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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Make Ramadan a Starting Point in Your Life

The month of Ramadan is a gift from our Lord. Its days are the sweetest of days and its nights are the most rewarding. Allah gives us this gift so we may purify ourselves, fortify our character, and aspire to greater spiritual heights, thereby attaining eternal bliss. It is a time for us to clean our slates and be forgiven our sins. It is a real opportunity for us to renew our commitment to our faith, perfect our moral character, and earn Allah's pleasure.

This is why Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would give glad tidings to his Companions on the arrival of Ramadan:

The month of Ramadan has come to you, a blessed month, wherein Allah has enjoined fasting. It is a time when the gates of Paradise are opened, those of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained. In it is a night greater than a thousand months. Whoever is denied its goodness is truly bereft. [Musnad Ahmad and Sunan al-Nasâ'i]

Ibn Rajab says: How can there be anything but glad tidings for the believer to hear that the gates of Paradise are open? How can there be anything but glad tidings for the sinner to hear that the gates of Hell are closed? How can any sane person not embrace the glad tidings that the devils are chained? How can this time of year even be compared to any other time?

Three Simple Steps

There are three simple steps we
2. (Vol.15, Issue: 07)

should take if we wish to make Ramadan a starting point to bettering our lives.

1. First, start out by feeling more responsible about how you behave in Ramadan.

In light of the great opportunities that Ramadan presents us with, we should feel an acute sense of responsibility about everything we say and do in Ramadan. This is the first critical step. We are all bound by the deeds that we do, and we will be held accountable by Allah to fulfill our duties and shun sinful deeds.

2. Work to infuse yourself with the spirit of this special month.

Ramadan has its own incomparable atmosphere. No other time of year is quite like it. Allah has singled out Ramadan for many blessings. He has given the month a number of distinctions. The most emphatic of these is when the Prophet declared that: "Whoever fasts Ramadan with faith, seeking Allah's reward, will be forgiven all previous sins." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim]

This is an immense opportunity to renew our faith. The chance to put our accumulated sins behind us really should inspire us and invigorate us.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Our faith gets worn out and shabby just like our clothing, so ask Allah to renew your faith." [Sahîh al-Jâmi` al-Saghîr (1590)]

The special atmosphere of Ramadan

helps us to put our faith into practice, and it is through practice that we truly reform our inner selves. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Knowledge comes by way of learning, a patient character comes by practicing patience, striving for good brings good, and shunning evil protects one from evil."

3. Set for yourself practical and attainable Ramadan resolutions.

We should consider what we wish to accomplish in the blessed days and nights of Ramadan. We should be confident about ourselves and desire to do as much as we can, but at the same time be realistic about our time and our capabilities. We should set for ourselves genuinely reachable goals.

Pick up a pen and paper and write down what you want to accomplish this Ramadan. Plan out your Ramadan schedule so that your goals and aims will be perfectly clear to you and as well as how you are going to fit those goals into your already busy schedule. It is important to plan well, since as the old saying goes: "Whoever plans poorly, plans for failure."

Be honest with yourself. Write down what you wish to achieve in all aspects of your life: in your faith, character, interpersonal dealings, cultural development, et cetera. Avoid negative statements. Be positive in your choice of words, like: "I want to do so and so." "I want to achieve such and such."

After Ramadan

Ramadan is a month wherein it is easy to perform good deeds. We observe the fast on a daily basis for the sake of our Lord. It is a time when worship and the remembrance of Allah become a believer's habit. The fast schedules our daily activities. We start our day with our pre-dawn meal and end it by breaking our fasts. We balance out our bodily nourishment with our spiritual enrichment.

Ramadan is a practical course for us in moral development, charity, and good conduct. We are reminded to help the less fortunate and to strive against our selfish tendencies. We must make sure to make use of what we learn in this course after the course comes to an end.

Ibn Rajab identifies two kinds of resolve: The first is the resolve we have to undertake a course of action. This is the resolve that gets things going. The second kind of resolve is the resolve to persevere. This is the resolve that gets us to our goals.

The devils are chained for a whole month. In this time, we can accustom ourselves to improving our religious observance and our character. We should keep in mind that our Lord is our Lord in Ramadan and throughout the year. What we achieve in Ramadan is a real achievement when it becomes part and parcel of our lives.

Two Intercessors

Abdullah ibn Amr (RA) reported that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "The fast and the Qur'an are two intercessors for the servant of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. The fast will say: 'O Lord, I prevented him from his food and desires during the day. Let me intercede for him.' The Qur'an will say: 'I prevented him from sleeping at night. Let me intercede for him.' And their intercession will be accepted." [Ahmad]

Question Answer

Q: To whom does the Ayat of fasting apply?

A: Fasting is an act of worship (ibadat). It is one of the Fundamental Principles (Pillars) of Islam. Allah says: "Oh you who believe fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may attain Taqwa (God-Fearing)." Allah says Oh you who believe. This is a general command for everyone who is follows Islam.

Q: Does a minor child have to fast?

A: Fasting is not obligatory on a minor. A minor is he who is not physically matured (Baaligh) in the case of a male and in the case of a female, she has not attained puberty. However, if by the age of 15 lunar years, the male or female did not become baaligh, they will be regarded as adults and have to fast and fulfil all obligations of Shariah.

Q: Does a sick person have to fast?

A: A sick person is exempted from fasting altogether if there is genuine reason to believe that the current illness will intensify by fasting or that he will suffer another illness on result of fasting or that his recovery will be prolonged due to fasting.

Q: Can a traveller omit fasting?

A: A Shar'ī musāfir (traveller) who embarked

on his journey prior to dawn is permitted to omit the fast of that day. As long as he is a Shar'ī musāfir, he may omit fasting.

Q: What about travelling during the day?

A: If a person embarked on a journey during the day after Subh Sadiq, he/she will have to fast that day.

Q: Will the application of eye drops break the fast?

A: Using eye drops will not break the fast.

Q: Can ear drops be used?

A: If a person's eardrum is imperforated, he may use ear drops. If someone has perforated ear drums, it will not be permissible to use ear drops.

Q: Can we use insulin injections whilst fasting?

A: It is permissible to use insulin injections. Injections do not break a fast.

Q: Will a nasal spray break the fast?

A: Yes, a nasal spray will break the fast.

Q: Can mouthwash be used whilst fasting?

A: It is not permissible to use mouthwash whilst fasting.

Q: Is it permissible to brush teeth and use toothpaste?

A: It is not permissible to use toothpaste whilst fasting. One may brush teeth, use a miswak and a tongue scraper.

Q: Can an addicted smoker smoke whilst fasting?

A: It is not permissible to smoke whilst fasting. Smoking will result in Qadhā and Kaffārah. A smoker may use a transdermal nicotine patch.

Q: What is the ruling for using suppositories?

A: Insertion of suppositories up the rear passage will invalidate the fast.

Q: I forgetfully ate whilst fasting?

A: If one was totally unaware that he was fasting, the fast will not be broken regardless of what was consumed.

Q: By mistake I swallowed water whilst doing wudhu?

A: By doing an act mistakenly will break one's fast. However, only Qadhā will be necessary.

Q: What if a person must break the fast due to an asthma attack?

A: If a person suffers from an illness or has an asthma attack and there is no option but to have medicine or an inhaler, it will be permissible to break the fast. However, he will have to do Qadhā.

Q: I engaged in intercourse with my spouse?

A: Intercourse will invalidate the fast and will make Qadhā and Kaffārah compulsory.

Q: What is the Kaffārah?

A: A Kaffārah is expiation for a violation. It is fasting for 60 days consecutively without any interruption for those capable of fasting. If one cannot fast, he will have to give monetary

Kaffarah.

Q: When will Kaffārah be binding?

A: Kaffarah becomes binding if one deliberately breaks his fast by eating or drinking or having intercourse.

Q: I had a wet dream whilst fasting. Is my fast broken?

A: A wet dream will not invalidate the fast.

Q: Can a sick person pay fidyah instead of fasting?

A: A person who cannot fast due a chronic or terminal illness may give fidyah. As long as a person's condition remains such that they cannot fast, they will keep giving fidyah for each fast.

If there is improvement to such a degree that they can fast, they will have to do Qadhā of all the previous fasts. The value of fidyah is the same as that of sadaqah al-fitr which is presently R16 for the people in South Africa.

All the above fatwas by Mufti Ebrahim Sahib.

Q. Can I use Zakāt to pay off my mother's loan?

A. It is not permissible to give zakāt in the following avenues:

- 1) Non-Muslims
- 2) Public welfare projects
- 3) Burial expenses
- 4) wealthy individuals
- 5) one's parents, grandparents and so on.
- 6) One's children, grandchildren and so forth
- 7) One's Spouse
- 8) Banu Hāshim (the family of the Prophet salallahu alaihi wasallam).

One cannot benefit from his own zakāt funds directly or indirectly. Hence, one cannot use his zakāt funds for himself nor can he give zakāt to that person for whom he is responsi-

ble for financially. Thus, a son cannot give zakāt to his mother. It will not be permissible to utilise your zakāt funds to pay off your mother's loan. However, this does not mean other people cannot assist the mother in her loan with their zakāt if she is a deserving recipient.

Ml. Faraz Sahib

Q. If I make an intention to fast at night, but I did not wake up for suhūr, can I choose to not fast?

A. If you have made an intention at night, then your fast will automatically begin with dawn and you do not need to make another intention at that point. Hence, if you wake up after dawn, then you are already in a state of fasting since your intention from the night before was valid. Therefore, you may not break your fast at that point or choose to not fast.

However, if you wake up before dawn, then you may change your intention and choose to not fast since your fast has not yet started.

Mufti Abrar Mirza Sahib

Q. Can we give Zakat on gold ,even that we are having it a period of less than 4 months ? Or else can we calculate it like total Zakat/3please correct us if we are wrong?

A. You will only have to give zakah on gold if:
i. it is equal or more than the nisab of gold (i.e 87.479 grams) or if it is equal or more than the nisab of silver (i.e 612.35 grams). In other words, lesser of the two nisabs.
ii. and you have it in your possession for one Islamic year.

However, if you have assets on which the zakah is due, then no matter how much gold you have, you will have to add it to the rest of assets and calculate zakah on total amount.

Ml. Abduz Zaman

Q. Is one Allowed To Use An Astham Pump During Ramadaan?

A. If one has a legitimate need for an asthma pump that cannot be otherwise fulfilled, then it would be permitted without dislike to use an inhaler. However, it would invalidate the fast and require that the fast be made up later. This is because asthmatic pump and nebulizer are both inhaled through either the mouth or the nose, so they both enter the stomach. Since it contains medicinal ingredients, the use of it in the state of fasting will invalidate the fast.

Mufti Mohammad Farhan

Q. Is there a different reward for umrah during ramadan compared to other days?

A: Narrated by Imam Abu Haneefah (ra) from Hadhrat Ataa` (ra) that Sayyyidina ibni Abbaas Radhiyallaahu Anhu reports that Rasulullah Sallallaahu Alayhi wa Sallam said:

“UMRAH IN RAMADHAAN EQUALS A HAJ (BY WAY OF REWARD).” (Musnad Abu Haneefah)

Moulana Yusuf Sahib

Q. I want to know difference between lillah, sadkah and zakat.

A. In brief, zakāh is one of the five pillars of Islām and a means to cleanse one's wealth. For those who possess nisāb, it is an obligation to pay 2.5% of their wealth, minus any expenses due, at the end of each lunar year. Zakāh has to be given in the ownership of needy Muslims who are non-Sayyids (those from the Banī Hāshim lineage).

On the other hand, sadaqah is any amount of money donated for the pleasure of Allāh and intended for the poor. However, the term sadaqah also applies to money donated for any noble cause, as well. It is not necessary to give sadaqah in the ownership of the poor and both, Sayyids and non-Sayyids, are valid recipients of it.

As for lillāh, it simply means “for [the

pleasure of] Allāh.” It is any good act done with the intention of seeking the pleasure of Allāh Ta’ālā.

Ml. Abrar Mirza

Q: I started Ramadan in Saudi. They started Ramadan one day earlier than us. I fasted 4 days in Saudi, did not fast on my travel day and landed in US where they began their 5th day of fast, and I continued Ramadan here which was also my fifth day. What day should I celebrate eid and do I have to make up the fast I missed while traveling?

A: 1. Now that you are back in the United States you must follow the dates of your locality. Continue fasting as normal and celebrate Eid according to local sightings, even if it turns out to be a 30-day Ramadaan, meaning that you would have fasted 31 days. The rule is that one has to observe Eid with local Muslims even if one fasted 31 days. You will not be allowed to keep Eid on your own based on the fact that you started fasting a day earlier according to Saudi Arabia. One is bound by the country in which one is at any given time.

2. The fast you missed due to travelling has to be paid in after Ramadaan. That is a separate issue and is not affected by the sighting of the Eid moon. When you travelled, the fast was faradh upon you, but due to Islamic concession, you were allowed not to fast; therefore, qadha must be kept.

Mufti Siraj Sahib

Q. Is zakat to be paid on all income even if it is necessary income?

What can a woman do if a man sexually abused her many years ago and left her with all his problems while he went on to a new life and everyone was pleased with him? Sometimes Islam these days isn't fair to women who stay away from the evils of other women like gossip.

A. Zakaat in general has to be paid on a year to year basis. A person will calculate his assets, deduct his expenses and discharge the zakaat at the end of the lunar year. The reason for this is that a persons assets and liabilities fluctuate. The amount a person paid the previous year will not be the same as the current year, therefore zakaat is calculated annually. We understand from your query that “necessary income” refers to your basic day to day salary which is used for your household needs, necessities and livelihood. If this is correct then it will be necessary for you to determine whether the surplus is equal or more than the nisaab (minimum stipulated nisaab for zakaat). If the extra cash amounts to nisaab and one year has passed on that money, then zakah will be necessary.

Mufti Ebrahim Sahib

Q. Do Tests Break The Fast?

A If your question is regarding the blood test during fasting, then following is the answer:

No, a blood test does not invalidate the fast, as it is merely the taking out of blood.

But if a person becomes extremely weak due to the blood test, it will be disliked for them to do so whilst fasting. If they are not weakened by it, there will be no issue in doing so. In both situation, the fast will be valid.

Mufti Mohammad Farhan

Q. My Wife's Period Began During Her Fast. Does The Fast Break?

A. If a fasting woman has her menses any time during the day (from the break of dawn until sunset), then her fast is invalid, and she will have to make up that day another time. [Nur al-Idah]

Sayyida Aisha (RA) said, "When we used to enter menstruation we were commanded to make up the fast and we were not commanded to make up the prayer." [Muslim]

And Allah knows best

Mufti Mohammad Farhan

Q. Is it permissible for a woman to wear jewellery in Ihram?

A. It is permissible though it is better that she avoids wearing jewellery. (Mu'allimul Hujjaj, Pg: 110)

The spirit of Ihraam is simplicity and it best that a female avoids adornment with jewellery whilst in Ihraam.

Mufti Suhail

Q. I was taught that when a female reads Salaah, in the position of sajdah, her elbows need to be on the floor. Recently, I was informed that this is wrong and that a female's elbows need to be high when she is in sajdah position.

A. The Salaah of a female is different from the Salaah of a male in the sense that her movements should be as least revealing as possible. This is why in Ruku she will only bend slightly and in Sujood, she will lower her body to the ground including her elbows. In the Hadith, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised the females of this and therefore, the correct procedure for a female is to lower her elbows to the ground. (Bayhaqi, Hadith #: 3201, narrated by Yazid bin Abi Habib)

Males are instructed to keep their elbows off the ground and there is a Hadith that condemns men from lowering their elbows to the ground. (Abu Dawood, Hadith #: 897)

Mufti Suhail

Q. Is drinking rain water recommended or Sunnah in Islam? Sometimes we collect rain water and drink it, so I wanted to know if this is just for health or some Islamic reason behind it.

A. Drinking rain water specifically is not Sunnah. In fact, one should exercise precaution from drinking rain water directly due to possible health hazards. Consider the following from Argonne National Laboratory: "Normally you could drink rainwater without becoming ill. However, rainwater contains pollutants, soil, plant parts, insect parts, bacteria, algae, and sometimes radioactive materials that the rain/snow has washed out of the air. If filtered with one of the filtering systems that you can buy in stores nowadays, and then boiled, you could probably drink the water safely. However, it is safer yet to get your water from municipal water supplies or from wells that are frequently tested"[1].

Nevertheless, rain is a sign of Allah's mercy, providence and grace[2]. The following Ahadith explain the Sunnah of Rasulullah Sallahu Alayhi Wasallam during rain:

It is recommended (Sunnah) to allow the rain to fall down upon us. It is mentioned in the Hadith: "We were with Nabi Sallahu Alayhi Wasallam when rain fell upon us. Nabi Sallahu Alayhi Wasallam opened his garment a bit so that the rain could touch his skin. We asked "O Rasulullah Sallahu Alayhi Wasallam, why do you do this?" He replied, "Because it has just recently come from Allah." (Sahih Muslim)

We should recite the following Dua:

Allahumma Sayyiban Naafi'a

Translation: O Allah! Make it a copious, beneficial rain. (Sahih Bukhari)

During heavy rain recite the following Dua:

Allahumma Hawa Layna Wa La 'Alayna.

Translation: "O Allah! Make it rain around us and not upon us. O Allah! Upon the mountains and the hills, down the valleys, and to the roots of the trees." (Sahih Bukhari)

M. Immad Bin Arshad

Lesson From The Qur'an

Surah Al-Imran - Verse 159-171

Note: Text in bold letters is the literal translation of the meaning of the Qur'an by M. Taqi Usmani and the normal text is the brief explanation compiled by Institute of Islamic Research, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

The mistake of leaving the post during the battle of Uhud by some of the Companions left the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sad. Though, because of his high moral values, he did not censure or deal harshly with them but Allah willed there remains no unpleasantness in his heart regarding them and their hearts be also relieved of heaviness, so, after giving them glad tidings of His forgiveness in the preceding verse, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is being given the following guidance so that the necessary aim is fulfilled.

So, even though you had the right to censure them for their mistake O Prophet! **It is through mercy** upon you **from Allah that you are gentle to them. Had you been rough and hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you** then to inherit the blessings obtainable in your company would have remained a distant dream from them. **So**, since you have dealt with them gently, therefore, **pardon them** by heart for the mistake they committed while carrying out your directives, **and seek Forgiveness for them** from Allah for

their shortfall in obeying His command; though He has already forgiven them but your invocations in their favour is additional benefit and consolation for them. Continue to **consult them in the matter** for which no explicit command is revealed so that this kind of treatment reduces their regret, **and** after consultations **once you have taken a** particular **decision** whether that is in conformity to their suggestions or in conflict, **place your trust in Allah** and carry out the requisite job. **Surely, Allah loves those who place their trust in Him.** (3:159)

In the following verse the Prophet's Companions are being relieved of the regret they harbored because of their subjugation in Uhud.

If Allah helps you, there is none to overcome you. And if He abandons you, then, who is there to help you after that and make you victorious? **In Allah the believers should place their trust.** (3:160)

Above, Allah's displeasure and visitation of

offending the Prophet (S) is mentioned. Now, in the following verse the Prophet's trustworthiness is being revealed to establish his impersonal interest in whatever he commands, as inverse of this indicates untrustworthiness – the quality a Prophet is totally pure of.

It is not conceivable from a prophet to misappropriate the spoils despite the fact that a treacherous individual will be subjected to infamy on the Day of Judgement, because **whoever misappropriates shall bring forth, on Doomsday, what he misappropriated** and the whole creation shall become aware of his deed. **Then** after the Day of Judgement, **everybody shall be paid** in the Hellfire, **in full, for what he has earned, and they shall not be wronged** by given more punishment than what they deserve. (3:161)

How then, could one – a Prophet, **who submits to the pleasure of Allah be equal to him** – a treacherous, **who returns with displeasure from Allah ? His ultimate place is the Fire; and what an evil end it is!** (3:162)

It is evident that both cannot be equal but **they** - who submit to the pleasure of Allah, and those who return with His displeasure - **are of various ranks with Allah** i.e., the obedient ones are held dear and rewarded with Paradise, and those earning the wrath of Allah are thrown into the Hell. **Allah is watchful of what they do** and will, therefore, deal with them accordingly. (3:163)

After mentioning the Prophet's trustworthiness, the believers are being asked to value and respect the person of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) which in itself is a great blessing sent towards them, and not to allow any such unworthy thought to enter their hearts which is against his high esteem.
Allah has surely conferred great favor on the

believers when He raised in their midst a magnificent messenger from among themselves who recites to them His verses - the light of which flushes out the darkness of hearts, **and makes them pure** of dirt - inward and outward, **and teaches them the Book** i.e., the Qur'an and its niceties, **and the Wisdom, while earlier** to your apostleship, **they were involved in open error** i.e., polytheism and unbelief. (3:164)

Since Muslims were very much dejected due to their loss in the battle of Uhud, so, in the following verse, this theme is again mentioned in another way. Further, the hypocrites are also reproached differently.

How is it that, when in Uhud **you suffered a hardship the twice of which you had inflicted upon them** in Badr (for in Uhud seventy Muslims were martyred and in Badr seventy disbelievers were killed and as many detained), **you say** - though not objectionably but if only astonishingly, **“Where did this loss come from despite we being Muslims?” Say O Prophet! “This is from your own selves** if only you had n't disobeyed the Prophet - for the promise of victory was linked to this condition”. **Allah is surely powerful over everything;** when you obeyed - He made you dominant by His power in Badr, and when you disobeyed - He subjugated you in Uhud.” (3:165)

Whatever you suffered on the day of Uhud, **when the two troops** that of the believers and the disbelievers **faced each other** to fight, **was by the will of Allah** because there were a number of reasons which have been mentioned above, **and also in order to know the believers** in manifest terms, because it is during the times of distress that sincerity and insincerity becomes apparent, (3:166)

And further in order to know publicly **those who are hypocrites. It was said to them** just

at the time of the battle when three hundred men withdrew from the group, **“Come on inside the battlefield, fight in the way of Allah with the spirit of sacrifice, or at least defend your own territory and family.” They said, “Had we known it to be a well planned fight we would have certainly followed you** but it is badly thought out since the disbelievers are three to four times more in number than we, and possess more weaponry.” (Allah says) **That day, by uttering such words, they i.e., hypocrites, were nearer to disbelief in clear terms than they were to Belief in apparent terms from the start; because prior to this, though not believing by heart, they would display conformity with the believers. They utter from their mouths what is not in their hearts viz., never to fight alongside the believers even in a well planned battle. Allah knows well what they conceal in their breasts.** (3:167)

They are **those who said about their own brethren** who got martyred, **while themselves sitting** and not having participated in the Jihad, **“Had they obeyed us and not left to fight, they would have not been killed.” Say, O Prophet! “Then avert death from yourselves if you are true** in what you think – for, the purpose of escaping from getting killed is to avert death itself. But, when death occurs even at home at its stipulated time, then to get killed at the specified time shall also not defer.” (3:168)
In the following verse, reply to the hypocrites

who related the death of those martyred in the way of Allah to futility and deprivation of the life’s pleasures, is being given.

Never take those killed in the way of Allah i.e., for Islam, **as dead** like other dead people. **Rather, they are** distinguishingly **alive** and **with their Lord** in repute, **well-provided** with corporeal provision as well as incorporeal viz., the pleasure of Allah; (3:169)

happy with what Allah has given them of His grace e.g., stages of nearness to Him; **and** the way they are happy over their condition, **they also feel pleased with the good news, about those left behind them** in the world **who could not join them, that** if they also attain martyrdom **there shall be no fear for them nor shall they grieve** in any way. In short, they will be happy in two ways - one, with regard their own self, and - second, for others as well. (3:170)

The reason behind this happiness is being mentioned as follows:

For their own state **they feel pleased with blessing from Allah, and grace, and for others with the fact that Allah would not let the reward for the deeds of the believers be lost,** therefore, those who have remained behind and are engaged in Jihad and/or other good deeds, they will also be honoured with such rewards. [3:171]

Doubtful Wealth

Hazrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thaanwi (ra) mentioned: Hazrat 'Abdullah bin Mubaarak [rahmatullahi 'alaibi] (a great luminary and ascetic, who was the student of Hazrat Imaam Abu Haneefah [ra]) says: "I prefer returning one dirham which is obtained through a doubtful source than giving 600000 dirhams in charity." Hazrat (ra) then mentioned that from this statement of Hazrat 'Abdullah bin Mubaarak (ra) we understand the serious nature of doubtful wealth. It is extremely sad to find that nowadays let alone doubtful wealth, people do not even refrain from that wealth which is categorically declared haraam in sharee'ah. All that they are interested in is in increasing and accumulating their wealth, regardless of the manner or means through which the wealth is acquired. (Behishti Zewar Pg. 417)

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Ablution

Chapter 13 : The washing away of pre-seminal discharge and that it makes Wudu obligatory.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi says:
"It is more probable that the purpose of this chapter is to say that the use of mud-stones is only permissible to clean the usual excretions like urine and faeces and for things other than these the use of water and washing is obligatory".

Hadith No. 265

Narrated 'Ali (RA)

I used to get pre-seminal discharge frequently. Being the son-in-law of the Prophet I requested a man to ask him about it. So the man asked the Prophet about it. The Prophet replied, "Perform ablution after washing your organ (penis)."

Comments

There is difference between (مني) semen and (مذي) pre-seminal discharge. With the excretion of semen, Gusul becomes obligatory and with the excretion of emotional urethral discharge only Wudu becomes obligato-

ry. All the jurists agree on this point.

Chapter 14 : One who wears perfume and then takes a bath with the effect of perfume remaining even after that.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah (RA) says that here the purpose of Imam Bukhari (RA) is to convey that if someone does not rub his body to do away with the fragrance of perfume which he had wore before Gusul, his Gusul is still valid.

Hadith No. 266

Narrated Muhammad bin Al-Muntathir (RA)

"On the authority of his father that he had asked 'Aisha about the saying of Ibn 'Umar (i.e. he did not like to be a Muhrim while the smell of scent was still coming from his body). 'Aisha said, "I scented Allah's Apostle and he went round (had sexual intercourse with) all his wives, and in the morning he was Muhrim (after taking a bath)."

Hadith No. 267

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

"It is as if I am just looking at the glitter of scent in the parting of the Prophet's head hair

while he was a Muhrim”.

Comments

It is preferable for a person who intends to perform Haj or Umrah to use perfume before putting on the Ihram. If the fragrance of perfume persists even after taking the bath, it does not matter.

Chapter 15 : To perform ‘Khilaa’ (passing of wet hands with open fingers through ones hair) of hair till one feels that he has made his skin wet (underneath the hair) and then pour water over it.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Sheikh-ul-Hadith Hadhrat Mawlana Zakariya (RA) says that the commentators of Bukhari Sharief are of the opinion that here Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that ‘Khilaa’ of hair is not necessary, only making it sure that the water reaches the roots of hair is enough. (Nasrul Bari)

Hadith No. 268

Narrated Hisham bin 'Urwa (on the authority of his father) (RA)

“Aisha said, "Whenever Allah's Apostle took the bath of Janaba, he cleaned his hands and performed ablution like that for prayer and then took a bath and rubbed his hair, till he felt that the whole skin of the head had become wet, then he would pour water thrice and wash the rest of the body." 'Aisha further said, "I and Allah's Apostle used to take a bath from a single water container, from which we took water simultaneously.”

Comments

Gusul becomes obligatory when one gets ritually impure (i.e., due to sexual intercourse, wet dream, menses, parturition period etc). The juristic schools differ in their opin-

ion whether there is any difference between the Gusul after sexual intercourse and that after the menses and parturition. The Hanafi, Shafa’ee and Maaliki schools are of the opinion that there is no difference between the two Gusuls, whereas the Hanbali school differs with them. As per Hanbali school, it is not necessary for women to untie their hair if they have to perform the Gusul after sexual intercourse but they have to untie and release their hair to perform the Gusul after menses and parturition.

Chapter 16 : One who performed Wudu in a state of ritual impurity and then washed his whole body but did not wash the parts which were washed during Wudu, once again.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says that here Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that if someone performs Wudu before Gusul, then it’s not necessary to wash the parts of Wudu again during Gusul.

Hadith No. 269

Narrated Maimuna (RA)

“Water was placed for the ablution of Allah's Apostle after Janaba. He poured water with his right hand over his left twice or thrice and then washed his private parts and rubbed his hand on the earth or on a wall twice or thrice and then rinsed his mouth, washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out and then washed his face and forearms and poured water over his head and washed his body. Then he shifted from that place and washed his feet. I brought a piece of cloth, but he did not take it and removed the traces of water from his body with his hand.”

Chapter 17 : When someone while in the Musjid remembers that he is ritually impure,

he should leave the Masjid and there is no need for him to perform Tayammum.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Majority of jurists are of the opinion that if a person forgetfully enters a Masjid in such a state that obligatory Gusul is due to him because of ritual impurity, he should immediately leave the Masjid once he remembers it. Imam Bukhari (RA) is also in agreement with this view. Only Sufiyan Thouri and Ishaq Rahoviya are of the opinion that such a person should first perform Tayammum and then leave the Masjid.

Hadith No. 270

Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)

Once the call (Iqama) for the prayer was announced and the rows were straightened. Allah's Apostle came out; and when he stood up at his Musalla, he remembered that he was Junub. Then he ordered us to stay at our places and went to take a bath and then returned with water dropping from his head. He said, "Allahu-Akbar", and we all offered the prayer with him.

Comments

Once it so happened that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came to Masjid Nabavi and stood at his place to lead the congregational Salaah and the Sahaaba stood behind in the rows; suddenly he remembered that Gusul was obligatory upon him. He asked the Sahaaba to stay back like that and left the Masjid quickly and returned after taking Gusul. In this Hadith, there is no mention that

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) performed Tayammum and then left the Masjid.

Chapter 18 : The removing of water from one's body with one's hands after taking the bath of ritual impurity.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi (RA) says: here Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say that the water used in Gusul is 'Taahir' as Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not use any towel to wipe the water droplets but only tried to do away with these. By doing so there is good chance that the water droplets would fall on one's body or clothes.

Hadith No. 271

Narrated Maimuna (RA)

I placed water for the bath of the Prophet and screened him with a garment. He poured water over his hands and washed them. After that he poured water with his right hand over his left and washed his private parts, rubbed his hands with earth and washed them, rinsed his mouth, washed his nose by putting water in it and then blowing it out and then washed his face and forearms. He poured water over his head and body. He then shifted from that place and washed his feet. I gave him a piece of cloth but he did not take it and came out removing the water (from his body) with both his hands.

Comments

There is consensus amongst the jurists that the use of towel after the Wudu or Gusul is permissible though not necessary as is evident by this Hadith.

Conscience

A man asked the Prophet (SAW) what was the mark whereby he might know the reality of his faith. Muhammad said, "If you derive pleasure from the good which you have performed and you be grieved for the evil which you have committed, you are a true believer." The man said, "In what does a fault really consist?" The Prophet (SAW) said, "when action pricks your conscience, forsake it."

The Meaning of Ramadan

By Khalid Baig

Fasting during Ramadan was ordained during the second year of Hijrah. Why not earlier? In Makkah the economic conditions of the Muslims were bad. They were being persecuted. Often days would go by before they had anything to eat. It is easy to skip meals if you don't have any. Obviously fasting would have been easier under the circumstances. So why not then?

The answer may be that Ramadan is not only about skipping meals. While fasting is an integral and paramount part of it, Ramadan offers a comprehensive program for our spiritual overhaul. The entire program required the peace and security that was offered by Madinah.

Yes, Ramadan is the most important month of the year. It is the month that the believers await with eagerness. At the beginning of Rajab --- two full months before Ramadan --- the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to supplicate thus: "O Allah! Bless us during Rajab and Sha'ban, and let us reach Ramadan (in good health)."

During Ramadan the believers get busy seeking Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and protection from Hellfire. This is the month for renewing our commitment and re-establishing

our relationship with our Creator. It is the spring season for goodness and virtues when righteousness blossoms throughout the Muslim communities. "If we combine all the blessings of the other eleven months, they would not add up to the blessings of Ramadan," said the great scholar and reformer Shaikh Ahmed Farooqi (Mujaddad Alif Thani). It offers every Muslim an opportunity to strengthen his Iman, purify his heart and soul, and to remove the evil effects of the sins committed by him.

"Anyone who fasts during this month with purity of belief and with expectation of a good reward (from his Creator), will have his previous sins forgiven," said Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam). "Anyone who stands in prayers during its nights with purity of belief and expectation of a reward, will have his previous sins forgiven." As other ahadith tell us, the rewards for good deeds are multiplied manifold during Ramadan.

Along with the possibility of a great reward, there is the risk of a terrible loss. If we let any other month pass by carelessly, we just lost a month. If we do the same during Ramadan, we have lost everything. The person who misses just one day's fast without a legitimate reason, cannot really make up for it even if he

were to fast everyday for the rest of his life. And of the three persons that Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) cursed, one is the unfortunate Muslim who finds Ramadan in good health but does not use the opportunity to seek Allah's mercy.

One who does not fast is obviously in this category, but so also is the person who fasts and prays but makes no effort to stay away from sins or attain purity of the heart through the numerous opportunities offered by Ramadan. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), warned us: "There are those who get nothing from their fast but hunger and thirst. There are those who get nothing from their nightly prayers but loss of sleep."

Those who understood this, for them Ramadan was indeed a very special month. In addition to fasting, mandatory Salat, and extra Travih Salat, they spent the whole month in acts of worship like voluntary Salat, Tilawa (recitation of Qur'an), Dhikr etc. After mentioning that this has been the tradition of the pious people of this Ummah throughout the centuries, Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi notes: "I have seen with my own eyes such ulema and mashaikh who used to finish recitation of the entire Qur'an everyday during Ramadan. They spent almost the entire night in prayers. They used to eat so little that one wondered how they could endure all this. These greats valued every moment of Ramadan and would not waste any of it in any other pursuit...Watching them made one believe the astounding stories of Ibada and devotion of our elders recorded by history."

This emphasis on these acts of worship may sound strange --- even misplaced --- to some. It requires some explanation. We know that the term Ibada (worship and obedience) in Islam applies not only to the formal acts of worship and devotion like Salat, Tilawa, and Dhikr, but it also applies to

worldly acts when performed in obedience to Shariah and with the intention of pleasing Allah. Thus a believer going to work is performing Ibada when he seeks Halal income to discharge his responsibility as a bread-winner for the family. However a distinction must be made between the two. The first category consists of direct Ibada, acts that are required for their own sake. The second category consists of indirect Ibada --- worldly acts that become Ibada through proper intention and observation of Shariah. While the second category is important for it extends the idea of Ibada to our entire life, there is also a danger because by their very nature these acts can camouflage other motives. (Is my going to work really Ibada or am I actually in the rat race?). Here the direct Ibada comes to the rescue. Through them we can purify our motives, and re-establish our relationship with Allah.

Islam does not approve of monasticism. It does not ask us to permanently isolate ourselves from this world, since our test is in living here according to the Commands of our Creator. But it does ask us to take periodic breaks from it. The mandatory Salat (five daily prayers) is one example. For a few minutes every so many hours throughout the day, we leave the affairs of this world and appear before Allah to remind ourselves that none but He is worthy of worship and of our unfaltering obedience. Ramadan takes this to the next higher plane, providing intense training for a whole month.

This spirit is captured in I'tikaf, a unique Ibada associated with Ramadan, in which a person gives up all his normal activities and enters a mosque for a specific period. There is great merit in it and every Muslim community is encouraged to provide at least one person who will perform I'tikaf for the last ten days of Ramadan. But even those who can-

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Fasting Issues

Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Acts Nullifying the Fast

Acts nullifying the fast are of two kinds. In the first place, there are some acts which not only nullify the fast, but also make one liable to both qada' and kaffarah. The number of these acts is only three, namely:

- Eating something;
- Drinking something;
- Having sexual intercourse.

These three acts are liable to kaffarah when they are committed deliberately after one has started a fast, provided that the person committing them knows that they render the fast broken.

In such cases both qada' and kaffarah are obligatory on him. qada' means to keep another fast in lieu of the broken one. And kaffarah means to perform an act to expiate the sin of having broken the fast.

Kaffarah may be given in the following three ways respectively:

- Freeing a slave;
- Fasting for two months constantly without a break;
- Giving food to sixty persons.

Since slavery has come to an end in our days, only the latter two ways can be adopted today. But the person who has strength enough to fast for two months constantly has been bound to fast. He cannot

adopt the third way, i.e. giving food to sixty persons. If he is too weak to fast for such a large number of days, he can give kaffarah by giving food to sixty persons.

In the second place, there are some acts which nullify the fast, but do not make the relevant person liable to kaffarah. In such cases only qada' is obligatory. These acts are:

- Eating or drinking unintentionally. For example, while making wudu, if a drop of water slips into the throat unintentionally, the fast stands broken, but only the qada' will be enough to compensate for the mistake;
- Dropping medicine or anything else in the nose or the ear;
- Smoking;
- Emission of semen while touching, kissing or caressing a woman;
- Eating or drinking under the wrong impression that the dawn has not yet broken, or the sun has set, while otherwise was true.
- If someone eats or drinks while he does not remember that he is in a state of fasting, his fast is not broken. He should continue with his fast after he remembers. However, if he eats or drinks after he remembers, his fast will stand broken, and if this eating or drinking was due to his wrong impression that his fast stood broken by his first eating or drinking, he will be liable to qada' only.

Acts Rendering the Fast Makrooh

The following acts do not nullify the fast, but render it makrooh in the sense that they lessen the reward of the fast. Hence it is not advisable to indulge in any of the following acts when one is in the state of fast:

- Chewing something or tasting it with the tongue without eating it;
- Using tooth paste or tooth powder. However, cleaning the teeth with a miswak or a brush (without paste or powder) is allowed;
- Remaining in the state of janabah (major impurity) for the whole day;
- Giving blood to anyone;
- Quarrelling with someone or abusing him;
- Gheebah, i.e. to abuse or to blame someone in his absence;
- Telling a lie.

The latter three acts are absolutely prohibited even when one is not in the state of fasting, but they become all the more prohibited when one keeps fast.

Acts Which are Allowed

The following acts are allowed in the state of fasting:

- Cleaning teeth using a miswak or a brush and ears with cotton swabs;
- Applying oil or henna or color to the hair;
- Using eye-drops or kohl (surma/kajal);
- Wearing perfume or feeling it, or using lipstick or chapstick;
- Taking a shower;
- Using medicine through injection;
- Vomiting unintentionally;
- Entrance of smoke or dust into the throat unintentionally;
- Ejaculation while dreaming;
- Bleeding from the teeth unless blood slips into the throat;
- Delaying the ghusl of janabah upto the sunrise.

Cases in Which Fasting is Not Obligatory

In the following cases, it is allowed for a Muslim to avoid fasting in Ramadan and compensate it by fasting on some other days:

If a person suffers from a disease which has rendered him unable to fast, or a competent doctor has expressed his apprehension that fasting may increase the disease, he can avoid fasting until when it is clear that fasting is no more injurious to his health. But after recovery he is under an obligation to perform qada' of all the fasts he has missed due to his sickness.

If a woman is pregnant, and it is seriously feared that fasting may harm her or her baby, she can postpone fasting in Ramadan and may fast after delivery as qada'.

If a woman breast-feeds her baby, and it is seriously feared that, in case she fasts, she cannot feed her baby or her fasting may harm her or her baby, she can avoid fasting in Ramadan and perform qada'.

Fasting in Journey

The one who travels to a distance of at least 48 miles from his hometown can also postpone fasting during his journey. But if he resolves to stay in a town for more than 14 days, he is not treated as a traveller for this purpose and he is obligated to fast in the days of Ramadan. However, if he has not made up his mind to stay in a place for more than 14 days, and he is doubtful whether he will stay for 14 days or less than that, he can also avail of the concession, unless he decides to stay for the prescribed period, i.e. more than 14 days. If he remained uncertain about his stay but stayed at a place for even more than 14 days in this state of uncertainty, he will remain entitled to this concession until he resolves positively to stay for another 15 days.

Although this concession is available to every traveller who leaves his hometown to

a distance of at least 48 miles, yet if the journey is comfortable and fasting is not very burdensome on him, it is more advisable for him to fast for two reasons. Firstly, because such a traveller gets more thawab (reward) in case he fasts during his journey, and secondly, because if he avoids fasting while on travel, he will have to fast after Ramadan which can be more difficult for him.

But if the journey is a difficult one, and it is much burdensome to fast in such a difficult journey, then it is more advisable for him to avoid fasting, but if fasting seems to be nearly unbearable for him, it is not lawful to keep fast in such a journey.

If someone has started fasting, then he had to travel during the day, he cannot avail of the concession during that day; rather, he will have to complete his fast unto the sunset. However, if his journey continues on to the next day, he can benefit from the concession the next day.

Conversely, if someone was on travel in the beginning of a day, and he did not keep fast for that reason and began to eat and drink but he reached his hometown during the day, he must avoid eating or drinking after reaching his hometown unto the sunset. This abstinence from eating and drinking will not be counted as a fast, and he will have to perform qada' of that day also, but he is directed to abstain from eating and drinking only to honour that part of the day of Ramadan which he has passed in his hometown.

Fasting is prohibited for women during their monthly periods (menstruation) and during partition (i.e., normal bleeding after childbirth), but they have to perform qada' for the fasts they have missed in such a state.

Those who are allowed a concession (of not fasting) in Ramadan can eat and drink during the day, but they should honour the days of Ramadan and should not eat and drink

as far as possible at a public place or before other Muslims who are in the state of fasting.

Concession Given to a Sick Person

Where a person is attacked by a severe disease, and a competent doctor opines that, if he continues with his fast, it will bring a serious danger to his life. In such a situation breaking of the fast is not only allowed, but it is obligatory.

A person feels such an extreme hunger or thirst that further abstinence from eating or drinking may endanger his life. In this situation also, breaking of the fast is obligatory.

In any situation where refraining from eating or drinking may create a serious danger to one's life, it becomes lawful to break the fast.

In all these cases, the person breaking the fast is not liable to kaffarah, but he has to perform qada' whenever the danger is removed.

The Clothing of Couples

"They (the women) are clothing for you and you are clothing for them." (Surah Baqarah v187)

This comparison indicates that between husband and wife there is a very strong and deep relationship. This is only possible through the mercy of Allah. By virtue of this intense relationship, it now becomes easy for the couple to fulfill each other's rights. The bond between husband and wife is strong, it is as though two hearts and two people have become one living being. Just as clothes are attached to us and become part of us, so does husband and wife become part of each other. The second comparison is just as clothes cover the body and conceal any scar and blemishes, likewise the couple conceal each other's faults. They do not publicize and expose the wrongs of each other.

The Myth of 'Homosexuality'

Shabir Hasan

These days homosexuality has become a buzz word. Media, globally, is discussing this issue whole hog and there are strong lobbies worldwide which are promoting the cause of legalising and promoting it. Muslim societies across the globe could not and have not remained immune to it. There are various issues and dimensions of this problem which confront the Muslim society at large, and the Muslim youth in particular.

Media is promoting homosexuality as if it is as predetermined as one's race which cannot be undone. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) has declared "homosexuality" as normal and has removed it from its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM). The decision of the Association was not based on any scientific research but was the result of huge pressure by so-called gay and lesbian lobbies and was strongly influenced by a poll conducted by the APA itself which was initiated and financed by the USA's National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

There is a natural pattern of having sex and that is with the opposite sex and any other relation either with same sex or with animals and even with non-living things is forbidden in Islam and is a deviation from the right

path, Islam which, as Muslims, we are required to follow. Following any other sexual tendency is sinful, perversion and a reason to invite Allah's wrath. Having any such tendency in itself for reasons beyond one's control is not sinful so long as it is not pursued for fulfillment. Nature has clearly demarcated the lines between male and female sexual beings and their sexual roles. Human beings and animals have always been having sex on a set pattern that is with the opposite sex, though there have been deviations of individuals and specific communities which were condemned to God's wrath for this habit. The societies of Sodom and Gomorrah are the examples which were razed to the ground and then turned upside down for their pervert sexual behaviour. The addiction of homosexuality was prevalent among Greek and Roman cultures like an epidemic- both in men as well as in women. Even in contemporary times, the problem continues to flourish in almost all Western countries with some of them having already legalized this deadly sin.

Historically such a sexual behaviour would always be condemned as a deviational behaviour. However, in modern times, due to the dilution of the universal moral sense and the arrogance of the human assertion as

against the divine revelation, all pervert sexual practices are being justified on the basis of what they call scientific research which by any standards it is not. We should always keep in mind that scientific research is never culture-neutral. Scientific research is prone to be influenced by the cultural and moral sense of the communities and societies in which it is flourishing. That is why homosexuality is being legalized and justified more in those countries where faithlessness is more prevalent like those of the West.

The truth is that there is no such thing as homosexuality and no such gender as 'gay' or 'lesbian'. Homosexuality at most can be termed as sexual perversion born out of various socio-cultural factors, by choice or by chance. Homosexuality is about the kind of lifestyle one wants to live. It's about one's worldview and the kind of life and faith one envisages for himself.

The psychological, physiological and biological make of the male and the female body is such that they perfectly complement each other while as those of two men don't. They do it the way it always is unnatural and pervert.

Psychologically speaking, setting this problem right is possible without any kind of psychiatric intervention. What's required is a strong resolve, backed by strong faith in Allah and His all powerfulness, to overcome this deadly and carnal sin which ruins one's life here and in the Hereafter. Such a sexual urge is not immutable, irresistible and even untreatable. No medicine and no psychiatric intervention are needed, at all. Once a person turns to Allah, all physical and spiritual problems vanish. Tears and prayers have the power to heal wounds-both internal as well as external. Such a person should not look at his chronic habit but look at Allah's power and His mercy for His servants. Hopelessness is faith-

lessness. Self-control and regulating one's sexual behaviour through marriage is the remedy. The process of self-control begins with lowering one's gaze, as advised by the Quran. Once we stop looking at beauty, we stop appreciating it. Once we stop appreciating beauty, we stop phantasizing it. Once we stop phantasizing it, we stop loving it.

Now remains the question why can't it be justified if some people feel like having sex with same sex. There are many reasons. There are some people in this world who want to have sex with animals which is called bestiality. They prefer to have sex with all kinds of animals and even fowl. Similarly there are people who indulge in carnal sin of incest that is having sex with their close blood relations like their mothers, daughters, sisters, father, children, grand children, and even grand parents. Even such a sexual pattern is quite common in the West. Likewise, there are people who suffer from the disease of self-love. They perform auto-sex. They perform sexual practices on their own selves and derive sexual pleasure in their imagination. There are people who do sex with new born babies and young kids. Such a disorder is called pedophilia. There are people who have the desire of having sex with dead bodies which is called necrophilia. In fact, there are people who like to have sex with dummies and other non-living things. So it's not simply the question of homosexuals. It's the question of all such perversions, and all sorts of perversions-sexual or otherwise- have been condemned and forbidden by our Lord Allah the Almighty.

There is no scientific evidence which could prove that homosexuality is genetic. So far no geneticist in the world has claimed to have found what could be called 'gay gene'. Despite that, the media throughout the world is promoting it as if they have found conclusive scientific evidence for the same, thereby

spreading the disinformation and misleading the public including the vulnerable teens. In fact, there is scientific research indicating to the otherwise. Had homosexuality been genetic, by now it should have got eliminated as such people prefer not to marry. So such a gene would not have passed on to the next generation and would have ended up by now. Similarly, identical twins have same chromosome pattern or DNA. That means both should be sharing same sexual preferences. But that's not the case. It would have remained a "constant" across history. But the case is otherwise. It has continuously been thriving like any other disease, especially in present times. Contrary to the reality, what did the sexual perverts do is that they problematised the clarity of gender demarcation. Thus, there is no evidence that anybody is born that way. We learn to love as we grow up with other people. We learn to love and enjoy responding to the other sex as we develop and find ourselves as men and women. Sometimes, we grow twisted feelings of love or liking, mostly for wrong reasons, but as soon as we are put into a context where the other sex is available in totality, we return to our natural interest. This should happen through Nikah only.

So the fundamental question about homosexuality and other sexually deviant behaviours is that of the worldview. If a person believes in Islam being the only acceptable way of life with Almighty Allah which we have been ordained to follow in this world and which is the purpose of our existence, then a person with this problem cannot use the tag of homosexual or gay for himself. He will define himself as a full-fledged male or female being as the case may be and he should not be in any confusion about his gender.

Homosexuality is mostly the direct negative fall out of child abuse. Getting exposed to a particular kind of pre-mature sexual

experience is in most cases responsible for homosexual feelings. Once a young boy or kid gets exposed to something which is by all standards exotic with the other partner getting erotic pleasure out of it, the exotic does not remain exotic for the impressionable mind of the young too; the exotic turns into erotic for him too after some time. There are other causes also for homosexual feelings. They mainly include:

- An acute sense of loneliness in childhood and therefore an intense desire for company of the same sex as the sexual urge is still latent in young age.
- Inferiority complex and therefore a strong desire to be identified with some one who looks like an ideal/perfect.

However, the child abuse is the most common cause of homosexuality. Once a kid or a young lad during the highly impressionable age of his life gets exposed to a particular sexual experience, he initially does not respond but then after some time starts phantasmizing about it and deriving erotic pleasure out of it with the growth of his sexual urge. Then he starts craving for this experience again and again and finally ends up as its addict. This addiction is just like any other addiction. It mostly begins at a very young and formative age of one's life and sometimes proves devastating for whole life. It ruins one's character and self image. Such a person suffers from deformity complex though he possesses none. Failing in life's tests and other 'manly' things, which he thinks he cannot accomplish, he seeks refuge in such hobbies which are passive in nature and do not require much physical rigour and where he engrosses himself mentally. In this way he gets the consolation of getting recognition while wallowing in his miserable solitude. If such people give full vent to their deviant sexual behaviour in their adolescence and during their young adult-

hood, it becomes harder for them to give up this practice and they remain severely addictive of this sexual behaviour. They abuse other people and even kids or get abused by others and in this way initiate more people in this lifestyle and the vicious cycle goes on. Such people need counseling, emotional support and spiritual guidance.

The first thing such people should keep in mind is that homosexuality is a big myth around and one is not born homosexual. There is no such category of gender as homosexuals. It's simply a deviant sexual behaviour caused by many socio-cultural factors. Homosexuality is a matter of habit which can be and must be stopped with strong resolve and will power as people with other bad habits manage to control their habits. As they say old habits die hard, so if one fails, that does not mean one should get disheartened and stop trying to control it. Traditionally many therapies were in vogue including electric shock therapy to control such sexually deviant behaviours. However, Muslims have a privilege of cultivating their spiritual power with which they can easily overcome their bad habits including homosexual tendencies. Such people should keep fast often. If they find it difficult, then they should not eat to the full of their stomach at least, besides avoiding all forbidden things.

Homosexuality is a grave sin which is most detestable to Almighty Allah. In fact, Muslims should mind dying in a condition when their hearts are polluted with the same sex desire. Logically speaking, if one has the tendency to do anything, he also has the capacity not to do that thing. Therefore any person who thinks that he cannot help it is logically speaking wrong. There are people who overcome other equally serious and chronic bad habits. This is the physical part of it. The emotional part of it is that all intensely emotional

relations are to be avoided. No relation lasts long in this short-lived world. Not to speak of such relations which are unnatural and have no sanctity from God and which have no chance of ever consummating in any sense. It has been observed that people with such pervert sexual behaviours do not remain committed to one person. That's why such people are highly vulnerable to contracting AIDS and other deadly sexually transmitted diseases, most of whom are incurable. Allah's displeasure in this world and in the Hereafter is a separate chastisement for this carnal sin. Such people also indulge in highly filthy and fetishizing and strange sexual practices which are unhygienic, unhealthy and are not adopted even by normally married couples. The reason is that a couple indulging in same sex pleasure has no way of getting sexually satisfied optimally as a normal couple does. So they adopt strange sexual practices to try to get sexual satisfaction which always eludes them and prompts them to try newer and newer sexual practices as such a desire is a bottomless pit. A same sex couple can never procreate which is a fundamental purpose of sex.

Despite the child abuse being mainly responsible for such a devastating problem in societies across the world, there are strong lobbies in many Western countries promoting this depravity. One example of this depravity and perversion is that the age when a boy can give consent for sex with a man is sixteen in UK, fourteen in Canada, Germany, Iceland, Italy, fifteen in France and twelve in Spain, Holland, Malta and Portugal. This is simply outrageous that as young as twelve year olds can give consent to adult males for sex. Ironically, the anti-Muslim lobbies in some countries criticize Islam for allowing child marriage. It is critically important to guard children from child abuse. They need to be guarded constantly when they are young. Parents must

watch their wards and their friends, teachers, close buddies, mobile use, internet use, summer camps, picnics, intimacies and even relatives and neighbours.

Why this problem is on rise is internet, social media, television, cinema which are shamelessly promoting such wanton vulgarity and initiating young minds into this depravity and thereby creating false gender confusion in their minds. That is why we are noticing an alarming increase in teens with false gender confusion. Sex by its very nature is sacred. Islam stands for fulfillment of sexual urge through lawful means that is Nikah but faithless and un-Islamic societies across the world are shamelessly promoting waywardness, thereby trivializing this sacred urge which is the only guarantee for procreation. All types of sexual aggrandizements have become a matter of chronic habit. If this epidemic is not stopped now, it can ruin all of us. In fact, homosexual practices being rampant is one of the signs of Qiyamah. The movement for promoting, projecting and legalizing homosexuality in any form is the greatest threat to our children and to our very social fabric including the family.

People who are suffering from this problem are advised to turn to Allah and Islam, His prescribed lifestyle for His slaves, before it's too late. They should get in touch with genuine Islamic scholars. In the meantime they may read these books:

Rooh ki Beemariyan aur unka ilaaj by Ha-keem Akhter

Haya aur paakdaamni by Peer Zulfikar Naqshbandi

Marne ke bad kia hogah by Moulana Aashiq Ilahi Meerthi

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Quotable Quotes

"Part of someone's being a good Muslim is his leaving alone that which does not concern him." (Prophet (SAW))

"The best way to defeat anybody is to surpass him in politeness". (Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA))

*"If you want to destroy any nation without war, make adultery and nudity common in the next generation."
(Salahuddin Ayyubi)*

"He who has no guarantee of his existence tomorrow, should not be contemplating on sustenance of the following day." (Imam Shaafee)

"The person who becomes aware of Allah becomes hospitable towards the creation of Allah." (Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani)

*"The key to life of heart lie in reflecting upon the Quran, being humble before Allah in secret & leaving sin."
(Ibn Al-Qayyim)*

*"Nothing brings more coolness to the eyes of a believer than seeing his wife and family being obedient to Allah"
(Imam Qurtubi)*

*"The sweetness of worship is snatched away from the person who habitually casts lustful glances."
(Sheikh Ashraf Ali Thanvi)*

"Keep the company of ulama & listen to them for therewith Allah revives dead hearts just as he revives dead earth with rain" (Luqman)

*"I am astonished by the one who recites the Qur'an and doesn't understand it's meanings. How can he enjoy it?"
(Imam Tabari)*

"We have not been sent in this world to spent a good life; We have been sent to this world to die a good death." (Sh. Zulfikar Ahmed)

"The most beautiful beauty is fine behaviour. The one who does not have it has no beauty." (Ibn Hibban)

"As much as you grieve for this world, the fear of the Day of Judgment leaves your heart." (Malik b. Dinar)

The Great American Dream and Muslims

Aijaz Zaka Syed

I take my share of readers' feedback seriously. It's invariably interesting and instructive.

Check out this mail from a regular reader, Shiv Dhanush, for instance, in response to a recent column on the predicament of Indian Muslims: "There are less than one million Hindus and Sikhs in the US, that is, 0.3 per cent of the population. But governors of two out of the 50 US states are from this community. There are nearly six million Muslims in the US but they do not have anyone in governor mansions. You can extend the example to other top learning institutions like MIT, Cal Tech, Berkeley, Harvard and Yale, etc. The representation of Hindu and Sikh children is greater than their percentage in the population.

"The share of Muslims in these elite institutions is lower than their population ratio. You can make a comparison of Punjabi (or Sindhi or Bengali) Hindus and Sikhs versus Punjabi Muslims in the US or UK and their relative achievements. Make a similar comparison of Hindus and Sikhs versus Muslims in US and UK prisons and you'll see alarming results.

"The playing field for all immigrants in the West is the same. So how did this happen? It happened because Hindus, Sikhs, and others give highest priority to education and personal excellence (whereas Muslims do not). This is

why Muslims today find themselves even behind the Dalits in India in all walks of life."

My apologies for this long quote, but it's intrinsic to my argument. Besides, this is fascinating stuff, don't you think? In fact, Shiv goes on to argue that the South Asian Muslims wanted Pakistan because they knew they couldn't compete with Hindus and Sikhs in an undivided India!

I have no issues with Shiv's argument and most of his facts. In fact, we are on the same page in his analysis about the Muslim under-representation in all walks of life and their excessive presence on the wrong side of the law.

The shining examples of Louisiana governor Piyush Jindal, being lionized as the Republicans' answer to Obama and a future president, and South Carolina governor Nimrata Kaur are a source of inspiration and pride not just for Hindus and Sikhs but the whole of India and Asia.

There are countless such examples in the land of opportunity that is America – of Indians scaling the pinnacle of excellence in universities, research and scientific centers and Silicon Valley companies, thanks to their hard work and dedication.

However, if Indian Hindus and Sikhs are increasingly becoming the shining face of

the great American dream while their Muslim counterparts rough it out in the cold, there's another more prosaic explanation.

I hate to disrupt Shiv's reverie, but if the Jindals and Kaur of this world find themselves in US governor mansions today, and possibly on their way to the White House, they've had to pay a price for it. Piyush Jindal was born a Hindu to Hindu immigrant parents from Punjab.

He converted to Christianity when he grew up, christening himself as Bobby Jindal. Today, he and his wife Supriya are proper churchgoing folk, like the rest of the predominantly white, genteel Christian America.

Ditto Nimrata Kaur, who today calls herself Nikki Haley. She was born a Sikh to second-generation Sikh immigrants. Like Jindal, she converted to Christianity before joining politics. She's married to Michael Haley and has two children, all of them nice, practicing Christians.

Of course, this has nothing to do with faith. Each to his or her own, and I am a firm believer in everyone doing his/her own thing. What I am trying to emphasize is the fact that both Jindal and Kaur had to give up their original identity and faith to find acceptance in white middle-class America.

I am a huge admirer of the great American dream and its enduring allure that continues to beckon generations of dreamers from around the world. But I have to point out that today if Jindal and Kaur are where they are, it's also because of their willingness to give up their beliefs to merge their identity with the host society, becoming tolerable for the Republican and Tea Party rabble-rousers. Compromises are made at every step of the staircase to heaven.

Unfortunately or fortunately, this is something the Muslims cannot or haven't been able to do. They would rather languish

on the edges of the American dream than give up their identity and faith to live in governor mansions.

I know this is a huge weakness or failing, according to the worldview of friends like Shiv. But that's how they are — rigid and uncompromising when it comes to their convictions and totally out of sync with the way of the world and liberal ways of the West. If they are left out in the cold while the rest of the world is partying, they do not seem to mind. And this is a global phenomenon, wherever Muslims are, from the Americas to Australia.

In fact, this apparent lack of "flexibility" and preoccupation with religion is seen as being at the heart of the West-Islam conflict today. Call it what you will, but this is in the very nature of Islam, that it demands its followers to accept it as a way of life, rather than as something private between God and the believer.

But if the Muslims find themselves stuck in a rut almost everywhere while the rest of the world is flying past them on the high road to glory, it's not because there's too much of religion in their lives. It's perhaps because they have failed to apply it the way it should be to their lives. Instead of imbibing the liberating teachings and revolutionary spirit of a faith that guides us every step of the way, we have turned it into a set of meaningless rituals and a heavy yoke around our neck.

It was the same faith that transformed the bands of unruly, bloodletting Arabian tribes into a world power in less than a decade, bringing down the mighty Persian and Roman empires like a house of cards.

It wasn't just on the battlefield that they beat others. They pioneered a knowledge and scientific revolution which, in turn, fed and inspired the European Renaissance. From philosophy and poetry to physics and chemistry and from mathematics and medicine to

planetary science, the West built its discoveries and advances based on blueprints created by Muslim pioneers.

Unlike us, early Muslims had been driven by a compelling craving and hunger for knowledge and new ideas, wherever they could find them. While we have become the prisoners of our past and our often narrow, literal interpretation of Islamic teachings, they looked to the future, showing the way forward to others.

They did not preach their faith. They lived it, promoting it with their actions and with their honesty, simplicity, piety and courage. At the same time, they promoted a culture of hard work, perseverance and excellence wherever they went and whatever they turned their attention to. No wonder they conquered the world in no time and have left behind a civilization to last forever.

They were extraordinary men, giants among men. A really hard act to follow, indeed! But if we could recreate even a fraction of their magic, we would do ourselves an immense favor, transforming our wretched existence forever and creating a better world.

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Nothing Serious

When 'Aaisha (RA) was mistakenly left behind from the caravan on one journey, she thought to herself that Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) will realise that she is missing and will send someone to search for her. So she lay down in the spot where she had camped and sleep overpowered her.

Safwaan bin Mu'attal (RA) was appointed by Rasulallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) to travel behind the caravan so that if anything was forgotten or had fallen behind, he can pick it up and bring it along. As he passes by, he sees somebody in the distance. When he comes closer, he recognises 'Aaisha (RA) since he had seen her prior to the laws of hijab. As soon as he realized it is her, he recited 'innaa lillaahi wa innaa ilaihi raaji'oon' aloud. Upon hearing this 'Aaisha (RA) immediately woke up and covered her face with her jilbaab (outer covering). She further says: "I take an oath on Allah, we never spoke a word, nor did I hear a single word from him besides 'innaa lillaahi wa innaa ilaihi raaji'oon'." (Sabeeh Bukhaari)

Lesson: Look at the level of modesty! Safwaan (RA) was so cautious, that even in a situation of dire necessity he did not address 'Aaisha (RA) directly. Instead he used this expression to alert her of his presence without having to engage in any type of conversation with her. Furthermore, despite their high level of piety, the purity of their hearts and the deep consciousness of Allah, and despite the fact that 'Aaisha (RA) had just experienced the trauma of being left all alone in the wilderness at a young age, she still immediately covered her face and didn't even speak a word. In stark contrast to this noble example, we have become so bold that notwithstanding the great possibility of sin and in fact at times the certainty of lust and temptation, we justify our casual chats via social networks by saying: "Our hearts are clean and there is nothing serious going on."

Many marriages have broken up in this way, many children have been affected and many homes have been ruined. We need to stop NOW, so that our marriage, children and home are not the next victim.

The Mysteries and Secrets of Allah

Maulana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (ra)

A qissah has come to mind: Hadhrat Musa (AS) once requested: "O Allah! I wish to attain knowledge of Your secrets." Allah replied: "O Musa, do not ask about My mysteries. You can never fathom them." However, Hadhrat Musa (AS) persisted with his request.

Take note at this point that, in our worldly affairs, when somebody important is pleaded to, and this person begs and persists in a request, the person to whom the requested is directed will give in to please the person. With Allah it is the same. The rule is that the auliya-Allah are trained in the manner of the Ambiya (AS). This is the rule.

When Hadhrat Musa (AS) persisted with his request, Allah acceded and instructed him: "Go and station yourself at the mouth of a cave at a particular place. You will be able to see wayfarers travelling along the path there but they will not be able to see you. From there you will be able to observe My mysteries in action." Hadhrat Musa (AS) went and stationed himself at the spot indicated by Allah.

After a very short while a person on a horse appeared. The path was adjacent to a stream where wayfarers used to stop to refresh themselves. The weather was hot. The wayfarer alighted from his horse and, placing a satchel that he with him on the ground, refreshed him-

self with water from the stream, ate from his provisions, climbed back on his horse and departed. He forgot to pick up his satchel and take it with him! Take careful note of this point.

Very shortly, another wayfarer passed by there. He saw the satchel, picked it up and walked away with it. Again, very shortly after this, a third wayfarer came that way, a poor wood cutter carrying a bundle of wood on his head. He stopped there, lay down his bundle, sat next to the stream and washed his hands and face.

In the meantime, the first wayfarer on the horse thought of his satchel, remembered that he had left it at that particular spot by the stream and returned to retrieve it. All the while Hadhrat Musa (AS) was observing closely to what was happening. The wayfarer on the horse returned and saw this person washing himself and then anxiously looked around for his satchel, but obviously, the satchel was nowhere to be found. He demanded from the woodcutter: "I forgot my satchel here just a short while ago. There is nobody else here besides you. Give me back my satchel!" This poor woodcutter denied all knowledge of the satchel, but the first wayfarer would not believe him and kept on insisting that he wanted his satchel back: "There is nobody else here besides you. You must have

taken it!" The woodcutter kept on denying any knowledge of it. It was an age where people carried their weapons with them. The first wayfarer took out his sword and killed the woodcutter, turned his back on him, climbed on his horse and rode away.

Hadhrat Musa (AS) was struck with astonishment. Someone else took the satchel and this person who did not take the satchel, but busy washing his hands and face, was beheaded. What an amazing turn of events!

Hadhrat Musa (AS) asked Allah: "O Allah! I do not understand at all!" Allah said: "I told you beforehand that you cannot fathom My mysteries. Have you observed My mysteries?" Hadhrat Musa (AS) said: "Allah, please explain to me." Allah explained: "The father of the rider on the horse – the one whose satchel was taken – had at one stage stolen a thousand Dinaars from the wealth of the second wayfarer. Therefore, the second wayfarer, who took the satchel, was compensated in that the satchel containing a thousand Dinaars was returned to him from the inheritance of the first wayfarer."

As to the one who was beheaded, there also lies an amazing tale: "The wood cutter, who was beheaded, had murdered the father of the first wayfarer. The son of the murdered man was given the opportunity to avenge the murder of his father." Obviously, all three involved were not aware of the reasons for the events, but justice was finally meted out. "Musa, each had his right restored to him. Your mind cannot reach to such depths." Hadhrat Musa (AS) said: "Yaa Allah! Nobody can unravel Your mysteries!"

The rights have been restored to those who have rights.

Have you seen? The unseen is known only by Allah. This is of His special attributes.

When something happens that is contrary to one's temperament – something caus-

ing sadness, grief, despondency or some harm or somebody's demise – one tends to lose control of oneself. Then there is crying and wailing, clothes are shred, there is cessation of eating and drinking; and the thought is there that one does not know what treasures have slipped from our hands. One's gaze shifts away from Allah. Some become completely depressed and do not leave their beds. Stop to think and ponder on the following qissah, also connected to Divine mysteries:

The mysteries behind the death of a kaafir and a mu'min

Two persons became very ill, one was a Yahud, a kaafir, and the other was a Muslim, a mu'min. The Yahudi kaafir had a desire: "I am close to death. I wish I could eat some fish!" The Muslim mu'min also had a wish: "I am dying. If I could just have some olive oil!"

The one was anxious to have his wish of eating fish fulfilled and the other was anxious to have his wish of having some olive oil fulfilled. Allah summoned two mala'ikah. To the one Allah gave the instruction: "There are no fish in his pond. Place a fish in the pond for the Yahud to eat." To the other mala'ikah Allah gave the instruction: "The Muslim mu'min wishes to have some olive oil. There is bottle of olive oil on a shelf in his house. Take the bottle and destroy it with the olive oil so that he cannot have it!"

Until the full account is not heard, one does not what kind of thoughts and doubts go through our minds. This is why one should listen to a bayaan till the end. A bayaan is such that midway through one topic another and then another topic is discussed, with the speaker coming back to complete the incomplete topics which were only partially discussed.

To continue: Both the mala'ikah met on the way to fulfil their tasks. The one asked the other: "Where are you going?" The first one said: "I have been ordered to go to a particular

Yahud. He has a desire to eat some fish, and there are no fish in his pond. So, I have to place one in it for him to eat. Where are you off to?" "I have been ordered to go to the house of a Muslim. He has a desire to partake of some olive oil. There is a bottle of olive oil on a shelf in his house. My instructions are to destroy the bottle and the olive oil so that he cannot have it." The second mala'ikah enquired from the first: "Did you ask Allah why?" The first one said: "Yes, I did. I said: 'O Allah! The Yahudi kaafir is dying and You are fulfilling his dying wish and heart's desire. There is no fish, yet You are seeing to his wish. What is the wisdom behind this?' "What was the reply?"

"Allah said: 'Whenever the Yahud had performed any goodness in the world, I had compensated him in the world with some khair.'"

Note that good deeds performed in this world fall into two categories: One is where the intention is to attain some qurb – that is, attain some thawaab, attain some reward, attain closeness to Allah, attain His pleasure, attain higher stages in Jannat. The other category is where the intention is solely to benefit the creation. One finds others give water to drink to the thirsty in hot weather, feed animals, give charity and assist people with problems out of a sense of compassion, and so forth.

"Allah continued: 'He is now on the point of dying. He has to his credit one good deed, for which he has still not been compensated. He has this strong desire to eat fish. I want his desire to be fulfilled so that he is compensated in this world for the good he has done. And, in the hereafter, he proceeds straight into Jahannam. That is why I have instructed you to feed him the fish.'"

Are you pondering this?

The first mala'ikah then asked the second one: "Did you enquire as to why you had to destroy the olive oil for the Muslim not to be

able to partake of it?" "Yes, I did." "What did Allah say?" "Allah said: 'Whenever this mu'min Muslim bandah committed any sin, I afflicted him with some problem contrary to his temperament, some difficulty, some sadness and grief, some problem. He made sabr, on account of which I washed away his sins.'"

Ponder this. Allah is Arhamur-Raahimin – the most merciful of all those who show mercy.

These topics came in when we were speaking about Hadhrat Musa عليه السلام. I was saying that he was unaware of the mysteries of Allah. In the one incident each person received his just deserts

Without knowing it, the traveller on the horse avenged the death of his father, and the rightful owner of the money was restored his wealth. These are unfathomable mysteries. Similarly, in the other incident, the kaafir being granted his dying wish of eating fish, so that he may have no good to his credit anymore and enter Jahannam on dying. And the mu'min bandah being deprived the joy of having some olive oil so that, by being deprived of this desire, he was compensated for the one sin for which he had not made taubah, so that he may enter Jannat directly on passing away.

Importance of taubah

Taubah is an act we should never dispense with. After having inadvertently committed a sin, we should make taubah immediately. Not only that, but even after having performed 'ibaadat we should also make taubah as completion of that 'ibaadat. In any case, when a mu'min bandah makes taubah Allah is very fond of him. Sin is a filth and impurity. How can He send anyone with the filth of sins on him, into Jannat? One can see that there are certain matters which even the mala'ikah are not aware of, and even a Nabí is not aware of and they have to enquire from Allah.

‘I Shop, therefore I am!’

The last two decades have witnessed an over expanding interest in consumerism. We are a society consumed by consumerism. Advertising companies, celebrity spokespersons, movies and TV shows conspire to render the consumer object into a fetish imbued with magical, if not downright divine powers, writes SYED KAZIM.

Today’s society seems as though it is being taken over by consumerism. The term consumerism is defined as the tendency of people to identify strongly with products they consume, particularly of name brands and status-enhancing appeal.

With the marketing world growing larger day by day, it seems more and more people are attracted to the advertised products and feel the need to have them in order to keep in style with the rest of society. The term ‘conspicuous consumption’ applies to those people who show off their products in order to show their wealth; as per Maslow’s need-hierarchy, he terms this an Esteem need. These people who show off their expensive clothing, jewelry or cars are trying to make an impression on people. Yet what does this impression hold?

In the past 100 years, world consumption has grown at a rate unprecedented in human history and especially the American economy is totally driven by the infection of consumerism. In 1900, a total of \$1.5 trillion was spent by public and private consumers. By 1975, it was estimated at \$12 trillion. By 1998, it doubled to \$24 trillion. It continues to grow rapidly.

20% of the world’s people living in rich

countries account for 86% of total global consumer spending. The US and Canada, with 5.2% of the world’s population, are responsible for 31.5% of consumption. South Asia, with 22.4% of the population, is responsible for 2% of consumption. The average African household today consumes 25% less than 25 years ago. In 2005, China used 26% of the world’s steel, 32% of rice, and 47% of cement. Though their per-capita resource consumption is low, with their large populations China and India look set soon to join the US and Europe as super consumers.

Today, the country’s economic health is measured more according to how much we are willing to spend, our consumer confidence and less in how much we produce, the gross national product, or even how we invest. If previous leaders preached self-sacrifice and service, our so-called leaders today from the corporate world send the only signal which is to consume and consume and consume. Since 9/11, the American government has consistently told Americans that if they want to help the country, they must consume.

Even as we walk through the corridors of the colleges, we can see many people wearing the more expensive clothing with name

brands stitched boldly across their chest. Why do so many people do this? If you ask them, they would most likely reply that it is in style or is the latest trend. People strive for acceptance. However, showboating is not a genuine way to go about gaining acceptance. Just because a person has the finer things in life, it does not mean he is a better person. Some people even grow shallow enough to think poorly of people who do not have the more expensive items or clothing.

Thanks to the software companies for paying huge salaries to the software professionals. After earning so much, where are they to spend it? Even if they do not have the attitude of spending more money, the peer pressure stimulates them to do so. Also thanks to the credit card companies who have encouraged their customers to purchase more and more, even if they do not have any money in their bank account.

The last two decades have witnessed an over expanding interest in consumerism. The word consumerism has to be fully understood in its historical retrospect with reference to the consumer's position in common law, main areas of regulations, controls on advertising, labeling standards, etc. We are a society consumed by consumerism. It is sad to say that, but it becomes truer each day. Think of how much consumerism has grown over the last 20 years or so. It is horrifying to think. Now the million dollar question: where we will be in the next 20 years at this level of consumerism?

In the 21st century, pleasure is equated to consumption. Consumerism, has become no less than any cult or religion, it has the power to level individual difference and independence and render citizens into a homogeneous mass. Advertising companies, celebrity spokespersons, movies and TV shows conspire to render the consumer object, be it a Rs. 1 ice cream cone or a Rs. 15 lakh luxury sedan, into a fetish imbued

with magical, if not downright divine powers.

Today, consumer is called the king of the market. He is at the centre stage of all market activities. It is constant endeavour of producers that the production of product must conform to the needs of consumer. In addition to the satisfaction of the consumer, it is also the endeavour of producer that their sale should be maximum. They, therefore, try to increase their sales by all possible means.

Today shopping has become a status symbol. You are considered as part of the society and you are considered up to date only when you do regular shopping. The question, "do you go for shopping?" has become a prominent question when a family goes to see a bride for their daughter, brother, etc. In a true incident a middle class family rejected a boy as a bridegroom for their daughters, saying: "The boy is earning just Rs. 50,000 per month and nothing can happen with Rs. 50,000 in today's world." It's really shocking, isn't it? Because of this corrupt consumerism mentality, the whole bride/bridegroom selection criteria is now based on income and less importance is given to the character of the person. One of the important catalysts of consumerism is the greed to have more and more. A person should purchase a particular good/ service because he needs it, not because he has the capacity to own it!

Consumerism infantilizes us, alienates us from one another, and makes us apathetic as citizens. What's ironic is that even if you base human worth not on social responsibility but on individual happiness, consumerism still fails us. But, given the global economic crisis and the rapid rate at which we are consuming Earth's resources, how long can our little comforts last? It is just going to cause problems in the long run!

God has designed the world mechanism in such a way that it can satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed!

Courtesy: youngmuslimdigest.com

Making Marriage Work

The Missing Link to Success

Yasmin Mogahed

“And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between you; verily, in that are signs for people who reflect.” (Qur’an, 30:21)

We’ve all read this verse on countless marriage announcements. But how many have actualized it? How many of our marriages really embody that love and mercy described by Allah? What is going wrong when so many of our marriages are ending in divorce?

According to Dr. Emerson Eggerichs, author of *Love & Respect: The Love She Most Desires; The Respect He Desperately Needs*, the answer is simple. In his book, Eggerichs explains that extensive research has found that a man’s primary need is for respect, while a woman’s primary need is for love. He describes what he calls the “crazy cycle”—the pattern of argumentation that results when the wife does not show respect and the husband does not show love. He explains how the two reinforce and cause one another. In other words, when a wife feels that her husband is acting unloving, she often reacts with disrespect, which in turn makes the husband act even more unloving.

Eggerichs argues that the solution to

the “crazy cycle” is for the wife to show unconditional respect to her husband and for the husband to show unconditional love to his wife. This means that a wife should not say that first her husband must be loving before she will show him respect. By doing so, she will only bring about more unloving behavior. And a husband should not say that first his wife must be respectful before he will show her love. By doing so, he will only bring about more disrespectful behavior. The two must be unconditional.

When I reflected on this concept, I realized that looking at the Qur’an and prophetic wisdom, there are no two concepts more stressed with regards to the marital relationship.

To men, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said,

“Take good care of women, for they were created from a bent rib, and the most curved part of it is its top; if you try to straighten it, you will break it, and if you leave it, it will remain arched, so take good care of women.” (Bukhari & Muslim)

He has further stressed: “The most perfect believer in the matter of faith is one who has excellent behavior; and the best among you are those who behave best to-

wards their wives.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has also said,

“A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another.” (Muslim)

Allah says:

“...Live with them in kindness. For if you dislike them – perhaps you dislike a thing and Allah makes therein much good.” (Qur’an, 4:19)

In these jewels of wisdom, men are urged to be kind and loving towards their wives. Moreover, they are urged to overlook their wife’s faults when showing that kindness and love.

On the other hand, when addressing the wife, the focus is different. Why are women not told again and again to be kind and loving towards their husbands? Perhaps it is because unconditional love already comes naturally to women. Few men complain that their wives do not love them. But many complain that their wives do not respect them. And it is this sentiment which is most stressed in the Qur’an and sunnah, with regards to wives.

Respect can be manifest in a number of ways. One of the most important ways to show respect is the respect of one’s wishes. When someone says, “I respect your advice,” they mean “I will follow your advice.” Respecting a leader, means doing what they say. Respecting our parents means not going against their wishes. And respecting one’s husband means respecting his wishes.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has said:

“When any woman prays her five, fasts her month, guards her body and obeys her husband, it is said to her: ‘Enter paradise from whichever of its doors you wish.’” [At-Tirmidhi]

Why are we as women told to respect and follow the wishes of our husbands? It is because men are given an extra degree of re-

sponsibility. Allah says: “Men are the protectors and maintainers [qawwamun] of women, because Allah has given the one more [strength] than the other, and because they support them from their means . . .” (Qur’an, 4:34)

But won’t this unconditional respect towards one’s husband put us, as women, in a weak, submissive position? Won’t we set ourselves up to be taken advantage of and abused? Quite the contrary. The Quran, the prophetic example, and even contemporary research have proven the exact opposite. The more respect a woman shows her husband, the more love and kindness he will show her. And in fact, the more disrespect she shows, the more harsh and unloving he becomes.

Similarly, a man may question why he should show kindness and love towards even a disrespectful wife. To answer this question, one only needs to look at the example of Omar Ibn ul-Khattab. When a man came to Omar (who was Khalifah at the time) to complain of his wife, he heard Omar’s own wife yelling at him. While the man turned to leave, Omar called him back. The man told Omar that he had come to complain of the same problem that Omar himself had. To this Omar replied that his wife tolerated him, washed his clothes, cleaned his home, made him comfortable, and took care of his children. If she did all of this for him, how could he not tolerate her when she raised her voice?

This story provides a beautiful example for all of us—not only for the men. This story is a priceless illustration of tolerance and patience, which is essential for any successful marriage. Moreover, consider the reward in the hereafter for those who show patience: Allah says,

“Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning (or measure).” (Qur’an, 39:10)

MERS!

What it Brings to One's Mind

Harun Yahya

We have frequently heard of viral epidemics in recent years. Many people are familiar with the names of these viruses, such as HIV, Ebola, Nile Virus, H1N1 (swine flu), SARS and now Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, known as MERS.

MERS has a relatively high mortality level; thirty-five percent of reported cases have ended in death. According to the World Health Organization, 254 cases have to date been identified in various countries. Fifty new cases were reported last week and the Saudi death toll has crossed 100. In addition to Saudi Arabia, MERS cases have been seen in Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the UAE, Germany, Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, Tunisia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

It is not yet known how the MERS virus infects humans. People carrying the virus can transmit the disease without being aware of it, or the disease may quickly end in pneumonia, organ failure and death. Research has thus far provided no answers, meaning there are no drugs or vaccinations against this virus at the moment.

The above information is what you can read in any newspaper or website. However, what I wish to emphasize in this article is something different. A tiny entity invisible

to the naked eye is able to baffle 21st-century science and technology. A tiny virus may cause the death of thousands of people, as has been seen before in history. But what is it, apart from the will of God, that makes a virus impossible to beat?

The answer to this is an important sign leading to faith. God has created diseases in order to show the transitory nature of this world and to show people how weak they are, and has created and equipped viruses, which cause some of these diseases, with an amazing system.

The war between our cells and viruses is vitally important for human life. Viruses can be very active in the body and they literally invade cells; they then use the machinery and metabolism of the host cells for their replication and thus turn the cell into a factory producing more copies of themselves.

In order to accomplish its task, the virus needs enormous information, awareness and also power. It is obvious that a virus so small that it can only be seen under an electron microscope is itself unaware of this immaculate structure. So how did that structure come about? Even though the virus has no brain or eyes, how does it know when and how to act?

There is no doubt that it is Almighty God Who creates the virus, and the host cell and its machinery. With these complex entities He creates, God shows us His matchless artistry and infinite might. As we look at the details of these entities with their flawless structures they are evident signs for believers of the presence of God.

God reveals in one verse that: "In the alternation of night and day and what God has created in the heavens and the earth there are signs for people who have piety." (Surah Yunus, 6)

The virus is one of the most interesting structures in nature. It does not possess a cellular structure and consists solely of a genetic mechanism. It consists of a protein coat and genetic material (DNA or RNA) inside that coat. By itself it has no functions or organelles exhibiting signs of life. However, when it enters an organism it comes to life and becomes active. From the moment it interacts with a living cell it starts to exhibit life properties; it becomes an aggressive and also highly intelligent creature.

Before entering a cell, the virus works out which cell is suitable for it. If the test result is positive, it injects its own genetic material into the cell and begins replicating using the host cell's DNA and RNA synthesizing machinery, and RNA processing machinery.

It is indeed very hard for the cell to become aware of the situation: It is like finding a short sentence from an encyclopedia consisting of 20 volumes. By means of this "intelligent" method, the virus mixes with the host cell's own programming mechanisms and literally becomes a part of the cell.

Under normal circumstances, a cell never reads the code for any protein, not

even of proteins of other cells, apart from those it needs whose codes are marked in DNA with special locks. However, the cell reads the virus DNA and continues producing the virus. How the virus does this is still a mystery for scientists.

This spells disaster for the cell. A dying cell is used right to the end of its energy for production according to the program wrongly encoded in its nucleus. Then it dies and is broken down. As it breaks down, the accumulated viruses enter other cells and find new targets for themselves.

This viral invasion would proceed fast enough to kill a normal person in a few days were it not for the immune system; that defense mechanism identifies the virus soon after it enters the body and immediately initiates a counter-offensive. This enables us to survive instead of being killed by the simplest virus.

God shows us our weakness through a tiny entity.

In order to behave so successfully, the virus has to fit the cell in the same way a key fits a lock. We are looking at a most evident truth here; God has created viruses deliberately to cause disease. By means of troubles of this kind, human beings are better able to realize their helplessness and the infinite might of God.

People who reflect on all this will realize their own weakness before God and will turn to our Lord, seeking forgiveness. God reveals in a verse how He forgives those who turn to Him:

Your Lord knows best what is in your selves. If you are righteous, He is Ever-Forgiving to the remorseful. (Surat Al-'Isra, 25)

Al-Jahiz

The First Islamic Zoologist

David W. Tschanz

Al-Jahiz began his career as a writer - a precarious profession both then and now-while still in Basra.

In every generation and among every nation, there are a few individuals with the desire to study the workings of nature; if they did not exist, those nations would perish.

So wrote Abu 'Uthman 'Amr ibn Bakr al-Kinani al-Fuqaimi al-Basri, better known as al-Jahiz - the Goggle-Eyed - in his magnum opus, the Book of Animals.

Al-Jahiz himself was one of those individuals and was fortunate to live during one of the most exciting epochs of intellectual history - the period of the transmission of Greek science to the Arabs and the development of Arabic prose literature. Al-Jahiz was intimately involved in both.

Born about the year 776, some 14 years after the foundation of Baghdad by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mansur, al-Jahiz grew up in Basra, Iraq, founded early in Islamic times as a garrison city but by the time of his birth was a major intellectual center, along with its rival, Kufa.

Al-Jahiz attended Basra's schools, studying under some of the most eminent scholars of Islam. One of the most important aspects about the period of Al-Jahiz's intellectual development and his life was that books

were readily accessible. Though paper had been introduced into the Islamic world only shortly before al-Jahiz's birth, it had, by the time he was in his 30's, virtually replaced parchment, and launched an intellectual revolution.

The availability of a cheap writing material was accompanied by another social phenomenon --the rise of a reading public. For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire, the cities of the Islamic Caliphate contained a large number of literate people - many of humble origins.

Al-Jahiz and his parents, for example, were poor themselves; as a young man of 20 he sold fish along one of the Basran canals. Nevertheless, al-Jahiz learned to read and write at an early age, indicating the opportunities for "upward mobility" in eighth-century Iraq. Al-Jahiz tells the story of how his mother presented him with a tray of paper notebooks, and told him that it would be by means of these that he would earn his living.

Al-Jahiz began his career as a writer - a precarious profession both then and now-while still in Basra. He wrote an essay on the institution of the caliphate - which met with approval from the court in Baghdad - and from then on seems to have supported himself entirely by his pen, if we except a single three-

day stint as a government clerk. The fact that he never held an official position allowed him an intellectual freedom impossible to someone connected to the court - though he did dedicate a number of his works to viziers and other powerful functionaries. In turn, he often received gifts of appreciation for these "dedications". He received 5,000 gold dinars from the official to whom he dedicated his Book of Animals.

Al-Jahiz wrote over two hundred works, of which only thirty have survived. His work included zoology, Arabic grammar, poetry, rhetoric and lexicography. He is considered one of the few Muslim scientists who wrote on scientific and complex subjects for the layman and commoner. His writings contain many anecdotes, regardless of the subject he is discussing, that make his point and bring out both sides of the argument. Some of his books are: The Art of Keeping One's Mouth Shut, Against Civil Servants, Arab Food, In Praise of Merchants, and Levity and Seriousness. On the style of writing, al-Jahiz stated that: The best style is the clearest, the style that needs no explication and no notes, that conforms to the subject expressed, neither exceeding it nor falling short.

The most important of Al-Jahiz's works, however, is the Book of Animals - *Kitab al-Hayawan* - which, even incomplete, totals seven fat volumes in the printed edition. It contains important scientific information and anticipates a number of concepts that were not fully developed until the first half of the twentieth century. In the book, al-Jahiz discusses animal mimicry - noting that certain parasites adapt to the color of their host - and writes at length on the influences of climate and diet on men, and plants and animals of different geographical regions. He discusses animal communication, psychology and the

degree of intelligence of insect and animal species. He also gives a detailed account of the social organization of ants, including from his own observation, a description of how they store grain in their nests so that it does not spoil during the rainy season. He even knew that some insects are responsive to light - and used this information to suggest a clever way of ridding a room of mosquitoes and flies.

An early exponent of the zoological and anthropological sciences, al-Jahiz discovered and recognized the effect of environmental factors on animal life; and he also observed the transformation of animal species under different factors. Furthermore, in several passages of his book, he also described the concept, usually attributed to Charles Darwin, of natural selection.

Al-Jahiz's concept of natural selection was something new in the history of science. Although Greek philosophers like Empedocles and Aristotle spoke of change in plants and animals, they never made the first steps towards developing a comprehensive theory. To them change, was only a concept of simple change and motion and nothing more than that.

Eighty-seven folios of the Book of Animals (about one-tenth of the original text by al-Jahiz) are preserved in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan. This collection (a copy of the original) dates from the 14th century and bears the name of the last owner, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Maghribi, and the year 1615. These folios of the Book of Animals contain more than 30 illustrations in miniature.

Al-Jahiz returned to Basra after spending more than fifty years in Baghdad. He died in Basra in 868 as a result of an accident in which he was crushed to death by a collapsing pile of books in his private library. A fitting death for a writer.

A Good Sealing State

Husn al-Khatima

Mufti Abdur Rahman ibn Yusuf

The final state of a person at the time of death is what matters in the Hereafter. In this article, we discuss some of the causes for both good and evil sealing states, and how a person's inner traits will dominate at the time of death.

In a hadith transmitted by Ibn Abi 'al-Dunya in his Commanding the Good and Forbidding Evil from Abu Umama (RA) the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said to his Companions (Allah be pleased with them): "How will your situation be when your women become tyrannical, your youth become transgressors and you abandon striving and jihad in the path of Allah?" They asked, "Will that really occur? The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Yes, by the One in whose hand my soul is, something even worse than that will occur." They said, "What could be worse than that, O Messenger of Allah?"

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said; "How will your state be when you stop commanding the good and you stop preventing the evil?" They said, "Is that something that will occur?"

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "How will it be when you will begin to consider the good as evil, and when you will begin to consider the evil as

good?" [They were shocked] and said, "Is that truly to occur, O Messenger of Allah?"

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Yes, of course. Allah says that I swear by Myself that I will spread such a trial in the land that even the wise ones among you could become lost."

This hadith tells us of a gradual change in perspectives among people as their righteous behaviour diminishes and they eventually confuse what is good for what is evil, leading to a state where even those known for their wisdom have become lost. At present, we are living through, and witnessing, many of the things which the hadith describes. The point to ponder is that, if Allah has not saved us from these evils, then we may already be guilty of considering what is good according to the Shari'a to be evil, and what is evil according to the Shari'a to be good.

There is another hadith in which the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "A servant does work like that of the people of Paradise until there is a short distance left between him and Paradise, when the destiny written about him by Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) [through his eternal knowledge] overcomes him, and he perpetrates an act of the people of Hellfire, and

thus enters the Hellfire. Then, there are certain servants who do the actions of the people of Hellfire all their life, until there is a very short distance remaining between them and the Hellfire, until the destiny written about them by Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) overcomes them and they do an act of the people of Paradise and thus they enter into Paradise.”

An explanation of this hadith is that some people’s actions are considered evil based on how they are perceived by other people and other people’s actions are considered good based on how he or she is viewed by others. However, there is something hidden inside the individual that eventually overcomes him or her, which is why the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that what is really taken into consideration is the final sealing state of an individual at the time of their death (innama ‘l-a’mal bi ‘l-khawatim).

The above hadith indicates that what really matters is husn al-khatima or su’ al-khatima.

Husn al-khatima means a good sealing state, and su’ al-khatima means a bad sealing state.

These terms do not refer to what a person has been doing all life long, or how they appeared to be in the sight of others, but rather to the state that they are in at the time they leave this world, their sealing state. This is why the scholars mention that the evil sealing state is such that, even though a person’s actions may appear to be very virtuous, this evil sealing state occurs due to an inner trait which was concurrent with the good that a person did in front of others. Whilst it was perceived that these actions were good, there remained something inside the individual which concurrently occurred or was a regular habit but which was not expressed in front of others. This inner trait was evil and eventually

took over, leading one to commit an act of the people of the Hellfire. Likewise, many people who seem to be disobeying the Shari’a for long periods in their lives have within their hearts much goodness which has not yet dominated and is just waiting to surface and appear in their external actions. Due to the existence of these good qualities, which are pleasing to Allah (May He be glorified and exalted), a person’s goodness can become dominant before he or she passes away.

The Companions (Allah be pleased with them) knew the system of Allah and therefore always remained concerned, primarily about how they would be viewed by Allah regarding their actions. One of the greatest believers and close Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA), who is considered the second greatest man after Abu Bakr. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (RA) would often say, “Have I been regarded (by Allah) as a hypocrite? Will I die with an evil sealing state?” He would ask Huzayfa (RA) if his name was included in the list of the hypocrites that was given to Huzayfa (RA) by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). He was constantly worried despite having to his credit so many acts of worship and so many conquests. ‘Umar (RA) knew that the inner dimensions of a person are what matter and not the external, apparent actions; and that one should be content with the former.

Here is a supplication that is commonly known: “O Turner of the hearts, establish my heart on your Din, keep it firm on your Deen. You are the turner of hearts.”

We should ask Allah to keep our hearts sound and firm on the Deen because we do not know how and when things could change, and we could become guilty of being boastful about our achievements and this could be the cause of our downfall. This is

why having humility, being humble, is always important.

The great scholars have highlighted a few major causes of a bad sealing state. One of the main causes is intoxicants. This could be of any form, including drinking, smoking or the taking of drugs, because intoxicants can overcome a person's rationality and can affect one's ability to focus or to be conscious of one's actions.

'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Rawwad says, "I was present when somebody was in the last moments of their life. They were being encouraged to say *Laa ilaha illallah*, but the person refused to say it. The final statement the person then uttered was: "He is a disbeliever in what you are saying!"

So 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Rawwad enquired about him, and was informed that, although he did not do it in public, this man was given to drinking in small amounts. This is what overcame him in his last moments. It was then that 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn Rawwad advised that one must beware of committing any sin as that is what had caused this person to have this ending.

The scholars mention that a sign of a good sealing state is perspiration at the time of death, and another sign is contentment or satisfaction at the time of death, evidenced by a smile on the face of the person despite the way in which he or she has died. An example of this comes from the stories of martyrs, who may have been killed in a gruesome way, but on whose faces can be seen peace and a sense of happiness.

There are numerous occasions where Allah opens up these kinds of states for his pious servants, blessing them with a vision, and making their state apparent to people around them so as to inspire and encourage others to do good because they have seen the person's life, and now they see their state at

death.

It is related about 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak (ra) that when death was approaching him, the people around him were saying *Laa ilaaha illallah*. 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak looked up towards the heavens and said, "For the like of this do the people work all their life." He was given an unveiling of what Allah had kept for him in the Hereafter.

The story of 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (ra) who was a caliph for about two years and six months, was able to change the whole order and system of the time for the better. At the time of his death, people were gathered around him, and he said to them, "Leave me, nobody should remain here." Thereafter, the people moved away and sat outside his doors. 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (ra) was heard saying, "Welcome to these faces. These are not the faces of the human or jinn." He then recited an ayah of the Qur'an: "That is the abode of the Hereafter which we designate for those who do not want to cause tyranny or corruption in this world. Well-being is only for those who have the fear of Allah." Then 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz (ra) breathed his last.

Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) does not deprive or humiliate his pious servants who have worked hard all their lives to please Allah, neither in this life, nor in the Hereafter. When Allah loves a person, He will place for them acceptance in the world. People will begin to love them.

Anas (RA) reports that the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "When Allah intends good for someone, He uses him (or takes him for his service)." The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was then asked, "How will Allah use him?" The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied; "Before death, Allah will give him the *tawfeeq* (divine Guidance) to do something

good.”

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, “When Allah wants something good for someone, He will use him.” The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) was asked, “How will Allah use him?” The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, “Allah will inspire him to do a good action, which he will do before his death, so much so that his neighbours and those people around him will become happy with him.”

Regardless of what a person does or who they are in front of, Allah will select a person and desire good for him and give him the ability to do good actions for his Deen before he dies. That action will then be a means of accomplishment and acceptance for the individual in the sight of Allah, and thus he or she will leave this world with a good sealing state.

We must ask Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) to use us for some form of good work for the Deen, regardless of our area of work or profession. One may think that “I am not capable of giving lectures or calling people towards Allah,” or other commonly known deeds that we see others doing. Do not fear. Regardless of your capabilities, ask Allah to open the doors of guidance. Whatever you do, Allah will guide you to some way in which you are able to do some good work that will be the cause of Allah’s being pleased with you and the people being pleased with you as well. If you already have tawfeeq to do good actions, whether this is through da’wah, or benefitting society through some community work, then ask Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) to accept it, make it a truly genuine and sincere, and ask that you be accepted for the service of His Deen.

Allah (May He be glorified and exalted) gives tawfeeq to his pious servants who have strived and worked hard all their lives to please Him and have done service for His Deen, enabling them to do good actions at the time of death. Ultimately what matters is what is going to happen then and how death will arrive. It is important to remember that it is not only the scholars or learned people who are able to achieve this good sealing state. It is not only through preaching or giving lectures that one can be of service to the Deen. There are numerous ways in which we can benefit humanity, things that we can do to assist and make it easier for people to worship Allah. The options are limitless.

Transcribed by Yunus bin Yusuf

Cont’d from page 48

tion for doing the act? Is it to seek the Pleasure of Allah or the pleasure of others? If you discern any of the contamination in your niyyat, then purify your intention. Divest it of the contamination and firmly resolve to render the deed for the Pleasure of Allah.

THE REMEDY

The cure for riyaa is the expulsion from the heart of the desire for fame and name. Riyaa in fact is a branch of hubb-e-jah (love for name, fame and glory). Execute your acts of Ibaadat in solitude. This Ibaadat in solitude refers to such Ibaadat which does not have to be performed in jamaat. However, regarding congregational Ibaadar the elimination of hubb-e-jah will be sufficient to combat riyaa in this avenue. Another efficacious remedy regarding riyaa developing in an act of Ibaadat is to render that specific act of Ibaadat in abundance. Within a short while the riyaa will be dispelled and by force of habit the Ibaadat will become sincere.

The Threat of Modernization VS Islam's Moderation

S. Nabil Saad

One of the most detrimental effects of modernization is its unprecedented threat on our daily lives; Secularism, modern technology, excessive consumerism, urbanization, etc. have all had their toll on us.

We live in a world with no boundaries, barely giving you any room for choice or control over your life.

It has unfortunately become the norm for many Muslims too, to accept modernization without questioning if it is all in all in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, should we really not question any of this?

As Muslims, how can we deal with these challenges in a way that they don't harm our faith or spirituality?

How can we strongly face the tide?

The Threat of Secularism

Although it is no person's right to force another into any religion, unfortunately secularism is not only the business of its followers as in a global technology ideas propagate with the speed of sound.

We are living in times, where in most areas, religion is scorned upon and seen as "the opium of the people"; a medium for the weak and poor and the ones less privileged 'mentally' to hold onto.

Morals have become an old fashioned connotation, replaced by unlimited freedoms that do not respect others' beliefs, even if they strongly go against them. Islam goes against this, your freedom stops when you harm others.

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"All of my Ummah will be fine except for those who commit sin openly (Al-Mujahiroon). Part of committing sin openly is when a man does something at night and Allah conceals it, but in the morning he says, 'o so-and-so, last night I did such and such.' His Lord had covered his sin all night, but in the morning he removed the cover of Allah." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim, 241)

The Threat of New Technology

Modern lifestyles are so stressful with the various tools of social media and the constant pressure to own the latest gadgets. We should be careful not to give in to this, as it not only harms our body but moreover destroys our peace of mind. Keep in mind that it is as vital too, not to take a part of something that goes against Islamic morals. This is not a call to boycott modern devices; rather it is only a plea to not let them control you; Islam calls for moderation; which is always the best.

Ease the mind and body of its stress and

sorrows and bring by a spiritual strength through drawing yourself closer to Allah.

We have become so engrossed in the virtual modern technology that it has unfortunately had its toll on our real lives; in improving our spirituality and relationship with our family.

Set your gadgets aside for a set time every day and turn to your Lord with a clear mind and enjoy some uplifting Islamic acts of worship such as Prayers, supplications, reading Quran, etc.

Ease the mind and body of its stress and sorrows and bring by a spiritual strength through drawing yourself closer to Allah.

Set your gadgets aside for a set time every day and spend real time with your family.

The Threat of Excessive Consumerism

Modernization has bombarded us with the need of excessive consumerism, but do we really need all this stuff that we are made to believe is a necessity?

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"Whoever wakes up safely in his home and is healthy in his body and has provisions for his day, would have acquired all the worldly possessions he is in need of." (At-Tirmidhi, 2346)

Subhan Allah, all what a person needs is actually "provisions for his day" to "have acquired all the worldly possessions he is in need of."

The threats of excessive consumerism are summarized in the article "Why Overcoming Consumerism": "Consumerism interferes with the workings of society by replacing the normal common-sense desire for an adequate supply of life's necessities, community life, a stable family and healthy relationships with an artificial ongoing and insatiable quest for things and the money to buy them with little regard for the true utility of what is bought.

An intended consequence of this, pro-

moted by those who profit from consumerism, is to accelerate the discarding of the old, either because of lack of durability or a change in fashion.

Landfills swell with cheap discarded products that fail early and cannot be repaired. Products are made psychologically obsolete long before they actually wear out. A generation is growing up without knowing what quality goods are. Friendship, family ties and personal autonomy are only promoted as a vehicle for gift giving and the rationale for the selection of communication services and personal acquisition. Everything becomes mediated through the spending of money on goods and services. Human beings who cannot spend become worthless."

The Threat of Urbanization

Islam calls for development, but without harming humans or the environment.

One of the major characteristics of modernization is the shift of dwelling from rural to urban areas. Certainly, development is vital, however the price paid is drastic.

Alarming rates of pollution, both in the form of air, water, noise and light with 24/7 access to electricity resulting mainly in a disruption of the natural sleep cycle of the body; decreased access to sunlight, fresh air and produce; has led to more diseases, both physically and psychologically.

Islam calls for development, but without harming humans or the environment. However modernized development has gone out of control because it shifted away from moderation. Why not create a combination of rural and urban life? Do we really need all these factories, food produces, leisure facilities, etc.? Have they really made us happier?

Allah Almighty says in His Holy Book:

{Nay (behold), you prefer the life of this world; but the Hereafter is better and more enduring.}
(87:16-7)

Happenings

APP MAPS COMMUNITIES OF 1948 PALESTINE

An Israeli non-governmental organization is launching a smartphone app that will allow users to identify Palestinian cities and towns depopulated or destroyed by Jewish paramilitaries in the 1948 war that led to Israel's creation.

iNakba, available only on Apple's iPhone iOS operating system for now, is the brainchild of Zochrot, a Tel Aviv-based group that raises awareness among Jewish Israelis about the Nakba. Arabic for "catastrophe," the word is used to refer to the expulsion and fleeing of more than 700,000 Palestinians in 1948. The app, which can be downloaded in Arabic, English and Hebrew, identifies these destroyed localities to younger Palestinians who want to learn about their ancestral homeland, and educates Israelis about the many Palestinian villages that existed before the 1948 war, said Raneen Jeries, who worked on developing the app at Zochrot. "The historical landscape has obviously changed since before 1948," Jeries told Al Jazeera. "And it's difficult to find these destroyed areas on maps. So we decided to put technology to good use, and make this kind of information readily available on people's smartphones."

iNakba relies on a current Google map of Israel, but merges it with another layer of maps containing the destroyed areas. Users can watch videos and see pictures of the historical cities and towns. An interactive feature allows them to upload their own visual ele-

ments and contribute through commentary.

muslimstoday.info

Chocolate Jihad Declared

Muslim groups have declared jihad on Cadbury after two of its products sold in predominantly Islamic Malaysia were found to contain traces of pork.

The discovery was made during a periodic check for non-halal ingredients in food products by the country's health ministry, which confirmed the presence of porcine DNA in bars of Cadbury Dairy Milk Hazelnut and Cadbury Dairy Milk Roast Almond.

Cadbury Malaysia, like most food makers in the country where Muslims make up more than 60 per cent of the population, has all of its products certified halal to conform with Islam's dietary restrictions, one of which is a prohibition on pork.

A news conference was held in Kuala Lumpur where the groups claimed Cadbury had "crossed the line".

"They have betrayed us Muslims by putting haram elements in the foods we consume," said Abu Bakar Yahya, a leader of Malay rights group Perkasa.

Nadzim Johan, president of the Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia, called for all Cadbury's factories to be shut down and for all Muslims nationwide to boycott their products.

The president of another Muslim rights group in Malaysia called for a holy war, or jihad, against the confectionery giant for

attempting to “weaken” Muslims in Malaysia.

Ustaz Masridzi Sat said: “Because the person eats pork it is difficult to guide him to the right path. When the day of judgment comes, that person will be wearing a pig-face because of what he has eaten.

“We need to unite, we must declare jihad.”

The company said it was undertaking a full review of its supply chain to ensure halal standards and the Malaysian government said it will conduct inspection of all Cadbury Malaysia’s products.

Telegraph.co.uk

250,000 Qurans to be distributed at Brazil World Cup

Kuwait's Awqaf Ministry has said it will distribute 250,000 free copies of the Holy Quran in different translations in Brazil during the 2014 FIFA World Cup this summer.

The Kuwaiti daily reported that the ministry's Quran Board, known as Al-Qabas, will foresee the distribution of Qurans in Spanish, Portuguese, English and French at hotels, stadiums and various other public places.

The competition, which starts on June 12 and will run until July 13, will host the fans of 32 international football teams, including six largely Muslim teams: Algeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Iran and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

A special guide book for Muslim visitors called Salaam Brazil has also been printed to help them become acquainted with halal restaurants and activities in the Latin American country with the help of the Omani authorities.

worldbulletin.net

Complex dedicated to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to be built in Makkah

Saudi Arabia has designated a one million square meter vicinity in the Holy City of Makkah to build a complex dedicated to the

46. (Vol.15, Issue: 07)

Prophet Muhammad and his teachings.

Called the “Peace be upon the Prophet” project, the centre will include an exhibition, university, electronic gate centre, library, translation centre, hotels and other facilities.

Due to be built on the Haram boundaries along the Al-Haramain Expressway, it will also serve as a printing press house for a new 500-volume, 350,000-page encyclopedia about the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

The exhibition will consist of Allah's 99 names, an explanation of the Prophet's (SAW) character and manners, Islam and other prophets and messengers.

worldbulletin.net

US to keep 9,800 troops in Afghanistan after 2014

Senior Obama administration officials have said the US president is to seek to keep 9,800 US troops in Afghanistan beyond 2014.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Obama will announce the plan himself in a statement from the White House in Washington, DC.

Obama, who made a surprise 32-hour trip to Afghanistan to visit US troops, said during a speech at Bagram Air Field outside Kabul on Sunday that he would soon make an announcement on troop presence in Afghanistan.

“After all the sacrifices we’ve made, we want to preserve the gains that you have helped to win,” he said. “We’re at a pivotal moment.”

Washington needs to sign a bilateral security agreement with Kabul to be able to keep troops in the country beyond 2014. Despite US pressures, Afghan President Hamid Karzai has refused to sign the agreement.

Karzai has been saying that the Afghan nation cannot approve the agreement without guarantees that the US will halt its deadly airstrikes on civilians.

However, US officials say they are confident that Afghanistan's next president will agree to sign the deal. The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in October 2001 as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The offensive removed Taliban militants from power, but after all these years, the foreign troops have not been able to establish security in the country.

Thousands of civilians, including women and children, have been killed and millions more displaced as a result of the US-led war.

pi-media.co.uk

Jakarta to host global Islamic tourism forum

The capital Jakarta will host the first Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) International Forum on Islamic Tourism next month to develop shariah tourism among 57 OIC members.

Tourism and Creative Economy Deputy Minister Sapta Nirwandar said sharia tourism was projected to continue to grow as Muslim populations were predicted to reach 2.2 billion – equal to 26.4 percent of the global population – by the end of 2030.

The Muslim population stood at 1.6 billion of a global population of 6.9 billion in 2012.

"Through this forum, we want to strengthen sharia tourism's position as one of keys to help support the global economy. We also want to promote sharia tourism destinations and products such as hotels, restaurants and spas," he said.

According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy 2012 research conducted by Thomson Reuters, Muslims spent US\$1.088 billion on halal food, equal to 16.6 percent of

worldwide food spending. The figure is projected to increase to \$1.626 billion in 2018.

Meanwhile, in the tour and travel sector, Muslims around the world spent \$137 billion on travel, excluding haj and minor haj, throughout 2012, or 12.5 percent of travel spending across the globe.

This figure is predicted to rise to \$181 billion by the end of 2018.

thejakartapost.com

Aussie Muslim students dismissed for wearing Hijab

A decision by a Queensland Christian college to fire two Muslim student teachers and transfer them to another school for wearing hijab has been sparking angry Muslim reactions who said they were "disappointed" by the discriminatory decision.

The controversy has erupted after the dismissal of two Muslim women from Redlands College after showing up while wearing the Islamic headscarf, hijab.

The two teacher students were assigned to a work placement at Redlands College this year.

"I have a duty of care to ensure that those teaching at the College are actively supporting the Christian principles, practices and beliefs of the College," the principal wrote in a newsletter that outlines reasons for dismissing the Muslim students.

onislam.net

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not spare ten days are encouraged to spend as much time in the mosque as possible.

Through direct Ibada we "charge our batteries"; the indirect ones allow us to use the power so accumulated in driving the vehicle of our life. Ramadan is the month for rebuilding our spiritual strength. How much we benefit from it is up to us.

Blameworthy Morals

RIYAA

Mawlana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)

Allah says:

"They display to people (their acts of Ibaadat)."

Rasulullah (saws) said: "Most certainly, even a little riyaa is shirk."

Riyaa is the intention to enhance one's dignity in the eyes of the people by means of acts of obedience to Allah. This attitude totally defeats the purpose of Ibaadat. The purpose of Ibaadat is to gain the Pleasure of Allah. Since show or display of Ibaadat involves division of purpose, riyaa is termed shirk-e-asghar (the lesser shirk). By means of riyaa one splits the purpose of Ibaadat by endeavouring to attain both public acclaim as well as the Pleasure of Allah. In this regard the Qur'aan says:

"He who hopes for the meeting with His Rabb should practise righteousness and associate none with the Ibaadat of his Rabb."

The Mufasssireen have explained that the meaning of "and associate none with the Ibaadat of his Rabb" is "to refrain from riyaa". Qadhi Thanaa-ullah explained this aayat in Tafseerul Mazhari as follows: "He (the worshipper) does not exhibit his good acts nor does he seek reward or praise for his virtuous deeds from anyone besides Allah."

It is also mentioned in the Hadith Shareef that on the Day of Qiyaamah when Allah will be compensating people for their deeds, the people of riyaa will be commanded to proceed for reward to those for whom they

had intended the exhibition of their acts of Ibaadat. In a lengthy hadith it is said that on the Day of Qiyaamah three persons will be ushered into the presence of Allah. These three will be an Aalim, a generous person and a Mujaahid who had waged jihaad. These three will proffer their respective acts of Ibaadat to Allah Who will say to them: "You have rendered these deeds for riyaa and acclaim. You rendered these acts so that people may say: 'You are a great Aalim, a generous person and a great mujaahid.' You have already obtained what you had sought. People have already praised you on earth. You have therefore no right here. Enter the Fire."

Rasulullah (saws) also said that a deed contaminated by even an atom of riyaa is unacceptable to Allah. Heed this and reflect! In view of the foregoing, never intend to display any act nor intend to conceal it. Concern yourself with the act itself, -intending thereby only the Pleasure of Allah. Ignore all diversionary waswasah (stray thoughts and whisperings of the nafs and shaitaan) which enter your mind. You may at times be assaulted by the thought that your act is to obtain the acclaim of the people. Ignore this waswasah which in fact is a ploy of shaitaan or the nafs engineered to side-track you from executing the righteous act.

Prior to rendering a good deed, reflect and ascertain your motive. What is your inten-

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