to a far out place such as Bark al-Ghamad, they will be with him; and they would never act like the companions of Musa (A.S)

who said: 'Go, you and your Lord, and fight the disbelievers' - 5:24; on the contrary, we shall fondly submit: 'You lead the way, we shall fight the enemy with you, in front of you and in the rear and the right and the left.'

Similarly, he consulted them about the battle of Uhud asking them if they should defend Madinah by staying inside the city limits or should they go out of the city limits and confront the enemy in the open. The general opinion of the Companions was that they should do the latter and this was what he accepted to do. In the battle of Khandaq, the question of accepting peace under the terms of a particular treaty came up for discussion. Sayyidna Sa'd ibn Mu'adh and Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah (R.A) opposed the proposed treaty on the grounds that it was inappropriate. It was the opinion of these two Companions that he finally accepted. When he went into consultations on a matter pertaining to Hudaibiyyah, the opinion of Sayyidna Abu Bakr Radhi-Allahu Anh: Allah be pleased with him was the basis of his final decision. The Companions were also consulted following the incident of Ifk (false imputation against Sayyidah 'A'ishah Radhi-Allahu Anha: Allah be pleased with her but this and all other matters pointed out were those in which no particular position to be taken by the Holy Prophet (saws) was determined through revelation.

To sum up, being a prophet, a messenger and a recipient of revelation is not a bar against consultation. Moreover, in the case of the Holy Prophet (saws) it cannot be said that his seeking of counsel from the Companions was ever de-

signed to please them artificially, or that it was virtually ineffectual in the conduct of affairs. On the contrary, the truth is that there were many occasions when he accepted the opinion of those present during consultation even if it happened to be against his own. In fact, in some situations where a particular line of action had not been determined for the Holy Prophet (saws) through revelation, and in its absence he had worked through consultation, there is great divine wisdom. The objective is that the practice of the Holy Prophet (saws) comes to be established for all future generations of Muslims. Thus, the seeking of consultation as a Sunnah shall become binding on the whole ummah of the Prophet (saws). Imagine when he himself has not been left free of the need of consultation who else can claim to be free of such need? For this reason, the method of mutual consultation always continued to be operative during the blessed times of the Holy Prophet (saws) and his noble Companions (ra) particularly in matters where there was no clear injunction in the Qur'an and Sunnah. When the Holy Prophet (saws) passed away from this mortal world, the noble Companions continued following his practice. Still later, mutual consultation was resorted to as the modality to deduce rulings of Islamic Law in matters where clear injunction was not found in the Qur'an and Sunnah. This was actually the method taught by the Holy Prophet (saws) in answer to a question put by Sayyidna 'Ali (ra) .

*Adapted from: Ma'ariful Qur'an
Mufti Muhammad Shafi (ra)*

**Faith in your hearts is like new clothes
that fade over time. So, ask God to renew
your faith. (Hadith)**

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

Chapter 69 : Spearmen in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Mosque is a place primarily meant for worship, but various beneficial services for the Ummah like collection of warfare donations etc., can be also carried out within it. Similarly, since Jihaad is also among the essential fundamental of Islam, therefore, all the necessary things related to it are permissible to be dealt with in the mosque. Imam Bukhari, by establishing this chapter, wants to convey this message.

Hadith No. 442

Narrated Aisha

Once I saw Allah's Apostle at the door of my room while some Ethiopians were playing in the mosque (displaying their skill with spears). Allah's Apostle was screening me with his Rida' so as to enable me to see their display. Urwa said that Aisha said, "I saw the Prophet when the Ethiopians were playing with their spears."

Comments

It was the day of Eid, as mentioned in other narrations, when some Abyssinians assembled in Masjid-i-Nabawi and started displaying their traditional spear drills. It is mentioned in a narration that Sayyida Aisha, of a very young age that time, wanted to see these Abyssinians

displaying their drills. According to another hadith, Rasulullah (saws) himself called her to see their show. Rasulullah (saws) screened her behind him with his cloak as she watched the Abyssinians; she continued to watch them until she was satisfied and left of her own.

In between, Sayyiduna Umar came to the Masjid-i-Nabawi and seeing the Abyssinians doing those drills, tried to stop them, however, Rasulullah (saws) told him to let them continue.

Lessons from this hadith

1. A husband should take into consideration the emotional aspect of his wife and be very kind and gentle to her. She should be allowed to enjoy the recreational activities falling within the limits of Shariah.
3. Warfare tactics, if necessary for the Jihaad, can be displayed in the mosque but it should not be a mere display of a ruler's force.

Chapter 70 : The mention of buying and selling on the pulpit in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

As mentioned before, a mosque is a place primarily meant for worship and not for any worldly affair. Here the question arises whether it is permissible to mention things related to trade etc., in the mosque or not? The learned

scholars like Ibn Hajr, Allaama Ayni Allaama Sindhi etc., hold the opinion that in this chapter Imam Bukhari wants to convey that though it is not permissible to do trade in a mosque but teaching the principles of Shariah related to it is also a kind of worship and hence permissible. It is one of the beauties of the religion of Islam that it connects worldly affairs with Deen, but this is possible only when worldly affairs are dealt with in accordance with the principles of Shariah. For people of other beliefs, religion is the name of few rituals and customs performed at certain places on certain occasions.

Hadith No. 443
Narrated Aisha

Barira came to seek my help regarding her manumission. I told herself you like I would pay your price to your masters but your Al-Wala (inheritance) would be for me." Her masters said, "If you like, you can pay what remains (of the price of her manumission), (Sufyan the sub-narrator once said), or if you like you can manumit her, but her Al-Wala would be for us. "When Allah's Apostle came, I spoke to him about it. He said, "Buy her and manumit her. No doubt Al-Wala is for the manumitted." Then Allah's Apostle stood on the pulpit (or Allah's Apostle ascended the pulpit as Sufyan once said), and said, "What about some people who impose conditions which are not present in Allah's Book (Laws)? Whoever imposes conditions which are not in Allah's Book (Laws), his conditions will be invalid even if he imposed them a hundred times."

Comments

Barira, the slave girl of a Jew, had an agreement with him of paying three hundred and sixty Dirhams in nine years at the rate of forty Dirhams a year in order to win her freedom.

She usually visited Sayyida Aisha and once she mentioned to her about this agreement. Sayyida Aisha told her that she was ready to pay her master the whole amount in one go to get her freed on the condition that the right of al-Wala (inheritance) would be for her (i.e., Sayyida Aisha). The Jew did not agree to this. He accepted to free the girl on full payment but wanted to retain the right of inheritance. When Rasulullah (saws) came to know about the matter and the condition laid down by the Jew, he went to the mosque, ascended the pulpit and told the people that the right of inheritance of a freed slave will pass on to the person who frees him/her and whoever imposes conditions which are not in Allah's Book, his conditions will be invalid even if he imposes them a hundred times."

Chapter 71 : Asking for repayment of a debt and catching hold of debtors in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here Imam Bukhari wants to mention that it is permissible for a creditor to catch hold of his debtor in the mosque and demand repayment.

Hadith No. 444
Narrated Ka'b

In the mosque I asked Ibn Abi Hadrad to pay the debts which he owed to me and our voices grew louder. Allah's Apostle heard that while he was in his house. So he came to us raising the curtain of his room and said, "O Ka'b!" I replied, "Labaik, O Allah's Apostle!" He said, "O Ka'b! reduce your debt to one half," gesturing with his hand. I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I have done so." Then Allah's Apostle said (to Ibn Abi Hadrad), "Get up and pay the debt to him."

Comments

Sayyiduna Ka'b bin Maalik, a famous companion of Rasulullah (saws) from among

al-Ansaar, once saw Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Hadrad, who owed some money to Sayyiduna Ka'b in the Prophet's mosque. He caught hold of Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Hadrad and demanded his debt. While discussing the matter their voices grew louder. Rasulullah (saws) heard their voices in his house and came to them and instructed Sayyiduna Ka'b to reduce his debt to one half, to which Sayyiduna Ka'b immediately agreed. He further instructed Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Hadrad to pay the rest.

According to the learned scholars to catch hold of a debtor and to raise voice for such reasons in the mosque is permissible but abusing or using foul language is prohibited. So, the hadiths which prohibit the raising of voice in the mosque are about foul language and if it is done for genuine reasons with no usage of foul language, it is permissible. This hadith proves that Rasulullah (saws) heard the voices of Sayyiduna Ka'b and Sayyiduna Hadrad while he was inside his house and did not prohibit them from doing so.

It is permissible to catch hold of a debtor inside the mosque particularly if he doesn't come across outside.

Lesson from this hadith

1. A creditor can demand his debt in the mosque.
2. A creditor should show kindness towards his debtor, and if possible, reduce some portion of the debt as is evident from the instruction of Rasulullah (saws) to Sayyiduna Ka'b.
3. A gesture is also a reliable means of instruction as in the hadith it is said that Rasulullah (saws) instructed Sayyiduna Ka'b with some gesture to reduce half the debt.
4. A judge can advise litigators to compromise before admitting the petition for hearing or judgement.

Chapter 72 : Sweeping the mosque and picking up rags, dirt and sticks from it.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

This chapter shows the significance and excellence of sweeping and cleaning the mosque.

It was well known amongst the companions of the Prophet (saws) that a pebble if removed from the mosque implores against the person removing it. There is a narration in Muslim which says:

"It was famous that if a person removes a pebble from the mosque it implores against the person".

So, Imam Bukhari wants to clarify this point by stressing the need for sweeping and cleaning the mosque. He has used two words viz.,

1. Kans - to sweep.
2. Iltiqaat - to pick up.

So, the mosque is to be cleaned by adapting either method i.e. by sweeping or by picking up the unwanted things like rags, pebbles, sticks and other dirt.

Hadith No. 445

Narrated Abu Huraira

"A black man or a black woman used to sweep the mosque and he or she died. The Prophet asked about her (or him). He was told that she (or he) had died. He said, "Why did you not inform me? Show me his grave (or her grave)." So he went to her (his) grave and offered her (his) funeral prayer."

Comments

Sayyiduna Abu Huraira narrates that a black man or a black woman used to sweep the mosque of the Prophet (saws). He is not sure whether the person was a male or female, but as per some other narrations, it was a lady whose only job was to keep the mosque clean. She would sweep the mosque as well as remove any unwanted or dirty object from it. Once she fell ill and died during the night. The companions of Rasulullah (saws) buried her during the

night without informing the Prophet about her. Next day on enquiring about her, Rasulullah (saws) came to know that she had died and was buried during the night. The Prophet (saws) got annoyed with his companions for not informing him about her death as he himself wanted to offer her funeral prayer. He then went to her grave and offered prayer there.

The learned scholars have given different explanations as to why the companions did not inform Rasulullah (saws). Some opine that since it was late in the night, the companions didn't like to trouble Rasulullah (saws) at such a late hour. Some others say that probably they didn't consider the matter of such a great importance so as to inform Rasulullah (saws).

To sweep the mosque and keep it clean is a recommendable and blessed job which the lady was doing, that is why Rasulullah (saws) showed annoyance to his companions for not informing him. Not only this, he then made it a point to go to her grave and offer funeral prayers there.

Can the funeral prayer be offered after burying the dead body?

This hadith states that Rasulullah (saws) offered funeral prayer of a lady on her grave after the people had already done so. There are other narrations which show that Rasulullah (saws) offered funeral prayer on the graves, but the jurists differ in their opinion about this is-

sue. According to Imam Shaafa'ee and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal, it is permissible for one to offer funeral prayer after the burial in case he missed it, but they also differ about the time period until which it can be offered after the burial. Some permit it up to two days and some even stretch it up to one month. As per Imam Abu Haneefa, Ibrahim Nakhaee and Imam Maalik it is not permissible to offer funeral prayer after the burial in case it has been already offered except in two situations.

1. It was not offered before the burial.
2. It was offered without the permission of the 'Wali' (testamentary guardian). A 'Wali' can repeat the funeral prayer.

According to these scholars their opinion is not against the hadith as Rasulullah (saws) is the Wali (testamentary guardian) of all the believers as per the Qur'anic verse:

The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves. (33:6)

So, it was the particular status of Rasulullah (saws). When Imam Maalik was asked about this hadith, he said, "I agree that Rasulullah (saws) had offered funeral prayers on the graves but the companions didn't carry the act later on". Muslim has quoted a hadith which says.

"Indeed these graves are plunged into darkness and indeed Allah enlightens these with my offering Salaah for them".

Do not stop mentioning Allah just because your heart is not present. Forgetting Him completely is worse than being inattentive while you are mentioning Him; perhaps He will elevate you from being inattentive to being attentive, and from being attentive to being fully present with Him, and from being fully present with Him to being fully absent from anything but Him. 'This is not difficult for Allah'.

(Ibn Atta')

Responding to the Divine Call

Muhammad Ghilan

Our presence in the world is a continuous process of separation after unity. We begin with a unification of a sperm and an egg followed by breathing in of the soul. Then there is a separation of this soul from the mother through birth, which is indicated by the Arabic term *nifas*. Breastfeeding is a materialistic attempt to reestablish that connection. But alas, it is to no avail and the child eventually stops trying. Progress through developmental stages is a gradual process of separation from the parents until we become physically independent. We cried at the time of birth because we did not want to let go, and our parents, especially mothers, cry at the time when we leave for our first day of school because they do not want to let go.

We were created through separation as God tells us in the Quran,

"It is He Who created you from a single soul and made from it its mate so that you may find tranquility in her." [7:189]

The Beloved (saws) said,

"The souls are conscripted legionnaires, the ones who recognize each other will be in harmony and those who do not will differ."

Before coming into this world we were together in the Atomic Realm in a state of peace. But we arrive here in a state of anxiety as scattered individuals. Our search for love in the modern world is confused with lust, which is a materialistic attempt to capture serenity when we reunite with our soul mates. Unless we first respond to the Divine call, anxiety will be our state of being and feeling completely at peace will remain elusive. The Quran relates the story of the Prophet Ibrahim peace be upon him who sought certainty from His Lord about how He gives life back to the dead. God's response to him was,

"Did you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying, and know that God is Mighty, Wise." [2:60]

Ahmad ibn 'Ajeeba (1748-1809) may God sanctify his soul mentioned in his commentary on this verse that the birds were a peacock, a rooster, a crow, and a pigeon:

"Whoever wants for their soul to live the Eternal

Life, and to move from the knowledge of certainty (*'ilm al-yaqeen*) to the essence of certainty (*'ayn al-yaqeen*), then his ego must die four deaths. First is death of love of worldly desires and adornments, which is the character of the peacock. Second is death of haughtiness and egotistical prowess, which is the character of the rooster. Third is death of sordidness, abjectness and vain hope, which is the character of the crow. Fourth is death of the quick following of whims, which is the character of the pigeon."

The beginning of these four deaths is initiated by responding to the Divine Call.

"Verily, man was created in a state of anxiety. When evil afflicts him he becomes greatly grieved. When good befalls him he becomes stingy. Except for those who pray. Those who are constant in their prayer." [70:19-23]

The Arabic word for prayer, salah, involves establishing a connection with God. It is not the physical acts that make a prayer valid. They are the necessary but insufficient means, not the end goal.

In the adhan, the public call to the five daily prayers, we hear the phrase "Come to Success" twice after the phrase calling us to "Come to Prayer" had occurred twice. Just as the cut up birds responded to Ibrahim peace be upon him and gathered their scattered parts, our response to the Divine Call is the gathering of our scattered parts across the mountains of Dunya so we can become whole again. It is the physical recognition of the poetic line uttered by Labeed ibn Rabee'a al-'Amiri - "Everything other than God is a falsehood."

A quick scan of the daily news can give one a feeling of despair. It seems we are quickly descending into chaos, and no matter where one lives, it appears that political unrest and oppression is only a stone's throw away. As the external struggle against oppression takes place, we must recognize that the rulers who get put over us are not there because of elections or foreign

clandestine interventions. These are the material means by which they may come into power. However, they are ultimately only there by the will of God.

"Say: O God, Master of the Dominion! You give dominion to whomsoever You please, and take it away from whomsoever You please. You exalt whomsoever You please, and debase whomsoever You please. In Your power is the good. Surely, You have power over all things." [3:26]

While everyone is quick to blame the election system in the U.S., the voters, the Democratic Party, Russia, and everything else that can be thought of, the one fact most are unwilling to acknowledge about Trump is that he is a reflection of what seems like the majority of us value today.

"Like so we put oppressors over each other on the account of they earned." [6:129]

We exalt money, fame, power, ostentation, self-interest, and narcissism. We support the ego and whims of the individual even if it comes at the cost of everyone else. We reward mediocrity and inflate status. A culture that gives medals and trophies to kids who come in last is one that will produce a Trump who buys a 6-foot-tall self-portrait with charity money.

The artificial division between the spiritual and the political is meant to only facilitate learning. But in action, the Quran teaches us they cannot be separated. When Prophet Shu'aib peace be upon him was sent to his people to warn them against cheating in their transactions and spreading mischief in the land their response to him was,

"O Shu'aib! Does your prayer enjoin you that we should forsake what our fathers worshipped or that we should not do what we please with regard to our property?" [11:87]

Commitment to Islam entails more than ritu-

al actions. It is a conscious recognition of a responsibility to be witnesses for Truth.

"And thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be the bearers of witness over people and that the Messenger may be a bearer of witness over you." [2:143]

Political activism is a testing ground.

"Moses said to his people: Rely upon God and be patient. Verily, the land is God's; He grants it as inheritance to whomsoever He pleases from among His servants, and the end is for those who guard (against evil). They said: We have been persecuted before you came to us and after you came to us. He said: It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, then He will see how you act." [7:128-129]

The goal is not to be in power, but to ensure that we prevent oppression. From an Islamic perspective, God will support a just disbeliever against an unjust Muslim.

One of the criticisms gaining traction from Muslim activists against religious leaders and scholars is about their lack of experience in ac-

tivism, which in turn is used to tell them to "stay in their lane". It is a warranted critique if what matters are the details. But this lack of on the ground engagement could be an advantage, as it allows an external observer a bird's eye view. Though scholars may not be aware of the details, they can certainly discern the direction of a movement. Unlike technology, human beings do not progress. The same egos and ailments of the heart that afflicted past peoples are afflicting us today.

As an increasing number of Muslims engage in political activism it is essential that the Divine Call be answered first. Otherwise, instead of moving with the transcendent compass that will make one act in accordance with Islamic teachings and principles, incoherent materialistic ideologies will be adopted in its place. Without an objective measure of justice guided by the Just, whims and desires will rule, and oppression will continue. The rise of Trump and figures like him in America and around the world should have the same impact as looking in a mirror and seeing a problem on ones face. Breaking the mirror does not make the problem go away, and neither does changing it.

The Perfect Designer

There are many pieces that make up our lives: Moments that break us. Moments that raise and shape us. Decisions we make to hold one. Or let go. People who enter our lives and leave us changed forever. The ones we love, the ones that hurt us, or heal us, or leave us. Sometimes we don't understand these pieces - or even despair over them. It's only when time goes by and we look back, that we suddenly can see our whole life like a perfectly designed puzzle. Don't be afraid of the puzzle piece you're in now. It will fit perfectly....just like the rest. How could it not? The Designer is perfect.

When Bahlool Met Junaid

Shaykh Junayd Baghdadi went for a walk out of Baghdad. His students followed him. The Shaykh asked how Bahlool was. They answered, "He is a crazy person, what do you need from him?"

"Bring him to me because I have a need for him."

The students searched for Bahlool and found him in the desert. They took Shaykh Junayd to him.

When Shaykh Junayd went near Bahlool, he saw Bahlool in a state of perturbation with a brick under his head. The Shaykh greeted him. Bahlool answered and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Junayd Baghdadi."

"Are you Abul Qasim?"

"Yes!"

"Are you Shaykh Baghdadi who gives people spiritual instructions?"

"Yes!"

"Do you even know how to eat?"

"I say Bismillah (In the Name of Allah). I eat from in front of me, I take small bites, put them in the right side of my mouth, and slowly chew. I don't stare at others' bites. I remember Allah while eating. For whatever morsel I eat, I say Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah). I wash my hands before and after eating."

Bahlool stood up, shook his garment on the Shaykh, and said, "You want to be the spiritual teacher of the world but you don't even know

how to eat." Saying this, he walked away.

The Shaykh's students said, "O Shaykh! He is a crazy person."

"He is such a lunatic who is intelligent in his work. Listen to the correct statements from him."

Saying this he went after Bahlool, saying, "I have a need for Bahlool."

When Bahlool reached a deserted building he sat down. Junayd came near him. Bahlool asked, "Who are you?"

"Shaykh Baghdadi who doesn't even know how to eat."

"You don't know how to eat, but do you know how to talk?"

"Yes."

"How do you talk?"

"I talk in moderation and to the point. I don't speak unoccasionally or too much. I speak so the listeners can understand. I call the world's people towards Allah and His Rasool Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. I don't talk so much that the people would get bored. I care about the deepness of inner and outer knowledge." Then he described whatever was connected with manners and etiquette.

"Forget about eating, you don't know how to talk either." He stood up, shook his garment on the Shaykh and walked away.

The students said, "O Shaykh! You saw, he is a crazy person. What do you expect from a

lunatic!”

“I have a need for him. You do not know.”

Again he went after Bahlool until he reached him. Bahlool asked, “What do you want from me? You who don’t know the manners of eating and speaking, do you know how to sleep?”

“Yes, I know.”

“How do you sleep?”

“When I am finished with Salat (prayer)-e-Isha and reciting supplications, I don my sleepwear.” Then he described the manners of sleeping which were transmitted to him by the learned people of religion.

“I understand that you do not know how to sleep either.” He wanted to get up, but Junayd caught hold of his garment and said, “O Bahlool! I don’t know; so for the sake of Allah teach me.”

“You claimed knowledge and said you knew so I was avoiding you. Now that you confessed your lack of knowledge I will teach you. Know that whatever you described is secondary. The truth behind eating meals is that you eat lawful morsels. If you eat forbidden food likewise, with one hundred manners, it won’t benefit you, but will be the reason for blackening the heart.”

“May Allah grant you great reward.”

Bahlool continued, “The heart must be pure, and have good intentions before you begin to talk. And your conversation must be to please Allah. If it is for any worldly or useless work, then however you express yourself, it will become a calamity for you. That is why silence and quietude would be best. Whatever you said about sleeping is also of secondary importance.

“The truth of it is that your heart should be free of enmity, jealousy, and hate. Your heart should not be greedy for this world or its wealth, and remember Allah when going to sleep.”

Junayd kissed Bahlool’s hand and prayed for him. The students who saw this incident, and had thought that Bahlool was crazy, forgot their actions and started a new life.

The lesson is that if someone doesn’t know something, then he shouldn’t be ashamed of learning it; like Shaykh Junayd learned the ways and manners of eating, talking, and sleeping.

The person who is thankful while eating food will get the same reward as one who is patient while fasting.

Sukhari

Man is deprived of sustenance and provision on account of committing sin and disobedience willfully.’

Musnad Ahmad

Do not be fooled by one who recites the Qur’an. His recitation is but speech, but look to those who act according to it.

Umar ibn Al-Zhattab

Eat what you wish and wear what you wish, as long as you avoid two things: extravagance and arrogance.

Ibn Abbas RA

I would mix with the rich & always be unhappy. I began to mingle with the poor & found myself at peace.

Imam Abdallah ibn al-Mubarak

Whoever hears something indecent and then spreads it is like the one who originated it.

Al-Adab

For Your Own Sake

Zara Faris

"Pardon them and overlook - Allah loves those who do good." (Qur'an 5:13)

If we hold grudges, our spirits get stuck like trapped birds. We can't fly the way we're supposed to, because our own resentments bind us and hold us down. When you hate someone, they don't feel it. Only you do. It affects only your own heart, until your heart hardens and your vision narrows, and life loses its joy and zest.

We must forgive each other and forgive ourselves. Let go of resentments from the past. Do it for your own sake, because letting go and forgiving is the only way to be happy.

Whatever others have done against you, let it go. Consign it to Allah, then forgive. Whatever you have done against others, apologize and ask forgiveness, and ask Allah's forgiveness as well.

The Messenger of Allah (saws) was seated in a gathering with the sahabah (his companions) when he looked towards the entrance and said, "A man of Paradise is coming." At that instance someone who seemed to be very ordinary entered the masjid where they were seated. One sahabi was curious as to why the Prophet had said such a thing about this man, so he followed the man to his house. The sahabi told the man of Paradise that he was a traveler, and was invited to stay as a guest. For three days the sahabi watched the man of Paradise, but he saw nothing unusual in

the man's character or worship. Finally he told the man what the Prophet had said and asked him what was so special about him. The man thought for a long time and said, "There might be one thing — before going to sleep every night I forgive everyone and sleep with a clean heart."

Mr. Evatt

I went to high school in Saudi Arabia, and I had an American teacher who I really liked. He was my English teacher for two years and his name was Mr. Evatt. He was from Georgia and had long hair and a heavy Southern drawl. He lived in an old neighborhood of Riyadh that was situated on a dusty, rocky hilltop. Every morning our school bus would pick him up, and I always found it amusing when we'd pull up and he'd be standing in the dirt road, smoking a cigarette, his shirt already plastered with sweat at 7 am, and a herd of goats climbing on the rocks all around him. He used to call us students, "wallets", which was his version of "walad", which means boy in Arabic. He'd come into the classroom and shout, "Siddown, little wallets!" But was a good teacher and I respected him.

Sometime during the second year, I was passing by the teacher's lounge and the door was open.

I heard a few of the teachers talking about Arabs. I paused outside the door to listen, and I heard Mr. Evatt refer to his students as “sand-ni****s.” I was very hurt. I think it also fueled the beginning of a deep resentment and intolerance in me that lasted for many years. I returned to the USA for college, and for a long time, if I ever found out that one of my non-Muslim friends harbored the least bit of bigotry against Muslims or Arabs, I would cut that person off forever. I had no patience for it.

I also had an increasing sense that I did not belong in American society. I had always been proud of being an American, but while I loved America, America did not seem to love me back. I was turned down for a job because of my religion, openly mocked on a few occasions, visited at home by the FBI, stopped at the airport for questioning and invasive searches... I became restless and unsatisfied with life in America. None of that had anything to do with Mr. Evatt of course, but that insult that he cast on us students represented my first awareness of bigotry; it became, in my mind, a symbol of racism.

My most satisfying times were my trips abroad to Mexico or Costa Rica. Finally I left the USA and emigrated to Panama.

I was happy in Panama. It was a peaceful, beautiful place. The people there had no preconceptions about Arabs and Muslims. I think I was able to finally relax, and breathe easily. I came back to the USA in late 2008 for family reasons, but I’ve realized that somewhere along the road, I let go of the grudges I was holding. I’m more easy going with people now. I have a martial arts teacher who has some anti-Arab ideas, but I am patient with him. Who knows, maybe his interactions with me will help to dispel his stereotypical beliefs. People need to be educated, not condemned. It’s the only way forward. “Pardon them and overlook – Allah loves those who do good.”

It’s so much simpler to extend love to people, and show them the way, rather than react with anger. And it’s better for my own soul. I feel calm now, and balanced. Alhamdulillah. If I could see

Mr. Evatt now, I would thank him for being a good teacher. He must have cared about us, or he would not have made the effort. And maybe I would ask him about the statement he made. But I wouldn’t blame him or get angry. I wish him well.

Forgive Yourself

This is important. Forgiveness needs to extend in all directions, even to yourself. Whatever you’ve done against yourself, forgive yourself. Don’t hold grudges against yourself. We humans all make mistakes. “Pardon them and overlook – Allah loves those who do good.”

Don’t call yourself names. You are not stupid, shameful, or useless. Just the opposite! You are bright, special and unique, with a special mission in this life. If you feel that you have been corrupted by sin, then the glory of Islam is that innocence can be yours again, with tawbah. We Muslims don’t believe in original sin. All human beings were created pure, on the fitrah. That is your birthright.

That’s why ‘Aisha reported Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) as having said:

“None of you should say: ‘My soul has become evil,’ but he should say: ‘My soul has become remorseless.’”

In other words, your soul has not turned into an evil thing. It is not totally lost. It is just at a point when it is not feeling remorse or sorrow for its actions. But that can be changed! The soul can be softened through prayer, dua, dikhr (remembrance of Allah), fasting, reciting Quran, doing good to others, and other acts of worship, until your soul once again feels remorse, and can return to a state of purity. SubhanAllah!

Allah knew exactly what He was doing when He made you. If you don’t trust your own judgment, then trust Allah’s.

Tonight, let go of your grudges and sleep with a clean heart. Tomorrow the day is new, and life goes on. You have far to go and much to do. Look ahead, with a sunrise in your eyes

Can there be a Doubt?

Dr. S Omer

misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the same.

The greatest, absolute and the only everlasting reality is Almighty God, the Creator, Master and Sustainer of the universe. Things exist because He created and sustains them. They are real only because He, the ultimate Reality, conceived and fashioned them in order to serve a real and consequential ontological purpose. They constitute the truth only inasmuch as they originated from Him as the absolute Truth, serve His aims, and intensely resonate, as well as unambiguously manifest, His magnificent Names and Attributes.

In their capacity as His work, things, both physical and metaphysical wonders, speak of Almighty God as their Designer and Maker. They are unmistakable signs of His existence, power and glory. They easily instill in willing human minds and hearts serene certitudes concerning that absolute and infinite Reality.

This verity led a poet to proclaim:

“Oh, what an oddity...

How is it that Allah is disobeyed,

How can a disbeliever deny Him,

When in every single thing there is a sign,

Revealing that He is the One!”

There is nothing plainer and, at the same time, more powerful than the truth. The truth about life is readily available everywhere and in everything. It easily proves itself because it is the only reality. It is the only thing that actually exists. Everything else is illusory and is, in actual fact, non-existent.

There is no falsehood, no skepticism, no agnosticism, no polytheism, no atheism, no myths and no fiction. There are only some people's hollow and vain explanations for rejecting the obvious and for failing to conform to its high and noble standards. At best, there is a nonrealization, or a malfunctioning, of the truth at the hands of some people. There are also various

By virtue of being one of those created and conditionally real and true things, containing elements of both the physical and metaphysical poles of existence, man's task, via his multidimensional being, is not only to reveal and demonstrate the greatness of God, and stand for some of His most irresistible signs, but also to rationalize those signs and operationalize their worth at various planes of his cultural and civilizational drive. Based on the results of such processes, man is invited to realize, both spiritual-

ly and rationally, and accept willingly that God is his Creator and Master, according to Whose Will and Word he is bidden to live, work and produce components of civilization.

Through the lens of such a realization, man is to “witness” and come to terms with God’s omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Man is thus to understand God and unmistakably see and read all the portents that lead to Him and attest to His encircling providential care for His creation. With that, man, furthermore, will unmistakably see and comprehend his very self, for he who knows himself, knows God, and he who is at peace with himself, is at peace with God. This will qualify man, and, at the same time, connote a prelude to seeing God in all His divine majesty and glory in the Hereafter in Paradise.

In his capacity as God’s vicegerent on earth, man, therefore, stands at the center of the whole of existence, and everything in the universe has been subjected to him to be part of his existential purpose and mission. Man, it follows, stands at the core of the whole truth, too. He himself is the truth’s microcosm. As integral part of it, man exists due to the truth, for the truth, with the truth and by means of the truth. His terrestrial task is to recognize himself as part of it, and through his self and the other both revealed and created signs, find and unreservedly submit himself to God as the Embodiment of all truth and as the only Truly Existing One.

It stands to reason that man is one of the principal and most obvious proofs of the truth and God. While perennially hankering and searching for the truth, as his insatiable primordial nature demands, man thus should go no further than his own intricate physical, spiritual and intellectual realms in his endless quest for the nature and relations of being. Man should not be obsessed with exploring the unexplorable, finding the unfindable and doing the undoable, just to attempt to find, or learn more about, that which is fundamentally identifiable with his

own self, his existential disposition and his operational sphere, which is the truth.

Accordingly, the Holy Qur’an at once reminds and exhorts man as regards that essential principle, saying, for example:

“In the earth are signs for those who have conviction, and in your own selves (as well). Will you not then perceive?” (al-Sharīyat, 20, 21).

“We will show them Our signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth” (Fussilat, 53).

The following verse is perhaps most emphatic:

“Do they not think deeply about themselves? Allah has created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, except with truth and for an appointed term. And indeed many of mankind deny the meeting with their Lord” (al-Rum, 8).

As if Almighty God divulges to man that by thinking, exploring and studying both deeply and sincerely about himself, he will be able to arrive at the greatest ontological truths not only about himself, but also about the whole universe and even God Himself. This is so due to man being a microcosm of the macrocosm and the epicenter in the created coherence and order. Man is the crown and climax of God’s divine act of creation.

The Prophet (saws) further emphasized the matter when he said that God created Adam, the first man and father of humanity, with His own Hands and in His own Image (Sahih Muslim). This means that Adam (mankind) has been bestowed with life, knowledge, power of hearing, seeing, understanding, etc., but the features of Adam (mankind) are different from those of God; only the names are the same. For instance, God has life, knowledge and power of understanding, and Adam (mankind) also has them, but there is no comparison between the Creator

and the created things, as the Qur'an declares:

"There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer" (al-Shura, 11).

However, the problem is that man, primarily due to his arrogance and a number of mishandled inborn limitations and weaknesses, tends to rebel against his very self, his Creator and the natural order of things. In the process, he undermines his remarkable capacities, debilitates his senses and hinders his progression towards a proper comprehension of himself, existence and God. Under such circumstances, man renders himself perennially confused, disoriented, vulnerable and despondent. In the name of science, technology and civilization, he hides his real conditions, trying desperately to paper over them. The whole scenario signifies one of the worst forms of spiritual and intellectual escapism where fiction is more favored and seems to make more sense than reality, and where the mysterious, yet imaginary, side of man is more pursued than the actual one. Unfortunately, the entire scheme is a lost cause, denoting a steady progression towards the utter destruction of man and what he erroneously deemed his civilizational headway.

That is why, for example, the modern man is happy to spend billions upon billions of dollars on space exploration programs -- which, in fact, yields extremely little tangible benefit -- but ignores the fact that much of the earth is not fully explored yet, that there are many either already widespread, or brewing, global crises that can threaten the very existence of mankind, that hundreds of millions of people in many parts of the world still straggle to fulfil their basic needs, that mankind is on the brink of a major environmental disaster, etc.

That is why, furthermore, the modern man is happy to dwell ad infinitum on such meaningless and outright nonsensical issues as aliens, the prospects of mankind's supernaturalism and immortality, numerous unfounded myths, su-

perstitions and legends, etc., but easily ignores the painful realities that racism and discrimination are rampant, that the ignorant, corrupt and outright evil ones rule the world, that human rights are yet to be clearly defined, let alone implemented, that the definitions of marriage and family, and many other concepts and issues that go along with them, are still hotly debated at all levels, that the role and position of woman are still unclear, that only 'might is right' like during the darkest and most primitive periods of human existence, that most of us are educated but vastly ignorant, never mind wise, etc.

So many obstacles and veils did the modern man place between himself and the truth that his vision was rendered blurred and distorted, and that most of his thinking paradigms became flawed and his judgments incoherent and one-sided almost beyond repair. So much so that in most authentic spiritual terms, the modern man has eyes but cannot see, has ears but cannot hear, and has the heart but cannot perceive and embrace the truth despite it being readily seeable, hearable, perceivable and livable.

Indeed, the similitude of such as negate and repudiate the obvious signs contained at once in revelation and creation is that of Iblis (Satan) who knew God, spoke to Him, knew the purpose of man's creation and all creation, lived with angels, etc., yet, he rebelled against God and His authority, as well as against the spiritual order of ideas and things, and became voluntarily ruined in both worlds:

"... He refused and was haughty; he was of those who reject Faith" (al-Baqarah, 34).

Moreover, their similitude is that of all those who rejected the Prophets, in spite of witnessing a series of world-shattering miracles being performed at their hands, dismissing them simply as acts of sorcery, folly, shamanism, or extraordinary talents. To them, every debased form of hedonism, disbelief, hypocrisy, superstition and polytheism made more sense than believing in

the One true and transcendent God Who created them and was ceaselessly communicating with them via their Prophets and revelations.

Nevertheless, the problem is never the truth. The problem is always man's inability to see it, and his unwillingness to genuinely find, embrace and live it. The problem, further, is always with man, and inside his individuality, not with, or inside, anything else. Instead of his life and his character being shaped in its image, man keeps trying to alter and shape the truth in his own despairing and tumultuous image.

Hence, the arguments of sceptics and disbelievers against the truth and God are always unquestionably false and illogical, and move in circles. Instead of clearing thus their confusion and doubts, they keep compounding them. Their arguments are as inconsequential, irrational and sterile as the life systems and civilizational models they put forth as alternatives to what was divinely revealed to the holy Prophets.

That was a chief reason why the Prophets used to exclaim:

*"What! Can there be a doubt about Allah, the Creator (Fatir) of the heavens and the earth?"
(Ibrahim, 10).*

The Prophets did so while disputing with the disbelieving members of their communities, and finding it difficult to fathom why they could not see, nor hear, nor perceive the obvious and compelling truth which was discernible as much in the smallest and simplest as in the grandest and most convoluted.

Certainly, it was not by chance that the word used in the above verse for "the Creator" is Fatir, which implies not only creating and bringing the universe and everything in it into existence, but also giving every created thing its particular character, objective and meaning. This connotes total harmony, equilibrium, balance and stability that pervade each and every aspect and component of creation and their subtle relationships.

Related to the same word is another term, fitrah, which approximately means "primordial nature" or "instinct", which, together with its repositories and carriers, constantly and avidly craves for and seeks its Creator. The close relationship between Fatir (the Creator) and fitrah (primordial nature or instinct) brings to light that Islamic monotheism and man's – as well as everything else's -- constant inclining to the truth constitute the pattern on which God has made mankind and the whole of the universe (al-Rum, 30).

Along the same lines, the angles, the guardians of Hell, as well, will imply on the Day of Judgment that more people should have followed their Prophets and the heavenly messages revealed to them. They will wonder, with an apparent degree of surprise, what might have held people back from reading and comprehending the undeniable signs, and from heeding their Prophets' honest and reasonable warnings, and why (al-Zumar, 71). As if the angels will ask what made those people betray themselves, their primordial covenant with their Creator, and their preordained nature, or instinct.

What man needs, most of all, in order to set things right, is to cleanse his mind and purify his soul, so as to be able to function as a normal, but enlightened and responsible, human being and as God's vicegerent on earth. That's not a tall order, though, because man, after all, has been created but to worship his Creator and to serve Him only in all his affairs. Man has been created innocent, pure and fully compatible only with the ultimate truth. His task, therefore, is to remain faithful to himself, his Creator and Master, and to the predetermined scheme of physical and metaphysical portents. In other words, the only thing man ought to do is to stay the course, without straying into the sham worlds of falsehood, deceit and ignorance.

While enjoying and celebrating the immeasurable wealth and beauty of the truth and his

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Thinking Straight

Ali Unal

Some truths are absolute, universal and without exception, some are general and some relative. For example, God's existence with His essence, attributes, names and works are absolute and universal truths; so are principles of faith such as divine justice with its dimensions of unity, gathering, destiny, forgiveness, munificence and mercy. Occurrences that can be examined by sciences like physics and chemistry are general truths for which exceptions can be found. On the other hand, truths showing differences in color, tone and character dependent on time, individuals, or conditions as opposed to seriousness, discipline, gentleness and tolerance, are relative truths. The number of relative truths in our lives is much greater than the number of absolute and universal truths.

If we evaluate knowledge as "an accumulation of information obtained as a result of a person's effort, merits, and capabilities," then man will come to this world without knowing anything and will encounter an endless universe where innumerable creatures come together and countless events unfold. Everything in the universe outside of man's influence is in its proper place and complete order, harmony and

balance reign. We can say that all the spiritual and scientific principles underlying the unshakable order, harmony and indestructible balance of this vast and complex universe, of which the human body comprises a miniature, are the sum of truth or truths.

On the other hand, sciences like physics, chemistry and biology—regardless of whether or not they are accurate—examine the universe and universal relationships with their own peculiar principles. The data from these sciences are taken up by philosophers, scientific and existentialist philosophers, etc. and data from human relations is used by sociologists and psychologists. In contrast, through their basic tenets of faith, monotheistic religions like Islam see the universe and man as an expression of the same truth in all relationships, principles of life and particulars of existence. In this situation divine books like the Qur'an are an expression of, in fact, comprise, themselves, the truth that provides universal harmony, balance and order or the totality of truth. Throughout history philosophers, sociologists and psychologists who have determined or discovered truths have differed among themselves, which has led to the

emergence of different schools of thought. In contrast, all prophets and the divine books they brought have espoused the same thing. Consequently, we can say that all the principles that bring about the universe in all kinds of events and relationships and provide universal harmony, order and balance and the Qur'an, the only divine book that has remained unchanged, are the "truth itself." Thinking and drawing conclusions according to these in view of all things and events can be called "thinking straight."

Main factors of thinking straight

Character and intention

Man is equipped with many capabilities, while being at the same time caught in a web of very mixed emotions and endless needs. He has faculties like intelligence that surround and burden him with sorrows from the past and fear and anxiety for the future, a conscience that reminds him of his human responsibility and the essential purpose of his creation, and a will that continuously brings him to choose between alternatives. Just as man can put his intelligence, conscience and will under the command of truth, he can also surrender them to the power of his desires, needs, interests and ambitions. The characteristics inherited at birth also play an important role in his thought. The sum of these characteristics is called man's nature or character.

A person under the influence of self-interest, desire, and moral weaknesses, and who has not yet found the right direction, especially one motivated by lower emotions such as jealousy, revenge, hatred and hostility, cannot easily think straight. Thus, one of the most important conditions for thinking straight is spiritual and moral training, of which the most reliable for all times and peoples is by the guidance of the Qur'an.

The elements making up a person's character such as desire, inclination, sensibility and need, always influence his intentions. When the

intention is not to reach the truth but to realize a personal goal the individual has set for himself, then that individual may not hesitate to distort data or even twist the truth. In order to strive after the truth and think straight, a person must have a sound intention which depends upon a trained and disciplined character.

Sent to this world with a nature that is ready to be trained, in fact, must be trained, man encounters two main resources for filling the transparent and empty mental cup that he is born with. The first is an environment composed of the immediate family circle, the cultural and social milieu (this includes the modern media) and schooling. The second is divine inspiration. From the moment of birth man naturally falls under the influence of his immediate family and surroundings. In time this influence leads to the development of the individual mind of many notions, modes of thinking, patterns of value and understanding. At school these are changed, reinforced or renewed by what is learned there.

During this process many divinely inspired thoughts come depending on the individual's effort and mental concentration. These thoughts can come, like many scientific discoveries, in the form of dreams or as inspiration to the heart. Divinely inspired thoughts, even if they are always essentially true, take on colour and form (like water taking the colour and shape of the bowl) according to the person's mental make-up, spiritual degree, and emotional sensitivity. Thus, the mental framework that has been shaped by the family, the environment, by formal or informal training, and by received modes of perception and patterns of value, can be regarded as the individual's measures.

At every stage in the process of developing the mental make-up, that is, at the different stages of the life-long educational process, man thinks and evaluates differently. This is normal. We can see changing thoughts and values as the normal consequence of a constantly developing mental make-up. What is abnormal is if a person

falls into the trap of thinking that every stage is the final one, then promotes his thoughts at that stage as absolutely true. This is one of the gravest mistakes that people make. The presentation of his thoughts as the absolute truth by one who is constantly in a learning phase, and in whose mind many false thought patterns and measurements have accumulated, is harmful. It can prevent him from learning new ideas, from avoiding repeating his mistakes, from reaching the truth, and from questioning and investigation at a later stage. God forbid, it can even lead him to stray or become a despot 'for the sake of knowledge'.

In view of this, the path to thinking straight passes through sound measures and, as a result, a healthy perspective. This can be achieved first by doubt, that is, by doubting everything except absolute truths taken from their source. Then, by mental and spiritual purification. The mind must be cleared of mistakes and biases and the heart of sin and lower emotions. Beyond that, signs of enlightenment that will take one to the truth and to thinking straight should be followed. Unless these stages are accomplished, unless sound measures and consequently a healthy point of view are obtained, it doesn't matter how much a person knows or works; he can't reach the truth.

Accurate knowledge

After a sound character, sincere intention and correct point of view, the most important factor for thinking straight is accurate knowledge. For a person with a healthy intention and perspective, accurate knowledge is the essential sound material with which to think straight, just as, for making bread the right flour in the right amount is essential material. Without this, it's not possible to think straight. Unless, there is revelation as for the Prophets—but that is no longer possible. Otherwise Divine inspiration can only manifest in a very pure heart. Even with inspiration, the range is very limited; in

most aspects of life there is a need for accurate knowledge.

Escaping from the restrictions of time and conditions or perceiving time and conditions accurately

Another factor for thinking straight is being able to escape the restrictions brought about by epoch and circumstances. While doing this, current time and conditions must be taken into consideration so that one is not crushed by them.

Another important factor in thinking straight is thinking about subject-matter or seeking truths that are not tied to time and conditions. This will save a person from thinking in fragments and allow for holistic thinking, which is very important.

However important it is to be free from the restrictions of time and conditions in order to reach truths not limited by them, it is also vitally important to take advantage of time and conditions. Just as the number of truths in our lives that are absolute (i.e. true for everyone all the time and under all conditions) is small, the number of relative truths (those that change according to people, time and conditions) is great. Thus, especially in finding truths in this second group, knowing and diagnosing accurately the times, conditions, and people involved, is one of the most important paths to thinking straight. Regarding the subject of Islam, which is a religion that addresses every century, every level, every character and temperament, and every condition, it is vitally important to know well all the different epochs, social levels, characters and temperaments in order not to fall into error. Otherwise, in the name of Islam the door to catastrophe can open and—God forbid—the danger of man falling within the bounds of reference of the following verses can arise: Say: 'Shall we tell you of those who lose most in respect of their deeds? Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life, while they thought that they were acquiring good by their works?' (al-

How About The Place Of Relativity In Thinking Straight?

With the publication of the “Theory of Relativity” at the turn of the century, the world-view based on the laws of simple cause and effect physics that began with Galileo and reached its peak in the 19th century, received a severe blow. Goethe’s observation that “people running after an idea fall into more and more error” was tellingly demonstrated, and scientists themselves were obliged to acknowledge the limitations of scientific theories. For example, T.G. Masaryk’s admission — that “Theories, after nourishing for a while the organs in the body of science, dry up and fall to the ground like leaves” — pointed out how difficult it is to maintain constant and permanent success in the sciences.

For centuries scientists had accused religion of being a collection of dogmas and religious people of being dogmatists. However, only with the demonstration of the limitations of classical physics did they realize that they too had become dogmatically attached to their theories. As Bertrand Russell put it: “Newton’s law reigned for such a long time and explained so many things that no one believed that it would ever need correcting. But eventually it became apparent that correction was needed. Let there be no doubt about it, one day these corrections will need to be corrected.” Science advances, if and when it does, by trial and error. In spite of this, Einstein’s Theory of Relativity which replaced the classical physics of Newton’s Law is treated in many circles as if it were absolute truth, and the fact that it will need revision is kept hidden from sight. It is quite probable that eventually it will give way to a new theory.

It seems that going to extremes in the pursuit of a single idea is a constant trait of human beings. Whereas, while there is a share of truth in each of these great ideas, they are not the only

means nor the only expressions of truth. If we think of truth as a light at the center point of a circle or a straight line, we see that the light will be reflected ray by ray to an infinite number of points on the circle’s circumference or along the straight line. Each point is touched by a ray of the truth and therefore each can be said to be true. However, the fact is that only the light of the truth in the center never changes, since it is absolute in contrast to each point which is only a relative truth. What gives the relative truth its particular dimensions and properties, its relevance, is the nature of the receiving point, its own properties, time and conditions. This is true for the natural sciences, as much as for the social sciences; indeed, it also applies to fields of Islamic learning such as tafsir (commentary on the Qur’an) and fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

But we may ask, Is there no permanent, absolute truth? Yes, this truth exists but it does so on the spiritual rather than the visible, external dimension of things. In fact, from one view even in the principles which relate to the spiritual dimension of things there are exceptions. These principles are not absolute, universal laws because, in their relevance to the visible, external dimension, they operate as general principles, that is, they admit exceptions. In respect of this difference between absolute and general laws, even science cannot affirm its laws, for example the law of cause and effect, absolutely. For this reason scientists say, “If the universe is in T1 condition at this moment, it cannot be concluded that a little later it will be in the same condition.”

We have already mentioned that the difference between absolute and general principles can be seen in the social sciences and even in the Islamic sciences like tafsir and fiqh. In the Realm of Unity, single and indivisible truth opens the door to countless relative truths in this material and quantitative world. For example, the Qur’an mentions good works as being virtues, as inherently and always of value. This

is so, and yet we know that what are virtues under certain conditions and according to certain people may not be considered virtues under different circumstances, at a different time, by others. An administrator's seriousness of manner may be considered to be dignity at work, but haughtiness at home. A weak person's self-respect before a strong person is a quality to be praised, but the same quality in a strong person before a weaker one is considered undesirable. In the same way, what is an act of sin for one person can be a meritorious act for another. For this reason it was said, "Pious deeds of righteous people are the sins of those near to God." Again, an act that earns a single merit for one person can earn a million merits for another. Again for this reason, as long as there is no conflict with the literal meaning of a word and the root of the word is studied and the rules of the Arabic language are not violated, the understanding of every reader of every verse in the Qur'an can be listened to with respect.

The most obvious example of the manifestation of the relative truth of general principles in history is in the sphere of justice. In the absolute, justice would see personal rights and public rights as equal. But sometimes there is such a disturbance of the peace that it is not possible to protect either the rights of the individual or of the public, let alone both; sometimes, even fundamental rights to life and Islam's basic principles are endangered. During such times relative justice, which sacrifices the individual's rights for the sake of the public good, becomes necessary and application of it becomes absolutely mandatory. In Turkish history the administration by sultans and even the killing of sons and brothers in the Ottoman dynasty were demanded by relative justice, which, by virtue of the necessity of compelling circumstances, gains the same authority as absolute justice.

In this earthly world there is such variety and abundance of colors, shapes, properties, times and conditions, that it is not possible

to avoid relativism altogether. It is a reality of this world. Having understood that, we do also need truths which are at least close to absolute so that we can guide our lives by them. The absolute truth is that in the universe there is no real effect created by causes, and everything is in God's hand. It is not predictable with certainty what will happen next, and our lives and the life of the world actually consist of this moment. Living this truth consciously together with faith and surrender to God, from the perspective of free-will given to man, we have also to give due recognition to the experience that causes do operate relatively reliably, though not absolutely, in this life. Because of this, the causes wrapping absolute reality like a shawl or veil, a veil of familiarity or habit, make life livable and thereafter, all technology and sciences get constructed on this veil. This is the broad region of human actions and observations where Newton's classical physics has precedence over Einstein's relativity physics.

Relativity is an important matter that reminds man of his vulnerability. The highest station a person who is climbing the ladder of divine knowledge can reach by means of his heart is the station of amazement. As the greatest human being said, "We did not know You as we should, O All-Munificent" and "How could I see Him; what I saw was light." Similarly, the scientist solves one problem, but opens the door to many new ones, and his trust in the century-old foundations of science suddenly falls through. The moment he says that he has found the truth, he sees that everything slips from his grasp. The fact of relativity makes him exclaim, "The only thing I know is that I don't know anything," and this leads him, like a moth flying around a light, to eternally flap his wings around the light of divine knowledge.

Relativity shows that absolute truth lies only in Revelation and never begins with man. It can be directly known only by Revelation. Therefore it is clear that man has an absolute need for re-

ligion and definite religious dogma. It has been seen in innumerable fields of activity that two people cannot agree on even a simple matter; thus, absolute truth can never derive from man and can only come from God. Man's duty is to organize his living and dying according to the God-given truth at the point of belief. Understanding that human beings can only attain partial truth is also an acknowledging of the space separating multiplicity from oneness. In pointing to and yearning for the oneness beyond multiplicity, this understanding functions as one of the important proofs of oneness.

Relativity is an important measure for managing (learning to live peaceably with) the differences among professions, temperaments, schools and sects that have arisen in philosophy, teaching methods and religions. All dispositions, sects, schools and methods have a portion of the truth and none of them are absolutely wrong or false. The important thing is for them to be able to unite around a common point. When we look to the past and catastrophes from the perspective of fate, and when we look to the future responsibilities and divine orders from the perspective of free-will and opportunity, then it is possible even to reconcile the conflict between the fatalists and the proponents of freedom of will.

The essential thing is to live believing that absolute truth when it touches upon this world, when it becomes relevant for us, is relative to us, conditioned by the points, circumstances, conditions receiving it. In the analogy given above, countless relative truths reflect the absolute truth located at the center point of the circle or the straight line at innumerable other points according to the properties, color and design of each. As long as people recognize, acknowledge, and defer to their own distance from the absolute truth, and don't go beyond their human limits, unmanageable conflicts will not arise. But when people lose this sense of proportion about themselves and their capacity to know

and propose the truth, when they take what is relative for what is absolute, they fall into errors with catastrophic consequences.

Securing the Du'aa of the Angels

When one makes du'aa for any Muslim in his absence, then in reality one is actually making du'aa for oneself. The Hadith has mentioned that when any person makes du'aa for his Muslim brother to be blessed with goodness and success, then the angels of Allah Ta'ala say to him, "May you be blessed with the same!" (i.e. O servant of Allah! May Allah grant you the very thing that you are making du'aa for your brother to receive) Hence, to make du'aa for every Muslim to be blessed with goodness is a definite method for one to secure the du'aa of the angels.

(Moulana Muhammad Ilyaas)

A Practical Approach to Unity

Jafar Idris

True unity is unity of hearts that comes as a result of faith in Allah and that makes people love each other as brothers and sisters. It is this bond of brotherhood that makes it easy for people to advise, to forgive, to excuse, to cooperate, to help and make *duâ* for each other.

And hold fast all together by Allah's rope and be not divided among yourselves, and remember Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts so that by His grace you became brothers. [3:103]

And [Allah] brought together their hearts. Had you spent all that is on the earth you would not have been able to join their hearts together, but Allah brought them together, for He is exalted in might, wise. [8:63]

The Quran stresses the fact that it is this unity of hearts that matters; mere coming together of people is not unity because it can take place even among people who hate each other:

You would think that they are united but (in reality) their hearts are divided, that is because they are a people who do not understand. [59:14]

It is this true unity of hearts, which we must aspire to achieve and preserve. Since it is a faith-based unity, the best way to strengthen it is by strengthening the faith that generates and but-

tresses it. The more we know about Allah, the more we become sincere in worshipping Him, the more we do all this by being very strict in following the way of the Prophet œ and his Companions, the more will we be united and the stronger will our loving relationship be.

By contrast, the more ignorant we become of some of the truths stated in the Quran or the Sunnah, and therefore deny them, the more we sow the seeds of discord among ourselves:

With those who call themselves nasâra (Christians), we made a covenant, but they forgot some of that of which they were told to bear in mind, so we stirred up enmity and hatred among them to the Day of Judgment. [5:14]

Enmity and hatred come as a natural result of denying some of the revealed truths because those who deny them will think of those who affirm them as deviating from religion or of making additions to it.

Organizational Unity

Despite its fundamental importance, unity of hearts is by itself not enough. This is so because though Islam starts its *islâh* (change to the better) at the individual's heart or mind, it never neglects the importance of external and communal behavior because of the great interaction between the mental and the physical. Faith

unites hearts and minds, but the internal unity has to be expressed in and enhanced by organizational unity. Muslims are required to live as a jamâa (organized society), not as a scattered individuals. The ideal form of this jamâa is a polity whose government abides by the dictates of the Quran and the Sunnah. What if for some reason we fail to realize that ideal society? Islam advises us to always do what we can; if we are unable to do the ideal, we opt for the second best, the third best, and so on.

Allah does not require a person to do except that which he (or she) can. [2:286]

The ideal choice for Muslims living in a country like the U.S, for example, would be to have one general organization that includes all Muslims and places them under one leadership. With such an all-embracing umbrella they can make many political, economic, educational and social achievements in a legal and peaceful way. The second best would be several organizations that are ready to coordinate their activities and cooperate among themselves in achieving common objectives (and there are many of them). That does not mean that they can never criticize each other or explain why they differ on certain issues; but difference is one thing and conflict is another.

Being Realistic

What if one does not find a society or organization to ones liking? One must be realistic and remember that it is almost impossible to find a group with which one is in hundred percent agreement on all matters. A thinking and honest person always weighs the pros and cons of being with an organization or leaving it. The general rule is that if a person approves of the main objectives and means of the organization, he must stick to it even if he finds himself in disagreement over certain issues. I know of some people who would boycott a masjid if they find the imam in the habit of committing

certain bida (innovation). There is no harm in that if the alternative is to go to another masjid where the imam is better. But if the alternative is to perform Salah at home and live in seclusion from the Muslim community, then it is certainly worse than offering Salah behind an imam who commits bida. One should always apply the rational and Islamic principle of opting for the lesser of two evils.

Cooperation

People who have faith-based relationship can cooperate on almost every thing. But it is wrong to think that cooperation must be confined to persons with whom we have such special relationship, and with whom we agree on almost every thing. The scope of cooperation is much wider. Enlightened Muslims cooperate with every one who works for the achievement of what they believe to be a noble objective. They do so because they believe that it is their duty to increase the good and lessen the evil in this world; they, therefore, believe that any one who does good or forbids evil is helping them in carrying out their duty. It makes no difference to them whether the person who does the good is a Muslim or a Non-Muslim, a hypocrite, or a deviant Muslim. Some good words of Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim are worth quoting at length in this respect. Commenting on the agreement of Hudaibia, which the Prophet ﷺ concluded with the people of Makkah and prior to which he promised to grant them any request in which they hold any of Allah's commands in high esteem, Ibn Al-Qayyim remarked:

If the polytheists, the innovators, the sinful, the aggressors, ask for help in a matter in which they respect any of Allah's commands they must be granted that help, even if they refuse to do so with other commands of Allah. They must be thus helped in matters in which they respect Allah's commands, not in their kufr or aggression ... Thus any one who seeks help in a matter which is

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The Ansar

and Us.....

O Anjum

The name of Ansâr never fails to evoke undertones of sacrifice, submission, and love of Allah and His Messenger and warm sentiments of appreciation in our hearts. There is much for us to learn from their lives. Is there something common between the Ansâr of Madinah and us today? I suggest: There is something fundamental. Let us look at the story of the Ansâr and reflect on our commonality.

The Ansar: Allah's Gift to Islam

The Ansâr, literally the supporters, of Madinah, were a gift of Allah to Islam. Their sacrifices were immense and their faith stunning. They believed in Islam as soon as they heard Musaib ibn Umayr recite the words of Allah to them, and finally invited the Messenger of Allah to move to their township.

Poor and war-torn Yathrib, the house of grief, was an apt name for what is now Madinah. But Allah has distinguished its people with hearts that are pure and beautiful, and even today the generous manners of the people of Madinah remind us of their hospitality to the Beloved Messenger of Allah. Inviting the Muslims to their land, and giving them protection, was tantamount to declaring war against all the Arabs, particularly the most in-

fluent of them, the Quraysh. The Prophet's loving but so-far non-Muslim uncle, Abbâs, warned the Madinans: You should know what you are getting yourself into...you better not take my nephew from my protection and then abandon him. The Ansâr, of course, knew this well. Their faith-filled answer was: Even if the Messenger of Allah leads us into the sea, we will follow him. We will not say what the children of Israel said to Musa: Fight you and your Lord, O Musa, and we are sitting right here.

Their Sacrifices for Islam

The Ansâr knew how to keep their word. They surpassed any estimations of human sacrifice the world had known by how readily they embraced their penniless refugee brothers—the Muhâjirûn—and shared with them all their wealth and property. When the rebellious tribe of Banu Al-Nasir was expelled from Madinah without a fight, the Prophet of Allah distributed the spoils to the poor Muhâjirûn. The Ansâr submitted to the decision with their characteristic faith.

The sacrifice of the Ansâr and their preference for their immigrant brothers at their own expense won them applause even from the Lord of seven heavens, and Allah said in Sûrat Al-Hashr: But those who before them,

had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the faith, show their affection to those who came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire in their hearts for things given to the (Muhâjirûn), but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their own lot. And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls are the ones that achieve (eternal) prosperity. [Sûrat Al-Hashr 59:9]

They Passed the Ultimate Test

However, the strongest test of the Ansâr was yet to come. The conquest of Makkah brought a large number of Makkans and other Arab tribes into Islam. Among them were honorable chiefs and influential leaders who likely felt they had lost the battle against Islam even though they had embraced Islam. When the battle of Hunayn followed and more spoils of war were secured, the Prophet (saws) sought to attract and soften the hearts of these new-Muslims by giving them the majority of the spoils, while some went to the poor Muhâjirûn, but nothing to the Ansâr.

The Ansâr were hurt. Did this mean that the Prophet (saws) was now going to forget them, now that he has regained his own city, and was he going to turn his back to them? Why were they deprived of their share of the spoils? Rumors started to go around. Hassân ibn Thâbit, the poet of the Ansâr, recited lines of poetry that mean: “Go to the Prophet and say you are the best among all human beings. Why should you invite Sulaim tribe to take a share of war spoils although they are mere Muhâjirûn while you deprived the Ansâr, who gave shelter, support and help to Muhâjirûn.”

We will let Abû Saïd Al-Khudri, an Ansâri, give the account, as reported by Ibn Isâq:

The leader of the Ansâr, Sad ibn Ubâdah, went immediately to the Prophet (saws) and said: “O Messenger of Allah, this group of the Ansâr are displeased with what you did with the spoils of war. You have distributed war

booty among your people, and have given generous portions to the Arab tribes, but you did not give the Ansâr anything.” The Prophet (saws) asked him, “What is your opinion about it?” Sad answered with the same bluntness, “I am but one of my people.” The Prophet (saws) asked him to gather the Ansâr.

The Ansâr were gathered, and no one else but them was allowed in the meeting. The Messenger of Allah   said, “O Ansâr, I heard that an incident that happened recently made you feel ill at ease. Now, did I not find you ignorant and guided you to the way of Allah? Did I not find you poor and Allah enriched you of His bounty? Did I not find you enemies and Allah joined your hearts together?”

They answered, “Indeed, Allah and His Prophet are far more generous and better.”

The Prophet (saws) then said, “Don’t you have anything to say, O Ansâr?” They answered, “There is nothing to be said but that Allah and His Prophet have the grace and bounty.”

The Prophet (saws) then said, “By Allah, you could have said – and if you did, you would have been truthful and acknowledged – ‘we believed in you at a time when all called you a liar. We supported you at a time when you were frustrated. We gave you our money at a time when you were poor and we even sheltered you at a time when you were homeless.’ O Ansâr, are you upset for a thing so trivial and worldly that I gave to some people so as to join their hearts to Islam and left you out of it, believing that your Islam sufficed you? Is it not enough for you that the rest of the people will go home with a sheep or a camel, whereas you will return with the Messenger of Allah? By Allah in whose hands is Muhammad’s soul, you return with a better thing than they went home with. If not for the migration, I would rather have been one of the Ansâr. If the people moved in one way, and the Ansâr moved the other way, I would choose the way of the Ansâr. O Allah, do have mercy on the Ansâr, their children,

sand their children's children.

By the time the Prophet (saws) concluded his words, their beards were wet with tears, for the words of the beloved Prophet (saws) filled their hearts with tranquility and enriched their souls. All of them cried out, "It is enough for us to have the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as our reward!"

This is precisely what is common between the Ansâr and us: "It is enough for us to have

the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as our reward!" As Muslims, we are oppressed, suspected and harassed in the world; we have inherited none of the glorious riches or powerful empires of early Islam. We get no booty for being Muslims, no worldly glory, and no advantages. Still, we are to struggle in the path of Allah, sacrifice in His way, trusting that "He never fails His promise," while nothing is on our side... except Allah and His Messenger(saws)!

Powerful Prescription

Sayyidah Ummu Sulaim (ra) once came to Rasulullah (saws) and requested, "O Rasul of Allah (saws)! Teach me some words to recite through which I will make du'aa to Allah Ta'ala." Rasulullah (saws) answered, "Recite Subhaanallah ten times, Alhamdulillah ten times and Allahu Akbar ten times. Thereafter, ask your needs of Allah Ta'ala, for He will say, 'I have done so! I have done so! (I have fulfilled your needs)'" (Musnad Ahmad)

The prescription given to Sayyidah Ummu Sulaim (ra) by Rasulullah (saws) is one that is both easy to recite and extremely powerful. We all have needs, and every person is totally dependent on Allah Ta'ala alone for the fulfillment of his needs. Hence, before supplicating to Allah Ta'ala and presenting our needs to Him, let us strive to recite the zikr prescribed above. It will take only a few moments, but the effect of the du'aa that is answered will be long lasting.

Envy

Abdul Haleem

Bukhari narrated in his book Sahih Al-Bukhâri on the authority of Abû Hurairah that the Prophet (saws) said:

There shall be no envying of anyone save two (types).

- A man to whom Allah has taught the Quran and who recites it in the watches of the night and the watches of the day. Thus should a neighbor of his hear him, he may say: "Would that I be given what so-and-so has been given so that I might do what he does; and

- A man to whom Allah has given (much) wealth, who continually lightens himself of it in (the path of) truth. Thus a man may say: "Would that I be given what so-and-so has been given so that I might do what he does."

What is Envy (Hasad)?

The Arabic word 'Hasad' means 'envy.' More specifically, it is to wish that the blessing of another be taken away from him/her and given to you so that you can be in a higher state than that person. Or, 'Hasad' is to desire that a blessing be taken from another so that you may at least feel that you are the equal of another [in a specific

regard].

Anyone who allows Hasad to fester in his or her heart, or who acts or speaks based on the feeling of Hasad is blameworthy and has committed a sin. Human nature is such in its creation that it is disposed to love being better than others. This being the case, the initial impulse of envy is not sinful. Only when one does not consciously subdue the sinful aspects of this impulse does one become sinful.

When Envy is Not Haram (Prohibited)

Hasad is considered halâl (allowed, encouraged) only when one sees that an ungodly person has a blessing that he uses to commit evil acts — in which case one can wish that the blessing be taken away from such a person. The motivation in this circumstance, however, is not the desire for you yourself to be raised. It is for the general good to be raised.

As for the Hasad mentioned in the above hadîth, it is not to be taken strictly in its literal sense. Rather, it means that one desires these two blessings for oneself so that one might do good works therewith—absent the desire for the other to lose his or her blessing. Thus competi-

tion in goodness is good. Allah has said:

Then, for this—that is, the delights of Paradise—let the competitors compete. [83:26]

Further, competition in that which has no moral component (such as in a race or sports), the Sharīah neither encourages nor frowns upon it. Conversely, competing in disobedience to Allah is Harām. For this reason the Prophet (saws) said:

And do not compete with one another, " meaning, do not compete with one another in bad things.

Wider Implication and Interlinking References

The recitation of the Quran and the spending of wealth in the above-mentioned [^]adith symbolizes all good things. That is because the recitation of the Quran in this context means not only the recitation in and of itself, but also the implementation in one's behavior of what those recited verses call for. Moreover, obedience to Allah is performed through actions and through wealth. Thus the recitation of the Quran represents, by extension, all good actions.

Encouraged competition is not restricted to the two specific things which the Prophet \ae mentioned in the hadith above. The proof for this is that there are other ahadith in Bukhārī that have the same basic thrust, but with slight variations. For example:

There shall be no envy except in two (things):

- A man to whom Allah has given (much) wealth such that Allah uses this man to distribute wealth in the path of truth; and

- A man to whom Allah has given wisdom such that he judges based upon it and teaches"

What is entailed in Al-Hikmah, "[the] Wisdom"?

'Al-Hikmah, the Quranic term translated '[the] wisdom,' strongly implies in this context

the knowledge of hadith. The proof for this is Imam Al-Shāfi'i's tafsīr of the verse:

Thus be ever mindful of [and repeat often] what is recited in your homes of the verses of Allah and of 'the wisdom.' Indeed, ever is Allah subtle, all-aware. [33:34]

Of this verse, Al-Shāfi'i said:

It is well known that the verses of Allah were recited in the house of the Prophet \ae [that is, his wives' apartments]. Then what is al-Hikmah referring to other than the Sunnah?

Thus, this ayah (verse) may be translated what is recited in your homes from among the verses of Allah and from among [the traditions of prophetic] wisdom, that is, ahadith. The Sunnah are the right/ righteous/ maximally God-pleasing ways of Prophet Muhammad (saws), as attested to in the ahadith literature. This exemplary, prophetic model of lifestyle for all humankind is, indeed, the highest form of wisdom—set in action by the Companions of the Prophet (saws).

Also, Al-Kitāb (the Book) is another word often mentioned in the Quran paired with the mention of al-Hikmah, such as in the verse, recounting Abraham's prayer:

Our Lord! And send forth among [our descendants] a messenger from their own who shall recite to them Your verses, and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them. Indeed, it is You, You [alone] who are the Overpowering One, the All-Wise. [2:129]

Hence, the strong implication is that al-Hikmah, "[the] wisdom," in this context refers to the exemplary practice of Muhammad \ae , what he had been seen to have wisely done and said, based as it was in his inspired, prophetic behavior, that is, in his Sunnah.

May Allah transform our inclination for envy to all "the Wisdom" (Al-Hikmah) that leads to pleasing our Lord.

Dilemma of Teaching Islam to Contemporary Youth

Sadullah Khan

“Train your children with a training different from your training, because they have been created for a period different from yours”

[Sayyidna ‘Ali]

Muslim youth are under the hammer of two extremes; forced to live in virtually two different worlds. In homes; which are culturally Muslim, and in an environment outside the home, which tends to be challenging in many ways as well as Islamophobic in some circumstances.. Youth fail to understand where they belong. Whatever they hear in many Mosques may seem meaningless to them in their daily lives, while in the real world they are exposed to the pressures of multiculturalism, assimilation and peer-presures. The result is that they suffer from Identity Crises. Identity, we must remember, is vitally important for self-esteem and self-esteem is so crucial for mental, emotional and personality development.

The home and madrasah/school atmosphere has a significant impact on the youth's attitude towards Islam. I focus here on 7 facets that need our attention:

1. Too often when parents/teachers think about talking to their children about Islam, they concentrate on the ritual of the five pillars. They expect teachers at school/madarasah to teach their children how to make salaah and memorize some short Qur'anic surahs. These are important, but don't forget that Islam is a total way of life; not mere memorization and ritual. Many children know how to pray; very few feel the need to pray, fewer still understand its importance. Quite a large number of children know how to read the Qur'an. Only a few read the Qur'an in order to understand it and fewer still in order to find solutions.

2. Many parents grew up in areas where colonizing rulers maintained schools for acquiescence. That is, pupils were taught to merely repeat exactly what the teacher told them. If the test question asked for 3 reasons why you pray, the answer had to be the exact three reasons that

the teacher had told them in class. In the process, personal understanding is undermined.

3. Throughout much of the Muslim world, Islamic education itself has been, so to speak, self-imitative for centuries. A teacher is expected to teach what he was taught, using the same methods by which he was taught. Hence it is extremely difficult to get most Islamic Studies and Arabic teachers to look at any textbook other than the textbook from which they learned, or to consider any change in the method which might speed up the pupils' learning and enhance their understanding.

4. The pupil is not supposed to think; he is supposed to accept everything without questioning. {If students do question, their questioning is mistaken as a rebellion.}

5. The prevalence of the Fear and Guilt approach is still prevalent. Instead of seeing the world as an opportunity, it is seen as a trap; in-

stead of enjoying the gifts of life, everything is seen through the prism of 'haraam'; instead of basking in the mercy of Allah, we are gripped in fear of God... This approach is most counter productive and often achieves the very result we are trying to avoid. Stressing the negative makes the child want to avoid anything to do with the religion. Children grow up thinking that it is religion that keeps one from enjoying life. The notion of wanting and having the best of this world and the best in the Hereafter is undercut.

6. Our children's first experience of Islam is based almost entirely on the memorization of many sounds and words of unknown meaning, of actions of unknown significance and of facts of no obvious relevance to the question of what is Islam and what does it mean to be a Muslim. This is after all the way most born Muslims are taught Islam, and they tend to feel it is the only way in which it can be passed on to the next generation. The children are therefore naturally under the impression that Islam is something

you memorize and hopefully are able to repeat when asked.

7. Learning "Islamic Studies" has often normally helped the growing child to understand much. It has not given him any insight and he was not encouraged to ask questions. By the time he reaches teen age he is quite likely to drop the subject and because of a lack of affinity to the subject, he tends to grow up as a virtual "religious illiterate."

Little wonder why so

many Muslims have such little understanding of Islam despite having spent much time attending classes on Islam.

Parents/Guardians have the basic responsibility of providing the young ones a loving family circle, a nurturing and protective home, a good name, good education, health care and preparation for independent life (marriage, work, responsibility ...). The duty now is to ensure that the content and method of teaching be practical and relevant.

**Many know how to pray;
very few feel the need
to pray, fewer still un-
derstand its importance.
Quite a large number
know how to read the
Qur'an. Only a few read
the Qur'an in order to un-
derstand it and fewer still
in order to find solutions.**

Blessings and Benefits from the Sunnah



Maulana Haroon Abbas

Foods filled with blessing and benefit from the Sunnah

By: Moulana Haroon Abasoomer (Allah protect him)

Allah, Most High, has repeatedly made reference to the gift of fruit in the Holy Quran.

In one verse Allah, Most High, says:

"Do you not see that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and we produce therewith fruits of various colours." (Surah Fatir: 87)

Elsewhere Allah, Most High, says:

"and He sent down rain from the sky and brought forth fruits as provision for you." (Surah Baqarah: 22)

Gratitude for all Bounties

Fruits and vegetables are great bounties of Allah, Most High, upon the creation. Some provide nourishment and others are a source of satisfaction and refreshment. As Muslims, we have been taught in the Quran and Hadith to be thankful to Allah, Most High, -our Sole Sustainer- for every minute bounty of His. It is only becoming of a true believer that he remembers his creator during times of enjoyment and happiness just as he turns to Almighty Allah in the

times of difficulty and distress.

The practice of Rasulullah (saws) at the time of receiving the first fruit of the season was that he would firstly show the utmost respect for it, he would then recite a supplication to Allah, Most High. Thereafter he would not partake of it himself; instead he would give it to any child that was present.

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah (Allah be well pleased with him), Sayyiduna ibn 'Abbas (ra both), Sayyiduna Anas (ra) and Sayyidatuna Aishah (ra) have all reported that when the first fruit of the season used to be brought to Rasulullah (saws) he would kiss it, touch it to his eyes, recite the following du'a and then give it to the smallest child that was in his presence:

"Allahumma kama araytana awwalahu, arina akhirahu"

Translation: O Allah! just as You have shown us the first of it, allow us to see the last of it.

References: These narrations have been recorded by Imams: Abu Dawud in his Kitabul Maraseel, Hadith: 475-476 Ibnus Sunni, Hadith: 280, Tabarani in Al-Mu'jamus Saghir, vol. 2 pg. 11 & in his Kitabud Du'a, Hadith: 2004-2005.

'Allamah Haithami (Allah grant him mercy) has declared the narration of Al-Mu'jamus

Saghir as sahih (authentic).

Explanation

The reason for giving it to the child is either because of the similarity between the two that both are new in the world or because of the extreme joy that a child experiences through this. (Al-Futuhatur Rabbaniyyah, vol. 6 pg. 235-236)

Hafiz ibn 'Allan (Allah grant him mercy) mentions that the reason for Rasulullah (saws) kissing the fruit and touching it to his eyes is because it has been newly created by Almighty Allah. Just as Rasulullah (saws) used to go out in the rain and open his chest (so the rain may touch him) and he would say: "Verily it (the raindrops) have only recently arrived from my Lord!" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 2080)

The following Du'a has also been authentically recorded to have been recited by Rasulullah (saws) upon sighting the first fruit of the season:

"Allahumma Bariklana fi thamarina, wa Bariklana fi Madinatina, wa Bariklana fi saw'ina, wa Bariklana fi Muddina"

Translation: O Allah! Grant us Barakah (blessings) in our fruit, grant us Barakah in our town, grant us Barakah in our food that is measured and grant us Barakah in our food that is weighed. (Sahih Muslim, Hadith: 1373)

The Sahabah (ra) would bring the first produce of their orchards to Rasulullah (saws). Many people today emulate that in a way by presenting their first produce to their teachers, seniors etc.

Selected Fruits

The following are among the fruits that Rasulullah (saws) is reported to have consumed in his lifetime:

Fresh dates

Dry dates

Grapes - Rasulullah (saws) would enjoy grapes.

Raisins

Pomegranates - Sayyidunna Abdullah ibn 'Abbas (raa) is reported to have commented that in each pomegranate there is a seed from Jannah. (Majma'uz Zawaid, vol. 5 pg. 45) In fact, the Quran states that pomegranates will be among the fruit of Jannah. (Surah Ar-Rahman: 68)

Cucumbers - Rasulullah (saws) would relish this. He would at times prefer to have it with a bit of salt.

Melons - Melons as well as fresh dates are reported to be from the most beloved of fruits to Rasulullah (saws)

For on the above list refer to Subulul Huda war Rashad (vol. 7 pgs. 204-209).

Conclusion

Each season of the year brings its own fruits. Let's implement the above Sunnah and turn these bounties of Allah, Most High, into "Blessed Fruits"

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unreserved submission to and worship of God alone, such man, from time to time, can wonder what the situation would be if he did not have what he currently has. This is just to become more appreciative of his state, and be more steadfast in what he does.

He can also wonder -- hypothetically and for the sake of boosting his self-confidence and determination -- what doubting, or attempting to disprove the existence of God, could mean, or bring to its executor, and what rationally and intrinsically acceptable could be produced for the purpose.

This is a safe and very productive approach, for it will be discovered that absolutely nothing wholesome, or satisfactory, can be submitted in defense of spiritual skepticism, agnosticism and atheism. It will be found that one of the best strategies for ascertaining the existence of God, essentially, is to try to rationally and innately refute it.

The Benefit of Mercy

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)

The Benefit of Mercy The Prophet (saws) is reported to have said: “Gabriel has said to me: ‘Allah will not treat mercifully anyone who does not show mercy to people’”. Allah treats with mercy His merciful servants. Treat with mercy those who are on earth so that those who are in heaven treat you mercifully. O you who wish for mercy from Allah (mighty and glorified is He), weigh up its price and you will then get it. Its price is nothing other than showing mercy to His creatures, being compassionate with them, and treating them with good intention. You would like to get something for nothing, so you will get nothing. Pay the price first and then take the priced thing. Woe to you! You lay claim to knowingness of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), yet you show no mercy to His creatures! You have made a false claim. The knower treats with mercy every creature from the point of view of Knowledge, and he shows mercy to some people and not others from the viewpoint of the Law. The Law differentiates, whereas Knowledge unites. Allah (high is He) has said:

“And enter the houses by their doors” (2.189).

The truthful, sincere, practicing shaikhs are

the doors to the True One (mighty and glorified is He) and His ways to His nearness. They are the heirs and deputies of the prophets and messengers (AS). They are the individuals whom the True One (mighty and glorified is He) has singled out and the ones who call to Him. They are ambassadors between Him and the creatures. They are the physicians of religion and the teachers of the creatures. Accept from them and serve them. Surrender your ignorant lower selves to their commandments and prohibitions.

All forms of sustenance are in the hand of Allah (mighty and glorified is He): the sustenance of the bodies, the sustenance of the hearts, and the sustenance of the innermost beings. So request them from Him not from someone else. The sustenance of the bodies is food and drink, the sustenance of the hearts is the belief in the oneness of Allah, and the sustenance of the innermost beings is the private remembrance [of Allah].

Show mercy to your lower selves by striving against them, instructing them to observe the commandments and prohibitions, and training them. Be merciful to the creatures by commanding them to do what is right, forbidding them

from committing what is wrong, offering them truthful advice, and taking them by the hand to the door of their Lord (mighty and glorified is He). Mercy is one of the attributes of the believers, whereas harshness is one of the attributes of the disbelievers.

Maintain a connection with the person who cuts you off, give to the person who deprives you, and pardon the person who wrongs you. If you do this, your rope will be connected to the rope of Allah (high is He) and what you have will be connected to what He has, because these morals are among the morals of Allah (mighty and glorified is He). Respond to the call of the muezzins who call you to the mosques, which are the home of hospitality, the home of private conversation. Answer their call for you will find salvation and satisfaction in them. If you respond to the call of His caller, He will admit you to His house, answer your prayers, draw you near, teach you knowingness and Knowledge, show you what He has, teach your limbs and senses the proper conduct, clean your hearts, purify your innermost beings, confer on you guiding inspiration, place you in His presence, lead your hearts to the abode of His nearness, and give them permission to enter into His presence. He is generous. If you respond to His call and do not underestimate it, He will answer your prayers, treat you kindly, and confer favors on you. The Invincible One has said:

"Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?" (55:60).

If you act properly, He will give you good rewards. The Prophet (saws) has said:

"As you treat others, you will be treated. As your state of affairs is, those who have authority over you will be. It is either in your favor or against you."

The Prophet (saws) has said:

"Keep to good manners in your social relationships with people so that when you are dead they

pray for Allah to show mercy to you and when you are alive they yearn for you."

Heed to this good advice. Tie it to your hearts and do not forget it. It points out to you an easy work that carries much reward. How good fine manners are! They are a source of comfort to the person who has them and to others. How detestable are bad manners! They are a source of fatigue to the person who has them and a source of harm to others.

Don't Lose Hope

The Prophet (saws) said, "Allah the Exalted has said, 'O son of Adam, I shall go on forgiving you so long as you pray to Me and aspire for My forgiveness, whatever may be your faults. O son of Adam, I do not care even if your sins should pile up to the sky; and should you beg pardon of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, if you come to me with an earthful of sins and meet Me, not associating anything with Me (in worship), I would come to you with an earthful of forgiveness.'"

(Tirmidhi)

Change your Mind (frame)

There is an endless stream of things we can do to augment the positive flow of change in our lives and in the world.

A Suleiman

DOES NOTHING STAY THE SAME?

A FEW MONTHS ago, a very close friend of mine got married. Another got engaged. And the rest, they just got busy. Things were changing and time was to blame. For me, time was hitting a turning point of no return (but isn't it always?).

The nature of our gatherings was different now. With growing maturity came a switch in priority, and everyone's time and attention was being distributed differently. Through the past two years, I felt this change in me but somehow believed that as my transformation was taking effect, the world around me remained stagnant. I thought I was the only one making huge life adjustments and decisions, and everyone else was hanging out, waiting for me to plug back in, nicely polished up, a better, finished product. Man was I wrong.

As I drove home that night from my friend's henna party, I was deeply saddened and equally shocked at the fact that everything, this whole time, was changing right along with me. Forget engagement and marriage. We were all growing up. And that gruesomely difficult process alone brings about all the individual change in the

world.

So there I was behind the wheel, thinking, *Ya Allah!* Here I am at these crossroads. New places will become my comfort zone, fresh topics of conversation the focus. And that's it. Everything I am used to and love so much is now changing, losing its original cozy form the warmth that fills your close friend's kitchen where all issues of the world are thoroughly talked about and re-talked about over and over again, your "spot" at the library where you've sat and studied for years, even that specific outfit you have become accustomed to wearing more than any other--poof! It all disappears. Then something else comes along to replace it, and so the cycle repeats.

I was overwhelmed with these thoughts until my fretting little neurons sent me a message:

"All who are upon the earth shall pass away, but everlasting is the face of your Lord-the Possessor of All Majesty and Honor" [55:26-27].

He is never-changing! To Him I could commend my weakness. In Him, and only Him, I could find the strength I was looking for to be secure with myself. It was not in my family who

is always there, not in my friends who I love so dearly, and not in my most recent comfortable lifestyle that I was holding onto for dear life. It was in the fact *that sufficient is Allah for me and an excellent trustee is He.*

We are all searching for stability. And, ironically, the only way to get there is through much vigorous turbulence. In the meantime, and always, Allah is our One source of steadiness.

He is unshakable. He doesn't need anyone, but everyone and everything needs Him.

Of course, we are not to be completely independent of people. Through each other, we find company and comfort (and if there is no one around, a Spalding volley ball with your bloody hand imprinted on it should suffice). This is, naturally, part of Allah's design of humanity. Adam and Eve had each other. We have our spouses, parents, siblings, friends, neighbors, etc... But to enjoy these external sources of reassurance, we must be internally secure. That comes only from Allah.

SO WHY ALL THE CHANGE?

Does change exist to make our lives difficult? I mean, there has to be a purpose for its creation. The function of change can be but one thing: To bring about goodness.

I have no control over the divinely decided events that happen in my life, or in anyone else's, for that matter. I have zero say in what stays and what goes, who leaves and who comes. The only way to prevent change is to stop time--and after religiously watching the *Back to the Future* trilogy as a child, I am convinced that this is impossible.

I do, however, have control over changing my undesirable intentions to good ones. I have power over my deeds. So I can provide helpful services to those in need around me. I can restrain myself from the untoward.

There is, in fact, an endless stream of things I can do to augment the positive flow of change in my life and the world. For over these things

Allah has extended His will to us.

If I must fret about change, then this is the kind of change I am meant to worry about. I am not to waste my energy weeping about the worldly changes that occur around me, putting myself in a constant state of mourning for things about which I am concerned but which at present I have no authority to affect.

Rather, my focus is to concern myself with changes that I can and ought to make, and for which I shall be held accountable. What changes am I leaving behind me in the world? Toward what changes am I headed in the Hereafter? What record of change am I amassing on the scroll of deeds now bound invisibly upon my own neck? For that is the legacy I am taking with me into eternity.

Time is passing, and so long as there is time, there shall be change. Yet the purpose of life stays the same. But when the time comes (or ends) and all our insecurities and fears have vanished, what will still remain is Allah, Our Ever-lasting Refuge.

He is ever changeless.

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lovable and pleasurable to Allah must be granted that help whoever he might be. He should not however be granted that help if helping him in that which is lovable to Allah, results in something which is much more hateful to Him. This is indeed a very subtle and extremely difficult situation.

There are always people in this or that non-Muslim country who are open-minded and who are keen on cooperating with Muslims on achieving common religious or humanitarian goals. Muslims should not let them down; they should not hesitate to cooperate with them in increasing the good and lessening the evil in the world.

The Gift of Gratitude

On one occasion, after Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) had married, Nabi Ebrahim (AS) came to visit him in Makkah Mukarramah. On arriving at his home, however, he did not meet Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS), as he was out, and instead met the wife of Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS). As she had never met Nabi Ebrahim (AS) before, she did not recognize him.

Nabi Ebrahim (AS) asked her where Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) was to which she replied, "He has gone to find sustenance for us (i.e. he has gone out to hunt)." Nabi Ebrahim (AS) next asked her regarding their condition and state. She replied by complaining and mentioning, "We are in a bad condition. We are undergoing constraints and poverty." Nabi Ebrahim (AS) then said to her, "When your husband arrives, convey my salaam to him, and tell him to change his doorstep."

When Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) later returned, he perceived that someone had visited, and thus asked his wife, "Did anyone come?" She replied, "Yes, an old man with such-and-such an appearance arrived. He asked me where you were, and so I told him that you were out. He asked me regarding our condition, and so I told him that we are in difficulty and hardship." Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) asked her, "Did he give you any message?" She replied, "Yes, he told me to convey salaam to you, and to tell you to change your doorstep." Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) responded, "That was my father, Nabi Ebrahim (AS). He has instructed me

to separate from you." (Nabi Ebrahim [AS] was actually referring to the wife of Nabi Ismaa'eel [AS] when he used the term 'doorstep'.)

After some time had passed, Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) remarried. When Nabi Ebrahim (AS) came to visit him after he remarried, he was again out of the home. Hence, Nabi Ebrahim (AS) met his wife who did not recognize him. Nabi Ebrahim (AS) asked her where Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) was to which she answered, "He has gone to search for sustenance for us." Nabi Ebrahim (AS) next asked her regarding their condition. She praised Allah Ta'ala and replied, "We are in a good condition, enjoying prosperity." Nabi Ebrahim (AS) then said to her, "When your husband arrives, convey my salaam to him, and tell him to keep and look after his doorstep."

When Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) later returned, he perceived that someone had visited, and thus asked his wife, "Did anyone come?" She replied in the affirmative and informed Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) of what had transpired, together with conveying to him the salaam and the message of Nabi Ebrahim (AS). Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) responded, "That was my father, and you are the 'doorstep' to which he referred. He has instructed me to keep you as my wife and look after you." (Saheeh Bukhaari #3364)

NB: The doorstep acts as a form of protection for the door and the home. Similarly, the woman of the home is a form of protection for

the home, as she guards the home in the absence of the husband. Further, the wife always remains at home (in the ideal situation) just as the doorstep never moves and always remains in one place. For this reason, the word 'doorstep' was used to refer to the woman of the home. (Fathul Baari vol. 6, pg. 499 and Al-Kautharul Jaari vol. 6, pg. 261)

Lessons:

1. The first wife and second wife of Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) had lived in the same home and had both experienced the same conditions of hardship. However, there was a great difference between the two wives. The first wife had the bad qualities of ingratitude and complaining, and hence she was deprived of remaining in the marriage of Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS). The second wife was blessed with the qualities of gratitude for the favours they enjoyed, patience over their hardships, and contentment with the little that they had, and so she was honoured to remain the wife of Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS).

2. The importance of the wife remaining grateful to her husband and abstaining from complaining can be clearly understood from the hadeeth in which Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) warned the women of this ummah that one of the main causes for them entering Jahannum is their excessive complaining and lack of appreciation for the favours and kindness of the husband (Saheeh Muslim # 2048). In another hadeeth, Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) described those women who do not have the quality of appreciation saying, "If you treat such a woman kindly for your entire life, and she thereafter sees something from you (that she dislikes), she will say, 'I never saw any good from you!' (i.e. on account of one unhappy experience, she will immediately forget the lifetime of good that you showed her and will immediately complain.)" (Saheeh Bukhaari #29)

3. Nabi Ismaa'eel (AS) heeded the advice of his father, Nabi Ebrahim (AS), regarding his

wife. Similarly, we should ensure that we consult and follow the advice of our parents and elders when choosing a spouse.

Obedience To One's Deceased Parents

Sayyiduna Abu Usaid Malik bin Rabi'ah As-Sa'idi (ra) reports: We were sitting with Messenger of Allah (saws) when a man of Banu Salamah came to him and asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Does there remain any form of obedience which I may show to my parents after their death?" He replied, "Yes, to pray for them, to supplicate for their forgiveness, to fulfill their promises after their death, to maintain the ties of kinship which cannot be maintained except through them, and honour their friends." [Abu Dawud]

Appeal

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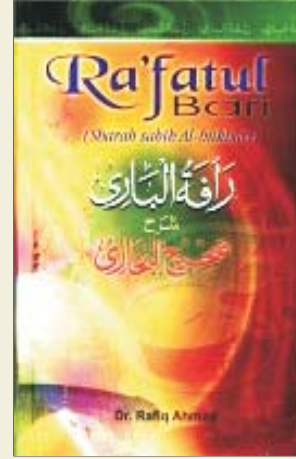
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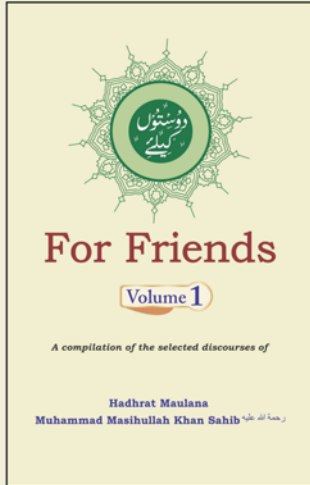
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