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# RADIANT REALITY

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## EDITORIAL

*All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted*

# Is it about saving lives?

The promoters of nude body scanners have used one argument that they consider to be bullet-proof. It is all about saving lives, they assure us. The news reports that accompanied the announcement of their sudden and universal installation reported passengers accepting the scanners because what they gave up in modesty they got back in added security.

Or did they?

What exactly is the gain in security as a result of mandating these legal obscenities? How big is the current risk and how much will it be reduced by the new measures?

These are the questions that have not been explored. And here is the big news. For even the best case analysis shows that the gain is so small as to be totally insignificant.

Available data indicates that flying is a very safe mode of travel and the further increase in safety with the new measures will be very marginal. Based on historic official data currently the probability of a passenger dying in an air carrier accident is 1 out of 2,067,000 (much smaller than the one for motor vehicles, which is 1 out of 7,700). With the drastic measures now being implemented, in the best case scenario, this will only be reduced to 1 out of 2,271,428.

The expected improvement can be calculated by looking at the historic data

for causes of aircraft fatal accidents. Available records for the past sixty years show that sabotage has been a very small and decreasing contributor to the overall aircraft fatal accident probability. Planecrash-info.com analyzed data for all aircraft fatal incidents that occurred from 1950-2008. Only 9% of these were caused by sabotage, which includes use of explosives, shoot downs, and hijackings. In other words 91% of all commercial aircraft accidents causing fatalities were caused by other factors. Of these 50% were caused by pilot error, 22% by mechanical failure and 12% by weather. The contribution to fatal accidents by sabotage was the highest in the 1980s and has been decreasing ever since. It stood at the 58-year average of 9% for the 2000s.

It does not take a genius to figure out that much bigger gains in saving lives can be made by addressing the factors that contribute to the 91% of the problem. That there is room for improvement there is indicated by a six-month USA TODAY investigation that found that during the past six years, millions of passengers have been on at least 65,000 U.S. airline flights that shouldn't have taken off because planes weren't properly maintained. According to the report, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which oversees airlines, levied \$28.2 million in fines and pro-

*Cont'd on page 48*

# Question Answer

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**Question.**

Is it permissible for a pregnant woman to postpone the fast during Ramadaan?

**Answer.**

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding may postpone the fast during Ramadaan if fasting will be detrimental to their health or the health of the child. After Ramadaan, they will have to make Qadha of the fasts they had missed when they are in a position to do so. (Badai-us-Sanaai)

NB. Breastfeeding and pregnant women should consult an upright and experienced Muslim doctor for advice on whether fasting will be detrimental or not.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

Is it permissible for a woman to take pills to avoid menstruation and to keep fasts?

**Answer.**

It is not advisable for a woman to take pills in order to avoid her menstrual period. However, if she takes pills to delay the menses in order to observe fasts, the fasts will be valid. (Fataawa Raheemiyah)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

I know that a woman cannot keep

fasts whilst in Haidh-menstruation. Then, if she experiences menstruation whilst fasting, does she have to keep Qadha for the missed fasts in Haidh or not?

**Answer.**

A woman who experiences menstruation during her fast will have to make Qadha for that fast as well as all the fasts she missed during her menstruation. (Hidaayah)

N.B. The Qadha of the missed fasts of Ramadaan will be made after the month of Ramadaan.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

What time should we partake of Sehri?

**Answer.**

There is no specific time for the beginning of Sehri. However to delay the eating of Sehri until before the Subah Sadiq (break of dawn) is Mustahab. (Hindiyyah)

By delay it is not meant that one eats right up to last moments. Rather it refers to not eating during the early portion or middle of the night, but towards the latter portion. One should complete the Sehri comfortably before the cut off time.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

In Ramadaan, I sometimes wake

up for Sehri but I am in a state of Janaabat - I have to take a Ghusal due to experiencing a wet dream. Can I make Sehri first and then take a Ghusal after Sehri, to be cleaned from the state of Janaabat?

**Answer.**

If one wakes up for Sehri in a condition of Janaabat (the need to take a Fardh Ghusal) and there isn't sufficient time to partake of Sehri and take a Fardh Ghusal at the same time, then one may first partake of Sehri and thereafter take a Fardh Ghusal. In such an event one should thoroughly rinse one's mouth and wash one's hands before eating.

In any case, a Fardh Ghusal should not be delayed unnecessarily.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

Is it permissible for a man to marry his mother's brother's ex-wife?

**Answer.**

A man's mother's brother's ex-wife is considered a non-Mahram (stranger) to him. As such, it is permissible for him to marry his mother's brother's ex-wife after the Iddah period. (Surah Nisaa)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

I will be an heir and own a share in my father's property. Can I give my share to my creditor to pay off my debts that I owe him whilst my father is still living?

**Answer.**

Being a potential heir in a share of a property does not make one a shareholder in the property as one does not own it. More so, heirs are only determined after the demise of the deceased.

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As such, you cannot pay your creditor by giving your potential share of your father's property to him whilst your father is still alive.

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

My non-Muslim colleague is doing a fund raising for a construction of a church. Is it okay for me to donate towards the fundraising of the construction of the church?

**Answer.**

It is not permissible for a Muslim to donate towards the building or construction of a church as it is assisting in the promotion of worshipping false deities besides Allah. Allah states in the Quran: "And do not assist each other in sin and oppression." (Surah Maaidah)

*Mufti Ismaeel*

**Question.**

Ebay charges me a commission for selling items using their online market service. The seller purchases the items on ebay and transfers the money via paypal into my account. Paypal then charges me a commission for using their online money transferring service. Is the above-mentioned transaction permissible?

**Answer.**

eBay is the world's online marketplace; a place for buyers and sellers to come together and trade almost anything. PayPal is an online payment service that allows individuals and businesses to transfer funds electronically.

The commission paid to eBay would be regarded as a fee in exchange for the usage of their facilities provided.

Similarly, the percentage taken by PayPal for the transferred amount is a fee, for their services in facilitating the transferral of the money.

Accordingly, the abovementioned transactions are permissible.

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question.

Can I enter into an interest bearing transaction with the intention of distributing the interest in charity after the transaction is completed?

### Answer.

It is not permissible to enter into an interest bearing transaction even with the intention of distributing the interest in charity to the poor and needy. Rasulullah Sal-lallaahu Alayhi Wasallam cursed the one who accepts interest and the one who pays it. (Muslim)

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question.

I made a firm intention to divorce my wife and I said to myself, "I will do it." Does this constitute a divorce?

### Answer.

The statement, "I will do it" of a husband to his wife does not constitute a divorce as it refers to a future time.

A divorce takes place when one issues the divorce.

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question.

As a solicitor, is it permissible for me to draw up a non-Shariah will for my Muslim clients? Will the income from it be Halaal?

### Answer.

It is not permissible for a solicitor to prepare a non-Shariah compliant will for a Muslim client, as it will amount to assisting in sin. Allah Ta'ala mentions:

*"Do not assist each other in sin and aggression" (Maaidah)*

The wages received from preparing such a will, will be Haraam. It will be necessary for the solicitor to return the money to the Muslim client and, if this is not possible, to dispense of it by giving it to the poor and needy. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question.

I want to enroll for an on-line course. The on-line course offers a discount on advance payments of fess while it offers a payment of normal monthly fees. Is it permissible to have two different fess for advance payments of fees and normal monthly fees in Shariah?

### Answer.

It is permissible to have a discounted fee for advance payments of fees and normal fees for monthly payments on condition that the fees are specified and does not fluctuate. (Badaai-us-Sanaai)

Mufti Ismaeel

### Question.

Can an heir reject his/her share of inheritance and give it to others?

### Answer.

An heir does not have an option in accepting or refusing his/her share of inheritance as their shares are given to them by Allah Ta'ala and the inheritor inherits his/her share automatically. However, an

heir may dispose of his/her share of inheritance after taking possession of it by gifting it to whomsoever they wish. (Shaami)

Mufti Ismaeel

#### Question.

As-salaamu-Alaikum, Our pet cat has taken ill in its old age; lost sight in one eye, losing balance, has a skin disease, etc. We really do not want to see him suffer anymore. Is it a sin to have him put down by the SPCA?,

#### Answer.

If there is no hope in curing the animal, it will be permissible to euthanize the animal in a humane manner to take it out of its misery. (Mawahibul Jalil)

Mufti Suhail

#### Question.

I am a Muslim female. My father in law passed away and my mother-in-law remarried another man? Is my mother in laws new husband a Mahram to me or not?

#### Answer.

Your mother-in-law's new husband i.e. your husbands stepfather, is not a Mahram to you. (Verse 23 Suratun Nisaa). Hence, it is necessary for you to observe Hijaab from him at all times.

Mufti Ismaeel

#### Question.

Many Muslims shake hands with non-Mahram males and females at family gatherings, offices, workplaces, on Eid's, Jumuah's etc. Is it permissible to shake hands with non-Mahram males and females?

#### Answer.

It is not permissible for non-Mahram (stranger) males and females to 'shake hands' with one another.

Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam said:

*"It is better for an iron rod (nail, needle etc.) to be driven into the head of a man, than for him to touch a woman who is not permissible for him."*(Mu'jamul Kabir)

Mufti Ismaeel

#### Question.

I am an executor of an estate. I would like to distribute the estate according to Shariah but I would like to do so in instalments? Is it permissible for me to do so?

#### Answer.

It is not permissible for the executor of an estate to distribute the estate of the deceased in instalments unless all the surviving heirs of the deceased mutual agree to do so. (Al Barur-Raa'iq)

As such, the heirs of the deceased should be given their complete share of the estate as soon as possible without any unnecessary delay.

Mufti Ismaeel

#### Question.

At certain malls there are gaming arcades for children, where tokens are bought to play games, however some games resemble gambling machines and others are where you do some activity whereby one wins a certain amount of tickets which are counted at the end and a prize can be claimed for the amount of tickets won. Is this permissible?

**Answer.**

Gambling is defined as losing one's contributions to his counterpart or winning his counterparts contribution. The definition of gambling fits the gaming arcade systems. Tokens are bought to play games in which the winner earns a prize. The children and the company are counterparts. The child may win and secure the company's contribution in the form of a prize. On the other hand the child may lose the game and the company takes the money paid for games.

In principle, all forms of gambling and betting are totally forbidden in Islam. This applies whether the gambling operates in the traditional forms or assumes any modern structure; both carry the same rule of prohibition. Simply changing the name of the principle amount used for gambling to "entrance fees" and the surplus achieved on the principle to "prizes" in others will not change the ruling.

Therefore, the gaming arcade systems in reference are not permissible as they are tantamount to gambling.

*Ml. Ismail*

**Question.**

How do you deal with your husband who when dealing with women (in my absence) is free, and takes their problems as his own? He just feels when women tell their situations to him, that he needs to solve them. I am very uncomfortable with this. Please give me some advice on how to go about this. Should I mention this to him?

**Answer.**

Spouses talking to the opposite sex

without need or restraint can have damaging effects on relationships. Seek out ways to strengthen your relationship, and ways to bond and spend more time together. Be tactful and see if you can indirectly get your point across. If the problem persists, you need to have a frank discussion with him, and if need be, get some professional or religious assistance.

Pray the Prayer of Need (salat al-hajah), and ask Allah to facilitate that which is best.

*Ml. Tabraze*

**Question.**

Someone has thoughts of disbelief and, in order to know the ruling, asks a scholar by writing saying that he has uttered this statements of disbelief. Does writing this question make him a non Muslim?

**Answer.**

No, this does not make one a non-Muslim.

What would take a person outside the faith is denying that which brought him into it, namely the testimony of faith and all that it entails of that which is necessarily known to be of the religion.

As for misgivings and passing thoughts of disbelief, they are no consequence as Sheikh Nuh Keller writes in Sea Without Shore, "As long as one has fear and disgust for passing thoughts of unbelief (kufr) and the like and does not make them convictions, they do no harm."

Imam Muslim narrates in his Sahih collection that some of the Companions of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came and asked him, "We find in ourselves

[thoughts] that any of us would consider too enormous to even mention.” He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, “And you all have found it?” and they said yes. He said, “That is pure faith.”

*Ml. Tabraze*

### Question.

What is the ruling on eating vegetarian food that has been prepared by a non-Muslim (e.g. Hindu), particularly if it has been part of a prayer ritual?

### Answer.

Scholars generally consider it permissible to eat vegetarian food prepared by non-Muslims, even if one suspects that a prayer of sorts may have accompanied its preparation. This is because there is nothing that prohibits consuming this food, and the default ruling is permissibility.

The prohibition of consuming That over which any name other than God’s has been invoked [Qur’an, 2.173] [Qur’an, 5.3] [Qur’an, 16.115] refers to the sacrifice of animals, not plants.

Some scholars may advise staying away from partaking in food that one suspects has been part of something that does not accord with Islamic beliefs, either out of discomfort, or because one does not want to be seen as being in support of such activities, but the food itself remains permissible.

*Ml. Shuaib*

### Question.

Many times we actually lose our mindfulness during prayer because of thoughts in our mind while having prayed outwardly in a correct manner. Does this require to repeat prayer?

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### Answer.

No, being inattentive during the prayer does not invalidate it as long as the integrals are performed.

As for having presence of heart, this is from the sunnas and proper manners of praying. Ask Allah to increase your presence, and take the means of doing so.

*Ml. Tabraze*

### Question.

I have made a vow to fast 30 consecutive days consecutive. However at the time I did not realise that I will be travelling abroad for job interviews. I will be travelling a week before I am due to finish the vow. I am worried about energy levels and breath. Should I continue the vow till the end?

### Answer.

If you uttered a vow to fast thirty consecutive days, then it will be binding upon you to do so; yet you do not need to fulfil the vow immediately. [‘Ala’ al-Din ‘Abidin, al-Hadiyya al-‘Ala’iyya]

This is because you made a general vow, without any additional conditions and the like, thus it is only binding in a general way— in that it must be fulfilled at some point.

Allah Most High says, “Fulfil any pledge you make in God’s name and do not break oaths after you have sworn them, for you have made God your surety: God knows everything you do.” [16.91]

However, as stated, this ruling only applies if you actually uttered the statement. If it was something you merely thought, without saying it, it is of no legal consideration.

*Ml. Tabraze*



# Lesson From The Qur'an

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***“But (God caused you to meet for battle in such circumstances) so that God might accomplish a thing that He had already decreed in order that he who was to perish should perish by a clear evidence (of his deserving perishing because he followed falsehood), and he who survived might survive by a clear evidence (of his deserving survival because of his devotion to the truth). Surely God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.” (Al-Anfāl 8:42)***

Life could have been organized according to what is stated in the verse, “If your Lord had so willed, all who are on the earth would surely have believed, all of them” (Yūnus 10:99). However, the Divine Will has bound the existence of belief and unbelief dependent upon a struggle which will continue until the end of the world. It is possible to see this reality clearly when we look at the history of humankind since the time of Prophet Adam, upon him be peace. So if we want to live as believers, we should not forget that we may always be the target of the transgression, betrayal, tyranny, and enmity of the people of unbelief. While the natural hostility of unbelief towards belief brings the unbelievers to aggression, the front of belief should not cause unbelievers to feel as if they are walking among the corpses. Those who die should die knowing clearly for which cause they die while those who survive should know clearly for which cause they strive and survive so that no one may have

any excuses or questions in God’s Presence on the Day of Judgment.

Whether it is the believers or unbelievers who are victorious, the result does not change: no side will have excuses before God, for both the believers and unbelievers deserve the result of their striving.

To explain the matter further, the verse under discussion was re-vealed in regard with the Battle of Badr. As stated in the first part of the verse, God Almighty organized the battle in such circumstances that even if the two sides—the Muslim army under the command of God’s Messenger and the Makkan army—had made a mutual appointment to meet for battle in such circumstances, they would have failed to keep the appointment. However, the divinely sanctioned incident brought the two sides face to face for battle without the forethought and planning of either of the two parties. Those who would “survive” would do so because they deserved it. In fact, this is the truth of the entire human

history. Those who have “perished” with respect to the eternal life as well as their worldly life have perished or lost because they have been closed to the truth and thus defeated by their grudges, hatred or deviations while those who have survived have survived and earned eternal life in high-spiritedness and happiness due to their courage, altruism, and struggle with wrongdoing and injustices, as well as their dedication to lofty ideals, and righteousness.

To sum up, neither those who have died nor those who have survived in the Battle of Badr and all other battles, neither those who are victorious nor those who are defeated, and neither the believers nor unbelievers who have lived throughout history can do anything but admit that whatever happens is right and pure justice. This is so because everything occurs in the knowledge of the “All-Knowing” and “All-Hearing” and within a framework He has established.

### Work Ethics

*Two requirements are essential for a workplace to achieve success in being profitable in this world and the next. The first is just and fair administration from those in charge and the second is competent and honest work from those employed. Both these go hand in hand in ensuring a prosperous and healthy work environment.*

*Common complaints against employers include vulgarity, harshness, inconsideration and exploitation. Common complaints against employees are abuse of workplace items like the phone and internet, being lazy on the job and theft of company property. The eradication of these complaints will occur if we implement Adl (being just) in our workplace. However, in the Qur'an, Allah commands Adl (Justice) and then further encourages Ihsaan (doing good).*

*This means that Islam does not only want us to form a just society where everyone fulfils their dues. It wants us to become a compassionate, caring and giving society. This same spirit should be implemented in our work environment as well. From the employer, it is leniency towards his staff and at times rewarding them more than their due. From the employee, it is taking personal initiative towards improving the success of the business and giving extra as if it were one's own.*

*This quality of Ihsaan was the secret power behind the rapid spread of Islam in the time of Sabaabah and their successors. It was a revolutionary way of living that captivated the hearts of the masses and drew them to Islam. This power is still available to us today. We need only strengthen our resolve and let Islam be our guide to success in the business world and everlasting success in the hereafter.*

# Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

*Dr. Rafiq Ahmad*

## *The Book of Tayammum*

### **Chapter 2 : When neither water nor clay is available.**

#### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Imam Bukhari (RA) is referring here to a very important issue, viz., if a person neither gets water nor clean clay to perform Tayammum, and the time of Salaah is about to expire, what should he do in such a situation?

#### **Hadith No. 328**

##### **Narrated 'Urwa's father (RA)**

*Aisha said, "I borrowed a necklace from Asma' and it was lost. So Allah's Apostle sent a man to search for it and he found it. Then the time of the prayer became due and there was no water. They prayed (without ablution) and informed Allah's Apostle about it, so the verse of Tayammum was revealed." Usaid bin Hudair said to 'Aisha, "May Allah reward you. By Allah, whenever anything happened which you did not like, Allah brought good for you and for the Muslims in that."*

#### **Comments**

Hadhrat Aisha (RA) says that she

borrowed a necklace from Hadhrat Asma and it was lost. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) sent some people to search it. They got late and the time for asr salaam became due to them. Since they couldn't find any water they offered Salaah without ablution. After returning they informed the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) about it. On this occasion the verse of Tayammum was revealed.

#### **A person's issue who neither finds water nor clay when time for Salaah becomes due**

From the above mentioned hadith, Imam Bukhari (RA) argues that before the verse of Tayammum was revealed, ablution was permissible only with water. Since water was not available, these Sahaaba offered Salaah without Wudu and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not ask them to repeat their Salaah. On the same basis, now two things can be used to attain Tahaarah, i.e., water and clay. So, if both are not available, then again as per Imam Bukhari (RA), one

should offer Salaah without Tahaarah and need not to repeat it i.e., Imam Bukhari says:

*“Should offer Salaah and need not to repeat it”.*

Imam Ahmad is also of the same opinion. Imam Shafa’ee says:

*“he should offer Salaah and then repeat it”.*

Imam Maalik says:

*“He should neither offer Salaah nor repeat it later, as Salaah has not become obligatory on him because of the absence of essential pre-requisite i.e., Tahaarah”.*

The Hanafite school says that he should mimic Salaah by performing only actions and not recite anything with the tongue and then repeat it later on. The Hanafite school says this on the analogy of a menstruating woman who gets menses during day time in Ramadhan; such a woman is supposed not to consume anything i.e., mimic to be on fast.

### **Chapter 3 : Tayammum at home place when water is not found and there is apprehension of losing the Salaah time.**

And Atta said this same and Hasan (Bisri) said that about the sick person who has water but there is no one to get it to him (for ablution) then he can do Tayammum. And Abdullah Ibn Umar was returning from his land situated at a place called Juruf and reached to his animal farm (near Madinah) where he offered Salaah, then he entered Madinah where sun was still high in the sky and he did not repeat his Salaah.

### **Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to say

that Tayammum is not permissible only for a traveler but also for a resident and also if either water is not available or one cannot use it for any reason.

Secondly, Imam Bukhari (RA) is of the opinion that if such a person who has performed Tayammum because of above mentioned reason while being resident, offers Salaah with this Tayammum and then he finds water, he is not supposed to repeat his Salaah. He supports his argument with the deed of Ibn Umar (RA).

Ibn Hajr (RA) says that Ibn Umar (RA) performed Tayammum at a time when he was not sure that he would reach Madina in time, but he had miscalculated it as he reached Madina in time. Since he had strong apprehension of losing the stipulated time of Salaah when he performed the Tayammum, so he did not repeat his Salaah on reaching Madina.

The Hanafite school is also of the same opinion that if a person does not get water, he should delay his Salaah and search for water. If he finds water in time (i.e., within the stipulated time of a particular Salaah) well and good, if not, then he should offer his Salaah after performing Tayammum before losing the time of Salaah and there is not need for him to repeat his Salaah.

### **Hadith No. 329**

#### **Narrated Abu Juhaim Al-Ansari (RA)**

*The Prophet came from the direction of Bir Jamal. A man met him and greeted him. But he did not return back the greeting till he went to a (mud) wall and smeared his hands and his face with its dust (performed Tayammum) and then returned back the*

greeting.

after striking them on clean clay for  
Tayammum.

### Comments

Umair—a freed slave of Ibn Abbas (RA) says that he and Abdullah bin Yassar—a freed slave of Mymoona (RA), came to the house of Abu Juhaim (RA) and he told them that one day Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was returning from Be'r-i-Jamal (well of camel—*This well was named 'well of camel' because a camel had fallen in it at some earlier time*). At this place, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) met a person (another narration says that the person was Abu Juhaim himself) who wished Salaam to him, but Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not answer his Salaam, instead he went close to a wall, performed Tayammum and then answered his Salaam. The learned scholars say that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did so because he was not with Wudu when Abu Juhaim wished him Salaam and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not like to utter the name of Allah with his blessed tongue without Wudu. Besides, the word 'Salaam' is one of the beautiful names of Allah.

Note:- The Hanafite school has derived an inference from this Hadith that it is permissible to perform Tayammum for those 'Azkaar' for which Wudu is preferable. Also, the Salaat-ul-Janaaza and Salaat-ul-Eid (i.e., the funeral and Eid prayers) can be offered with Tayammum even if water is available but only when there is apprehension of losing them if one goes to perform Wudu. (Eidha-ul-Bukhari)

### Chapter 4 : Should one blow his hands

### Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Tayammum is an alternative to obtain ritual purity if there is no water or there is any problem in using it. It is a must to spill water over the parts of body that are supposed to be washed in Wudu and make them wet. On the same analogy, one might think that since clean clay is a replacement to water, so it should be necessary to rub the dust on the hands and face, but Imam Bukhari (RA) says that it is not necessary to do so and one can blow off the dust from his hands after striking them on clay etc.

### Hadith No. 330

#### **Narrated 'Abdur Rahman bin Abza (RA)**

A man came to 'Umar bin Al-Khattab and said, "I became Junub but no water was available." 'Ammar bin Yasir said to 'Umar, "Do you remember that you and I (became Junub while both of us) were together on a journey and you didn't pray but I rolled myself on the ground and prayed? I informed the Prophet about it and he said, 'It would have been sufficient for you to do like this.' The Prophet then stroked lightly the earth with his hands and then blew off the dust and passed his hands over his face and hands."

### Comments

One day a person came to Hadhrat Umar bin al-Khattab (RA) and asked him that Ghusl had become obligatory upon him but he was not getting any water.

*Cont'd on page 44*

# Laylat al-Qadr and its Significance

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Laylat al-Qadr (night of Decree) is one of the major blessings of Ramadan. During this night, Quran was sent to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). About this night, the prophet has informed us that all our sins could be forgiven. Worshipping Allah on that night is better than worshipping Him for 1000 months.

The following ahadith shed light on the days of observing Laylat al-Qadr.

According to a hadeeth narrated by Ibn 'Abbaas (RA), the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Seek it in the last ten days of Ramadan, when there are nine days left, and seven days left, and five days left." (Bukhari

'Aa'ishah (RA) who said that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Seek Laylat al-Qadr in the odd-numbered nights of the last ten nights." (Bukhari)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Seek it in the last ten nights, on the odd-numbered nights." (Bukhari, Muslim)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Seek it in the last ten nights of Ramadan, when there are nine left, when there are seven left, when there are five left" (Bukhari)

Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyah said: "But odd-numbers have to do with what is past [i.e., when one starts counting from the beginning of the month], so it should be sought on the twenty-first, the twenty-third, the twenty-seventh or the twenty-ninth; or it may be with regard to what is left, as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: 'when there are nine left, or seven left, or five left, or three left.' On this basis, if the month has thirty days, these will be even-numbered nights, so on the twenty-second there will be nine days left, on the twenty-fourth there will be seven days left. This is how it was explained by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (RA) in the saheeh hadeeth, and this is how the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) prayed qiyaam during this month. If this is the case, then the believer should seek it in all of the last ten days." (al-Fataawaa).

## Virtues of Laylat al-Qadr

There is a specific chapter in the Quran that describes the significance of Laylat al-Qadr. Allah says:

1. "Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).
2. And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is?
3. The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better

than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months).

4. Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees,

5. (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn" [97:1-5]

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Whoever spends this night in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward will be forgiven his previous sins." (Bukhari; Muslim).

'Aa'ishah (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "Seek Laylat al-Qadr among the odd numbered nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan." (Bukhari)

'Aa'ishah (RA) said: When the last ten days of Ramadan began, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) would tighten his waist-wrapper, spend his nights in prayer, and wake his family. (Muslim)

Allah says in the Quran:

*"The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months" [97:3]*

### Revelation of Quran

In the following verses is another verse that mentions about revealing of Quran on that blessed night.

*"Haa-Meem. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Quran and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] By the manifest Book (this Quran) that makes things clear. We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night [(i.e. the Night of Al-*

*Qadr) in the month of Ramadan]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship]. Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments. As a Command (or this Quran or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers) (As) a mercy from your Lord. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower." [44:1-6]*

Ibn 'Abbaas and others said: "Allah sent down the Quran at one time from al-Lawh al-Mahfooz to Bayt al-'Izzah in the first heaven, then it was revealed to the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) in stages according to events over twenty-three years." (Ibn Katheer)

### Better than a thousand months

The significance of this night is obvious from the fact that worshipping during this ONE night is better than worshipping Allah for more than a thousand months (not days). Allah says in the Quran:

*"The night of al-Qadr is better than a thousand months" [97:3]*

Allah also described it as being blessed, as He said (interpretation of the meaning)

*"We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night" [44:3]"*

### Forgiveness of Sins

On this night, a person's past sins could be forgiven. Considering that sins block happiness in this life and hereafter, this is a major reward. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

*Cont'd on page 44*

# The Month of Mercy

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*S. Abdullah al-Qarnee*

Mercy is a favor from Allah which He places in the hearts of whomsoever He wills. Verily, Allah will have mercy on His servants who are merciful. Allah is the Most Compassionate the Most Merciful. He loves the merciful and calls to mercy. He orders His servants to enjoin patience and mercy. A person may lack mercy for any number of reasons, among them, an abundance of sins and disobedience. They stain their hearts so much so that they ultimately blind them until their hearts become harder than stones. Allah says of the Children of Israel: *'And yet, after all this, your hearts hardened and became like rocks, or even harder'* (Qur'an 2:74).

Allah also says about them when they opposed and rebelled against the divine law: *'Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden'* (Qur'an 5:13).

Among the things that cause a loss of mercy is arrogance with wealth and pride with riches. Allah says: *'Nay, verily, man becomes grossly overweening whenever he believes himself to be self-sufficient'* (Qur'an 96:6 - 7).

The day the heart is disciplined with faith and good deeds it fills with mercy and kindness.

Another reason for the weakness of mercy is an abundance of gluttony and saturation. They give rise to contempt and recklessness. Hence the month of fasting was prescribed to crush this unruliness and ill discipline. The fasting person is naturally among the most merciful people. That is because he has tasted hunger, experienced thirst and endured hardship. His soul is, therefore, enveloped with mercy, care and gentleness for Muslims.

Mercy is something which every Muslim is required to render to his brother Muslim. It is a requirement from every responsible custodian toward those under his care. He should feel sorry for them and be lenient toward them. Prophet Muhammad sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: *'O Allah! Whoever was entrusted with authority over any affair of the Muslims and made it difficult for them, please make it difficult for him. And whoever was entrusted over any affair of the Muslims and was kind toward them, then be kind toward him.'*

In a related hadith Allah's Messenger also said: *'Whoever oversees an affair for my nation and disappeared or abandoned them without fulfilling their needs while impoverishing them, Allah will debar him from his needs and impoverish him on*



*the Day of Judgement.'*

Mercy demands that the scholar and teacher should be gentle toward his students and lead them to the easiest and best ways to love him and benefit from his teachings. If he does this Allah will decree for him the most excellent and abounding reward. Listen to the manner in which Allah praises His Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam : *'And it was by God's grace that thou [O Prophet] didst deal gently with thy followers: for if thou hadst been harsh and hard of heart, they would indeed have broken away from thee'* (Qur'an 3:159).

Mercy further requires from the imam that he should not make worship difficult for his followers or cause them harm. On the contrary, he should be merciful, kind and wise. The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: 'Whoever from you leads the people in prayer must make it easy because among them are the old, the sick, the young and the needy.' It was narrated that when Mu'adh once extended the prayer the Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said to him: *'Are you a troublemaker O Mu'adh? Are you a troublemaker O Mu'adh? Are you a troublemaker O Mu'adh?'*

In the same manner, when Uthman ibn Abi al As al Thaqafi requested: 'O Messenger of Allah, make me an imam of my people.' The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: 'You are their imam so lead the prayer according to the weakest of them and take a caller to prayer who would seek no payment for doing so.'

Mercy dictates that the one who calls to Islam must advise those whom he is inviting with tenderness. That he should,

moreover, clarify issues to them with concern. He should not hurt, defame people or even revile the disobedient in public. Allah advised Moses and Aaron to employ the following methods in their call to the tyrant Pharaoh: 'But speak unto him in a mild manner, so that he might bethink himself or [at least] be filled with apprehension' (Qur'an 20:44).

He also says: 'Call thou [all mankind] unto thy Sustainer's path with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and argue with them in the most kindly manner' (Qur'an 16:125).

The eminent jurist and Islamic scholar, Imam al Shafe'e wrote:

*Support me with your advice in private,  
and avoid advising me in public.*

*Surely giving advice among the people is a kind of reproach, which I would rather not listen to.*

*If you disobey and ignore my wish, don't be saddened if you are not obeyed.*

Mercy is required from a father to his children. The mercy of the father or mother toward her children has the greatest effect on their integrity, well-being and obedience. Self-praise and harshness only open the door to despair. The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: *'Kindness was never bestowed upon something except that it beautified it, and it was never removed from that thing except that it made it ugly.'*

O you who fast and cause hunger to your stomach, there are thousands of stomachs more awaiting a meal. Will there not arise from among you those who would feed them? O you who fast and cause

*Cont'd on page 27*

# Welcome to Void

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*Syed Iqbal Zaheer*

One of the major problems that modern materialistic civilization faces is that of diminishing resources. How and from where to get more for the ever hungry world? Will the civilization die off for want of resources? Can we (the West) maintain our position if the earth's belly is emptied? Such are the questions that worry the West which will be the most to be affected.

For the scientists, however, this is a minor problem. They look beyond the millennium, beyond the stars, deep into Time and Space. For example, the prospect of our sun burning out its energy, getting reduced to the size of the moon, and refusing to shine any further – an event expected in another five billion years – is a problem of some interest to the scientists. For, if that happens, it would mean cessation of all life on earth which happens to depend on a single vital process: photosynthesis. If the sun went cold, the plants would die taking the animals and humans with them to the dust. This prospect was something that disturbed the scientists (some time back, now they are busy with other things). So they offered several solutions. One is interesting to hear. They suggested, (one of them was Doral Froman, the technical associate director of Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in the 60s), that we humans, (absolutely capable of playing the role of God – and better for that) could

beat the cosmic plan by moving the earth out of its orbit, put it on a course of blissful journey through the space (blissful because it would be a nightly thousand year journey during which you will eat plastic), and eventually place it in orbit around another star. And, when that star also fades, pull off the bus from there, travel up further, and tag it on to another star. That could go on forever and life would thrive for eternity. The idea was to use half of sea water as fuel and replenish it from time to time at stop stations at other planets as the earth passed by them.

But, that problem nearly solved (for those who would rather place their trust in the scientists), the short-term problem still needed to be addressed. In fact, it would remain a nasty recurring problem because the resources on earth would not last a fraction of the five billion years. The diminishing resources must be replenished now from other planets in other planetary systems – if there are any. Space travel, and not earth travel, must be first addressed. But, disturbingly, and the distances being what they are (you mention them in light years so as not to remind of the realities too often and too coarsely), some scientists, (Edward Purcell in 1960 was one of them, although, to admit, only an occasional one here and there who spoke out), were raising the alarm that space travel

might not become a reality after all. Why? For several reasons (although he dealt with only one or two that we know of). One was the life-span of the humans. It was too short for such long journeys. It might take, even if travel speeds could be increased to 90% of light, a hundred years if not centuries for a round trip to another planetary system.

But the biologists, as confident as the astrophysicists, the cosmologists and the space scientists, couldn't be beaten and left behind in tall claims. They said the space scientists could move the earth to new stars, if they so wished. But in the meanwhile they could also plan long distance space travel to solve the immediate resource problem. Any biological problem encountered in this connection could be forwarded to them on a piece of paper for solutions. In this case, they had a solution to the imaginary problem of the space travelers themselves going cold during long journeys. In fact, they were a little modest, for, they had two solutions. They would make space travelers go into hibernation, (by freezing them) and then quicken them after a couple of centuries. Another was no less modest. They would make humans live forever. These solutions would allow them travel out as far away as they wished and be alive and kicking when the spaceship hatchets are opened after the termination of the journey a couple of centuries later. (Perhaps they knew the spaceship would never return). In our modesty we forgot a third solution. The biologists would create a new creation, full of life, but a different life, like us, but different from us, incapable of dying and especially suited to

space travel. No, not robots. But living creatures. (Wait and see).

Such were the talks across the podiums and in some serious science works during the best part of the last century. Einstein was alive. Enthusiasm was high. Carl Sagan was the spokesman. Belief in science and scientists was of the absolute degree. There was no need for America to give up its civilized role and invade the Middle-east for oil. (It was getting difficult by the day to be pretending about civilization and all that stuff anyway). If scientists could put you on the moon in just about a decade after Sputnik I was in orbit, they could as well bring you fresh stocks of anything that went short, from anywhere in the universe. So, swallow it for the moment that the blasted Arabs, (and more blasted Iranians), had been placed on patches of earth that have seas of oil beneath. (Another evidence that God did not exist. A God could never be unjust). In the meanwhile, why do things that would make the genealogists trace back your origin to Huns and Goths? Go ahead boys, book tickets for space travel.

So the boys got busy with the plans, as the first step, to colonize the moon. Soon it would be teeming with colonies and people would be traveling up and down just as they travel between continents: in hours, bringing down material from the mining station. The skeptics were reminded: Did you imagine you would set foot on the moon in half a century after the Wright brothers first flew their aircraft for half a minute? Real estate agents were invited to bid for land on the moon. (The craters on the moon, the reasons why they

were there – and some as big as an island – were enthusiastically ignored). Did somebody suggest: How about colonizing the Sahara, the Gobi, the Empty Quarter or the Siberian deserts, right here on earth? After all, there is no crater-causing bombardment from space nor any shortage of fresh air!? Or, how about colonizing the north and south poles (covering an area some 20 million km square) instead of traveling all the way to icy Mars? Of course apart from ourselves, a few other voices must have said that, but mutely for us to have heard. Some objections were also raised against ambitious plans to build – as the American Physicist Gerard Kitchen O’Neil suggested – space stations, orbiting the moon, housing 10,000 people apiece, fully sealed from all around, with walls lined with soil from the moon, self-sufficient in every respect (and far away from the blighted earth of Tess of the d’Urbervilles). What were the answers to these silly suggestions and objections? Look! Don’t waste the scientists’ time over simple problems like colonizing the earth’s vast tract of deserts or the icy north and south poles. Come to us (or send a slip) for what you consider impossible. It is impossibilities that interest us.

Nevertheless, the cat wasn’t going to remain in the bag for long. The truth was spilling out. Time was passing. Decades were slipping. Einstein was dead. Nothing was happening. What was the problem? Well, space travel wasn’t going to be easy. Err, that was being modest, again. Out with it loud. It wasn’t going to happen.

What were and are the problems?

Briefly, as under.

Food supply was one. Ordinary canned food won’t do. It’s too heavy for long journeys. Compacted food in the form of perhaps tablets is the answer. (For those who hate canned food, it offered an attractive alternative for the exciting thousand year journey). Yet, around half a kg of such food per person, per day would be the minimum to carry. Add up about 3 kg of water and a kg of oxygen per person, per day: so said Asimov. That totals to about 4.5 kg. Round it up to 5 to account for other weights. How many persons shall we put into the ship? What with the mining to be done there, fifty is a small, but essential number. And how long the journey? Well, let’s initially plan for the impossibly short 100 year journey (More about this later). So  $50 \times 100 \text{ years} \times 365 \text{ days} \times 5 \text{ kg}$ , is equal to a mere 9 million tons.

So, you have a space ship sitting on its launch pad weighing 9 million tons ready to take off. Right? No. Wrong. You need to add up the fuel weight. It is said that a man entered into an expensive Jewelry shop and was told, “one million,” when he asked the price of a ring. Startled, the man said “pew.” Then pointing to another ring in the show case he asked, “and what about that one?” “well,” said the salesman, “that would be two pews.” So you pew twice over 9 million tons, and try to lift the space ship while we look into some other problems. (The total payload in terms of fuel for 100 years journey at the speed envisaged might leave you phewing the best part of the night).

Let us look into the speed problem. Let us remain steadfast with the journey

time as 100 years. In so doing we are of course a bit generous with speeds. At present speeds – 25,000 km per hour (7 km per second) – we shall reach the nearest planetary system about 25 light years away in 100,000,000 years. It is another thing that the scientists are not dead sure that there is in fact a planetary system like ours at that distance. Some data, (what if it is obscure?) suggests (remember discovery of life on Mars?) that there is one. But nobody is betting on it. (Millions of closer stars have no planetary system). But, once again, these are minor problems. If you didn't find one after traveling 25 light years, you could move on. After all, the universe is 15 billion light years across. There is enough room for the adventurers.

There is another hitch though. With every increase in speed, the weight of the craft and of the occupants would also increase. That means every acceleration will require additional engine size, power and fuel. Yet, it might be remembered that whatever the size of the engines and whatever amount of fuel it carries, once in space, with its weight increased due to its own speed, the engines would before long fail to accelerate the craft any further. Attaining the ideal speed of light, therefore, is a pipe dream: so says Einstein's Theory of Relativity. (Many scientists are angry with the theory on that score. What does he mean by setting limits?)

But, let us not be so timid at the start. Let us increase the speed (you like it or not) to the maximum affordable. 300,000 km a sec. could be unattainable without the object itself becoming light. But we could settle for less than that. Let us

say we can somehow achieve 90% speed of light. Yet, acceleration is a problem. How long will it be before you reach that speed starting from zero? Well, at best you can accelerate at the rate of 1 g (the gravitational force at the earth's surface). Anything more at every second would shatter the delicate brain nerves. But let us assume even with 1 g, every second, for straight 24 hours will not shatter the nerves. (And don't you protest at so many assumptions). At that generous rate of acceleration it would take 1 year to attain the 90% speed of light and another year to decelerate. So, you need 4 years merely to accelerate and decelerate.

Yet one cannot go too fast either. 90% of light is something. At that speed the craft will smash against the one per cubic centimeter hydrogen particles floating in space along with other occasional free lunch stuff. Experience with atom-smasher plants (particle accelerators) tells us that these objects will crash through the windscreen, through the occupants and through everything else, and out – at the speed of light. What would they leave behind? The dust cloud you might see would be the remnant of your dear space ship.

Any more problems? Yes. We did not discuss the fuel problem in full. We spoke of the fuel required for the lift off. Roughly some 18 million tones. If the planet you arrive at is, say, twice the size of the earth, don't land. For, you will never be able to lift off because of the increased gravitational pull. (But, if it is all gas, as some planets can be, then, never mind. You are permitted to land). In any case, what about fuel for the journey? It is esti-

mated that for acceleration alone (not later journey) the fuel requirement will be 500 billion, billion, billion, billion tons (Walter Sullivan, We are not Alone), for a suitable spaceship size. So somebody suggested nuclear energy. But nuclear power cannot lift the spaceship from the earth. You still need chemical energy. However, if that problem is overlooked for the present, nuclear power could do its job in space. But, you will have to lift off whole of the nuclear power plant; along with, of course, a mere 1000 tons of uranium pile. So Carl Sagan suggested (before the American Rocket Society in 1962) using hydrogen energy gathered from space as the craft moved forward. (Let's not talk about the nagging lift off problem any more). But some calculations showed (after the talk and after the news flashes) that the hydrogen gas collector will have to be of diameter 2,500 miles for sweeping in enough hydrogen to accelerate the craft to a respectable speed.

One another problem is that of "time dilation." It is estimated that an interstellar journey lasting say two decades, undertaken at the speed of light, would be for the earth-dwellers a few hundreds years. If you went further into space, change the hundreds to millions. That is, if you went out for a hundred years, millions of years would have passed over the earth.

Communication of course poses no problem. If you travel 25 light years, the answer to your urgent questions will come back after fifty years of you making your

appeal. But in 50 years you hope to be back. So, why communicate?

Finally, (we skip some), when you have at last reached the planetary system 25 light years away, don't be surprised you find nothing there. For, everything in our universe is on the move. The planetary system that your radio telescope and some computer printouts suggest is there, would have packed and left for a party by the time you reached there, whenever you did, or sucked up by a Stephen Hawking black hole. Welcome to void.

Such are the realities that the scientists successfully kept back from the non-specialists for decades. The Qur'an however made no unambiguous statement about the impossibility. While indirectly acknowledging future air travel (6:125), it clearly maintained about interplanetary travel (55: 33): O you family of Jinn and men! If you can pass beyond the edges of the heavens and the earth, then pass through! You shall not be able to pass beyond without authority!"

The "authority" is that of Allah, who also said about the human beings (20:53-55), "(It is your Lord) who made the earth a cradle for you, threaded therein paths for you, and sent down water out of heaven. And then We brought forth thereby many species of diverse plants. Eat and pasture your cattle. Surely, in that are signs for men of understanding. From it We have created you, to it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out a second time.

(YMD 2003)

# Prevent Deviation, Develop Right Attitude Toward Stressors

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*Misbah Rafiq*

A young man talking incessantly about the world that only he could see; a woman sunk in deep thoughts indifferent toward her surroundings; an adolescent girl completely mute and immobile, staring into a vacant space; a teenager with an unsteady gait probably intoxicated; an old lady severely suspicious about her family, wearing a vigilant look-----these are the common observations that I witnessed inside the psychiatric hospital. Firstly, I felt the taboo of strangeness is wrongly associated with mental illnesses. We all have our own fantasies, our own worries, our own beliefs about ourselves, others and the world - which may or may not be correct. But it is only when these thinking and behaving patterns are out of proportion, they are termed abnormal. Ultimately all behavior - normal or abnormal - lies on a continuum. It is possible to have empathy for these people whose behaviours are not as strange as they appear to be.

Secondly, though the affected population is less but the fact is that the mental disorders are globally on rise. However, in this part of the world there are some factors that lead to our resilience, be it our religion or our social and moral system. Then what went wrong that these illnesses

are on rise in this place as well. Let's face it squarely, we have enormous stressors, some being the result of the century we are living in - there is a sense of urgency, cut-throat competition in case of educational, professional and social statuses that engulfs us nowadays; and others being the result of the place we are living in - political instability, very little opportunities and nature's fury (as we are living in an earthquake prone and recently added a flood prone place). In fact Allah AzzaWaJall says in the Holy Quran:

*"Verily! We have created man in toil" (90:3).*

So practically we cannot do away with all our stressors, does that mean we will succumb every time we face one? No, we cannot afford to make ourselves and our children dysfunctional and a liability on our society which is already overburdened with huge debts.

Let's delve deeper and see for ourselves that why our youth adopt maladaptive ways to cope with stressors, like a low grade in exams, a relationship issue, bereavement or poverty, and the way out that they have discovered is attempting suicide, succumbing to drug use, and to depression among other things. Maybe it is be-

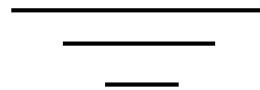
cause we didn't provide them with healthy alternatives, we didn't develop in them right attitudes towards distress, we didn't set their priorities right. This is where we are falling short.

Certainly the solution lies in making concerted efforts to inculcate right attitudes in our children but for doing that we first need to be convinced ourselves of what the right attitudes are. And there is nothing more straight and right than the Book of Allah, in our return to His book lies our solution. It is very beautiful how Allah prepares us for the tribulations that we will have to face in this world in the following verses of the Holy Quran:

*"And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, loss of wealth, lives and fruits, but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patient ones, etc.) who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "Truly! To Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return. They are those on whom are the Salawat (i.e. blessings, etc.) (i.e. who are blessed and will be forgiven) from their Lord, and (they are those who) receive His Mercy, and it is they who are the guided-ones." [2:155-157]*

What are the rewards mentioned for the patient ones in these verses? It is said that they will have salwaat (blessings) on them, (some exegetes say that these refer to the greetings by the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), they are the ones who will receive Allah's mercy and guidance. But unfortunately, we are living in a state wherein the significance of these things has reduced, we have become a part of a world which speaks and understands only mechanical and practical lan-

guage. However we forget that no matter how 'scientific' we turn, we always resort to religion in face of adversities. Therefore, instead of making religion a defense mechanism in distressing situations, we should try to incorporate religion into our lives in order to prevent debilitating sadness to haunt our lives by developing right attitudes towards the distress - which somehow is an inevitable part of our lives.



*Cont'd from page 30*

achieve either of these two objectives.

In the second part of a *hadith qudsi*, God says:

O My servants, you will not attain harming Me so as to harm Me, and you will not attain benefiting Me so as to benefit Me.

O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, of humankind and *jinn*-kind, to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one of you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything.

O My servants, were the first of you and the last of you, of humankind and *jinn*-kind, to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one of you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything. (*Riyaz al-Salihin*)

So whether or not we believe in God does not affect Him in the least. If our belief in God is important to Him, it is not important to God in the personal sense that it affects Him, but in that He desires that we succeed (in getting the rewards of our belief). However, God desires to see us succeed on the basis of our own free will, and not because He decreed us to be believers without any choice on our part.



# Renunciation

*Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (ra)*

O young man , I am not interested in my speech, you, or the goods, wealth, and presents that you keep in your houses. As long as I remain so, you will benefit from my words, Allah willing. As long as the eye of the speaker is on your turbans, clothes, and pockets, you will not derive any benefit from what he has to say. As long as he frequents the place of the smoke of your cooking and has greedy desires about you, you will not benefit from his words. His speech will be a shell that has no kernel, a bone that has no meat on it, a bitterness with no sweetness, an appearance with no essence. The speech of the covetous person is never free of flattery, and his flattery prevents him from disagreeing with you. The words of the greedy person are as empty as the Arabic word *ṭama'* (covetousness) itself, because the three letters of the word *ṭama'* are all empty and hollow (the way they are written in Arabic): The *ṭā'*, *mīm*, and *'ayn*.

The ascetic has no hands with which he takes the money of people.

The reality of renunciation is giving up this world and giving up the hereafter; giving up all lustful desires and pleasures; giving up one's very existence; giving up seeking spiritual states, rankings, miracles, and spiritual stations, and giving up everything other than the Lord of the creatures so that no one remains other than the Cre-

ator (mighty and glorified is He). He is the final destination and He is the ultimate object of all hopes. To Him all affairs belong.

Renunciation is a source of comfort for the hearts of the obedient ones, the ascetics. The burden of renunciation rests on the body, the burden of knowingness on the heart , and the burden of nearness on the innermost being. Practice renunciation, be content, offer thanks, be satisfied with your Lord (mighty and glorified is He), and do not be satisfied with yourself. Think well of others, give up holding a poor opinion of others, and do not hold yourself in high esteem.

When you renounce this world and your asceticism becomes true, this world will appear to you in your dreams in the form of a woman who pays homage to you, saying: "I am a maidservant for you; I have trusts for you, so take them." She will count for you your allotted shares, whether few or many. When your knowingness has strengthened, she will come to you in wakefulness. The first spiritual state of the prophets (prayer and peace be on them) is inspiration and the second is a visionary dream. When their spiritual states have strengthened, the angel comes to them in wakefulness and says: "The True One (mighty and glorified is He) says to you this and that."

When someone has genuinely re-

nounced the creatures, they become genuinely interested in him and benefit from listening to his words and looking at him. When the heart's renunciation of the creatures and the innermost being's renunciation of anything other than Allah (mighty and glorified is He), apart from His nearness, have become genuine, nearness becomes his close companion in this world and his entertainer in the hereafter.

Be sensible, I can see that you do not have hearts or knowledge of the heart. Woe to you! You claim to be an ascetic and put on clothes of ascetics, yet you go knocking at the doors of the kings and the rich, who are the sons of this world, and then return! Your lower self seeks this world and wishes for what those people have. Surely you must have known that the Prophet (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) has said: "Whoever hovers around a prohibited area is very likely to end up encroaching on it." Preoccupation with the affairs of this world obstructs the way of the servants of Allah (mighty and glorified is He), enchants them, and drives them out of their senses. This applies to everyone except those whom Allah (mighty and glorified is He) wills to exclude. These are a few individuals. Allah (mighty and glorified is He) looks after their hearts and deeds and protects them in both their public and private lives. He purifies their food, drink, and clothing by the hand of power. The people of Allah have put into practice what the Messenger of Allah (Allah's prayer and peace be on him) brought with him, so the Master (mighty and glorified is He) took care of them and loved them.

Woe to you! It is the heart that

practices renunciation not the body. O you who are ascetic only outwardly, your renunciation is thrown back at you! You have hidden your turban and shirt, buried your gold in the ground, put on austere woolen clothes, and collected leftovers. May Allah cut off your skin and head if you do not repent. You have opened your shop to sell hypocrisy. May Allah demolish your shop on top of you and kill you under its ruins if you do not destroy it, repent, and cut your waistband (zunnār). Woe to you! The believer has renunciation in his heart and nearness to his Lord (mighty and glorified is He) in his innermost being. This world and the hereafter have both come to his door, inside his treasury, not inside his heart. His heart is empty of anything other than his Master. How can it take in others when it is already filled with Him, His remembrance, and His nearness? His heart is empty and broken on his Master's account, so no doubt He dwells in it. Allah (mighty and glorified is He) has said in one of His utterances: "I am with those whose hearts are broken on My account." Their lower selves have broken by giving up this world and their hearts have broken on account of their Master. Once this break has taken place, He will come to them and set it. The Physician will come and treat them. This is the true bliss, not the bliss of this world and the hereafter.

You have to practice pious restraint so that the hand of your heart is never without it. If you give it up then you will be disappointed. When someone gives up the practice of pious restraint, his heart darkens with legally dubious things and impurities. Woe to you! You claim that you are

pious yet you do not practice pious restraint! The practicing person abandons many things in fear of falling in prohibited and dubious things, and Allah punishes him on the basis of the lowest allowed concessions. One day I passed through a village surrounded by fields of corn. I stretched out my hand and picked a corn cane to suck. At that point, two men from the village, each of them holding a stick, came and beat me up until I collapsed to the ground. So I gave a pledge to Allah (mighty and glorified is He) at that moment not to take advantage again of the allowed concessions or avail myself of what is not mine. The Law has allowed the person who passes by fields of cereals and fruit trees to eat as much as he needs without paying anything in return, but it prohibited him from taking away anything. This is a general concession. However, I was not allowed to take advantage of this concession and I was ordered to adhere to the strictest laws. As the person increasingly remembers death, his pious restraint increases, the concessions that are allowed to him decrease, and his adherence to the strictest laws increases.

Open the eye of your lower self and say to it : "Look at your Lord (mighty and glorified is He) and see how He looks at you. Look how He has destroyed the kings and the rich who lived before you. Remember the deaths of those of bygone times who owned the world and enjoyed its pleasures before it was snatched away from their hands and they were snatched away from it. They are now imprisoned in the jail of torment. Their palaces are deserted, their houses are in ruins, their prop-

erty is gone, and their deeds have stayed. The lustful desires have gone and their bad consequences have remained." Do not rejoice, for this is not the time of rejoicing. Do not be impressed by the beauty of your wife's face, by your son, by your house, and by the size of your wealth. Do not rejoice in what the preceding prophets, the messengers, and the righteous (Allah's prayer and peace be on all of them) did not rejoice in. Allah (mighty and glorified is He) has said: "Allah does not love those who are recklessly happy" (from 28.76) with this world and its people and with other than Him. He loves those who rejoice in Him (mighty and glorified is He) and in His nearness. The thinking and the reflection of the people of Allah are focused on the affairs of the hereafter not on lustful desires, pleasures, and entertainments. O you who are under an illusion, you have not done what He wants you to do! O forgetful ones, in the hereafter there is a severe torment for those who do not obey Allah (mighty and glorified is He)!

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thirst to your liver, there are thousands more who await a mouthful of water. Will there not arise from among you those who would quench their thirst? O you who fast and wear the finest garments, there are naked people out there awaiting only a piece of cloth to cover their bodies. Will there not then come forth from among you those who would clothe them?

O Allah! We implore your extended mercy that will forgive our sins and erase our misdeeds and errors.

# Why is Believing in God so Important?

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*Feisal A Rauf*

There are two sides to this question: i.e., why is belief in God important to me, and why is it important to God? A self concerned with its safety and individual destiny comes to the realization that its security can only be built on a belief in God, the essential *sine qua non* of Islam. Disbelief (*kufir*) in God is the only unforgivable sin to God, for by denying Him, we deny all that He stands for, we reject God's Oneness, sever the channel of His Forgiveness by denying the need for it, and align ourselves in an opposing polarity to God's transformative effects upon us.

No matter how humanitarian we might be, our deeds count for naught if we do not believe in God:

A parable for those who disbelieve in their Lord: Their works are like ashes furiously blown by the wind on a stormy day. They have no control over what they have earned [of good actions] whatsoever. That is what distant misguidance is (14,18).

Yet as long as we believe in God and His Oneness, we may look forward to Divine forgiveness, no matter how much we sin, as depicted in the following *hadith qudsi*:

O son of Adam! So long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you do, and I shall not mind [God will not mind that I sin]. O son of Adam! Were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask

forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam! Were you to come to Me with an earthful of errors and then meet Me without ascribing a partner to Me, I would bring you its measure in forgiveness. (*Riyad al-Salihin*)

Although we can justify the final judgment of God as required to provide justice to those who have "gotten away with murder," consigning a humanitarian disbeliever to Hell sounds unjust to many, as is admitting into heaven a tyrant who seeks God's forgiveness before he dies; but if we acknowledge God, we have to acknowledge His laws. And if we have difficulty understanding some of these laws, then our purpose is to find that perspective from which they will be self-consistent, fathomable and right.

Setting aside the issue of whether it is practically possible for an unbeliever to be "good," one way to look at this is to consider this aspect of God's will as analogous to the laws of Physics (in themselves an expression of God's will). These physical laws are amoral and affect everyone equally, regardless of their humanitarianism or morality.

We cannot argue with the existence of gravity, for instance, although we can try to understand its origin and relationship to massive bodies. We cannot live and ignore

gravity. We cannot place hammers in mid-air over our heads or step out the window of our tenth-floor apartment without suffering the consequences of this action. We do not need to understand Newton's gravitational theory to appreciate the risks; all we need to understand are the consequences.

Similarly, we do not need to understand religious theory; all we need to understand are the effects and consequences of our actions, and the serious risks we take by ignoring God—although the attempt to develop a religious theory can be helpful. The key is to think of disbelief in God as somewhat analogous to jumping out a window; the "physics of the situation" is such that we would be crushed to death regardless of our humanitarianism. And once we jump out the window, we are no longer free to reverse our decision. We still have free will (we can choose to scream or not to, for instance), but the freedom not to jump is no longer available as a choice. Likewise, once dead, we are no longer free to reverse the consequences of our disbelief in God; the freedom to accept or reject God is no longer an available option.

If we jump from the seventieth floor of a skyscraper, the force of gravity, *as an expression of God's Will*, will result in our death, whether or not we are humane persons. But the *responsibility* for our death is ours, not God's, whether or not we believe in gravity. To stretch the analogy further, we have all been placed into the gravitational field of God's will. From the moment of our birth, we are "falling" throughout our lives towards death. A belief in God is like a parachute that ensures our safe landing. Disbelief in God is like free falling without a para-

chute. Death is like ground zero; we will all land on it. Those who land safely will then proceed to have their actions "weighed in the balance." Those whose good actions outweigh their bad actions will enter Paradise, those whose bad actions outweigh their good actions will enter Hell.

Just as those who crash onto the ground at 120 miles an hour do not need an ambulance but a broom and a plastic bag to collect their remains, those landing without a parachute (dying while disbelieving in God) won't find much purpose in having a balance set up for them:

These are those who disbelieve in the signs of their Lord and in the meeting with Him, so their works are unsuccessful, for We shall not set up a balance for them [to weigh their actions] on the Day of Resurrection" (18,105).

There is no need to learning to "relegate" well, in the sense of learning how to operate the religious parachute and prepare for our landing, is no less than a practical and survival skill. Belief in God is being humane to ourselves, and disbelief in God is being inhumane to ourselves.

A corollary question is: Why is a belief in God so important issue to God in the sense that He constructed His Law so that our believing in Him results in Paradise and disbelief results in Hell? How could a loving God cast us into Hell?

First, the magnitude of a decision we make is a function of its "size." More thought is given as to what car to buy than what to have for dessert, because the financial repercussions are greater. If the choice of believing or disbelieving in God has no consequences, then this choice would have no more signification than whether we chose

chocolate or vanilla ice cream for dessert.

But we can also extend the gravitational analogy further. Gravity is the attraction between two bodies of mass. If I jump from the seventieth floor, the gravitational attractive force between me and the earth "pulls us" towards each other. Because! of my relatively small mass compared to the earth, I am the one that "falls" towards the earth and not the earth towards me, and I am the one crushed and not the earth. If however I were much larger than the earth (if I were the size of the sun, for instance) the earth would be the entity "falling" towards me; and because of the relatively smaller size of the earth to me, it would be the earth that would be "crushed."

As there exists a gravitational attraction between physical bodies, so there is an attraction between us and God. God, having created man (and the universe) as an outward emanation and expression of His love, draws man back towards Him, also as an expression of His love.

God is by definition the Greatest Being (*al-Akbar*). We are infinitesimal compared to God; So we are the ones that experience the "fall" towards God, and not God towards us.

When "impact" occurs between us and God, (death followed by the Resurrection), the relative minuteness of our size compared to God's is such that we will be the ones crushed, and not God. God will not be affected at all. The one who denies God is like a person who believes he is significantly larger than the earth (the earth "is nothing," or denies its existence) and chooses to jump from an airplane without a parachute (he asserts that God "is nothing" - at

least compared to himself), so if and when impact occurs between him and God - if it will at all - he will not be affected.

To the believer, all of creation will return to God, including our consciousness and self-awareness, and the rest of the components of our being, all being creations of God. If ours is a God-denying consciousness, it will not - and cannot - return to God and merge into a state of comfortable and loving Divine acceptance; it will be rejected by God for it chose to reject Him.

Hell, in this picture of our gravitational analogy, is the personal unfolding experience of a consciousness crashing into God. The pain of this rejection occurs because God is, by definition, the greatest, and His consciousness infinitely greater than ours. Most people hate to be rejected and find it a painful experience. To be rejected by the Greatest Being in the Universe as the reciprocal result of our rejecting Him stands to be the most excruciating of all possible rejections: thus can Hell be defined. God's "size" is infinite, therefore the repercussions to our consciousness of our accepting or denying Him are correspondingly infinite in joy or pain. Projected in time, this "infinite repercussion" translates into an eternal paradise or hell.

That God allows us to be crushed is not because God does not care, but because He *gave us freedom to reject Him and thus to destroy ourselves*. He can either *prevent* us from being crushed, which would then mean that our free will is restricted (from committing self-destruction) or *grant* us that expression of free will, and not only *permit* us to destroy ourselves, but *help* us

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# The Station of the Sought

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*Allaama Ibn Al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah (ra)*

Among the stations of *iyyâka na'budu wa iyyâka nasta'in* —You alone we worship and your help alone we seek [Sûrat Al-Fâtihah, 1:5]—is the Station of the Sought (Al-Murâd). The people [of *sulûk*, i.e. travelers upon the spiritual path] have singled this station out for mention. Yet, in reality, every seeker is sought. Indeed, one cannot be a seeker save after he is sought. Yet, these people deem the seeker as being the beginning of their process and the sought as being its end.

Abû 'Ali Al-Daqqâq said: "The seeker is the carrier. The sought is carried." Thus [prophet] Moses was a seeker when he supplicated: My Lord! Expand for me my breast [Sûrat TâHâ, 20:25] and our Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was sought when it was said to him: Did We not expand for you your breast?" [Sûrat Al-Inshirâh, 94:1].

Al-Junayd was asked concerning the seeker and the sought. He said: "The seeker entrusts his (inner) affairs to knowledge. The sought entrusts himself to the care of the Truth, for the seeker walks and the sought flies. When does one who walks ever catch up with the one who flies?"

The author of *Manâzil Al-Sâ'irîn* [Shaykh Abdullâh Al-Ansâri Al-Harawi, d. 482/1089] said in the Chapter of [the Station

of] the Sought: "Allah Almighty said: You had not hoped that the Scripture would be inspired in you; but it is a mercy from your Lord [Sûrat Al-Naml, 28:86]. Most of those who discourse in this knowledge distinguish between the seeker and the sought, and deem the station of the sought above that of the seeker, and refer by the term 'al-murâd' to the elite concerning which there is a [Prophetic] report."

## Is There a Spiritual Elite?

I say that the ground for adducing this verse is that Allah, the Magnificent, sent to His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) His Book and singled him out for His grace and qualified him for His message and prophethood—without him [the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)] hoping for it, earning it, or seeking it by his deeds. Rather, it was a matter willed for him. Thus he [the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)] was the sought in reality.

[Al-Harawi's] statement, "Most of those who discourse in this knowledge distinguish between the seeker and the sought," is to explain that some of them limit the mention of the Station of Al-Murâd, containing it within the Station of Al-Irâda (will), since the one who possesses the will (to seek Allah) is a

seeker. Yet he is also the one sought.

As for [Al-Harawi's mention of these scholars'] allusion to the elite [among the travelers of the spiritual path], he means by it a report narrated on the authority of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam): "Most surely, Allah has some who are the elect among His creation (ḍanâ'in'), whom He gives life in safety and death in safety" (recorded in Al-Majma' by Al-Haythami and graded weak). 'danâ'in' means 'the elect.' It is said: 'So and so is my dinna from among men,' which means one whom I have singled out, and adinnu bi-jûdatihi, that is, 'I am miserly concerning his fine company and fear its loss.

The example of the seeker and the sought is that of a people summoned by their king from far-off lands to his company. He sends along guides and wealth, mounts, and all manner of accompaniments. Moreover, he commands them to cross long distances and deserts, and strive hard upon the path until they meet him. To one group among them, however, he sends steeds and servants. He directs these servants: Have [the select among the summoned] mount these steeds, and thereby leave all others behind. Moreover, serve them upon their journey, so as not to let them tire with tying and securing (saddles), and when they dismount for a respite, give them solace. Then have them mount again until they arrive to me. Such people do not experience the strenuous struggle and exhaustion on their journey that others do.

Some say that the seeker goes beyond the Station of Seeking (irâda) until he becomes the sought. He is the lover who becomes the beloved. Thus, the ultimate end of every sincere seeker is to become the one

who is sought. This is the opinion of most of them. The author of Al-Manâzil, however, considered one who is sought to be one who is lost [in spiritual ecstasy]. The seeker, on the other hand, is actually the one who treads the strenuous path.

### The Three Levels of the Sought

[Al-Harawi] said:

The station of being sought has three levels:

**First:** The servant is protected by compulsion from disobedience, as the delight of disobedience is spoiled for him, its opportunity diminished, and its doors closed."

[Ibn Al-Qayyim said:] This means that when such a servant inclines toward an act that would stand between the servant and his Lord, when the servant is prone to surrender to his base desires, his Master protects him, as if forcibly, by spoiling and dimming the pleasure of the sin. Thus, he does not feel its pleasure save mingled with much discontent, which may even overcome its pleasure altogether and eliminate it, rendering the pleasure of the sin little more than a stealthy shadow.

**Second:** He narrows the opportunity or means (of sin) as He surrounds him from it until he no longer inclines to it or settles into it. And even when the causes are available, a defender is appointed to him who comes between him and it, one who says to him: "Look! You are being deceived." This is the essence of (divine) care, protection, and shelter.

**Third:** the paths of sin that incur [divine] wrath are closed to him, even if he dislikes this. This is a mark of compassion and protection for him.



*History of the Qur'an*

# The Compilation of the Qur'an

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*Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah*

Compilation after Abu Bakr's (RA) regime

When the compilation of the Holy Qur'an was completed during the regime of Abu Bakr (RA), the manuscript, according to historians was presented to him. It remained with him until his death. It then went to his successor 'Umar (RA). After the martyrdom of 'Umar, the manuscript passed into the custody of his daughter Hafsa (RA), the widow of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Not all spouses of the Prophet's were educated. Some knew how to read, some knew both writing and reading, while others were illiterate. Hafsa, the daughter of 'Umar, was one of the few women of her time who knew both reading and writing. 'Uthman (RA), the successor of 'Umar, presumably because of the personality and prestige of Hafsa, did not consider it appropriate to withdraw the manuscript from her custody. He was himself one of those who had committed the Qur'an to memory. He had his own copy and did not need to acquire the one with Hafsa. But an event took place which made it necessary for the Caliph to resume its custody.

'Umar's regime saw a phase of quick conquests. Many opportunists who were, in reality, hypocrites (*munajiqun*) began to masquerade as Muslims to seek ma-

terial gains. They wanted to subvert Islam from within. The Qur'an, too, became the victim

of their intrigues. May be these intrigues were of no consequence, but an incident did create a grave situation. During 'Uthman's regime an expedition was sent to Armenia. Al-Qastallani, a commentator of the *Sahih* of al-Bukhari, records that while this force was stationed close to Erzerum, the recitation of some verses during a prayer led to a quarrel between the *imam* and his followers. Some of the followers took an exception to the manner in which he recited the verses. One held that his teacher in Iraq, such and such Companion of the Prophet, had taught him to read it differently. Another countered by saying that his teacher in Syria, such and such Companion, had taught him to recite it in another way. Both stuck to their versions. The dispute nearly led to an armed conflict but the sagacity of the army commander helped avert an ugly situation.

When the army returned to Madinah, its commander, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, instead of going to his own house, went straight to the Caliph and briefed him about the details of the event and its implications. One of the qualities of 'Uthman

was that he was a man of decisive nature, and had the ability to have his decisions implemented. He decided at once to redress the situation. A messenger was dispatched to Hafsah with a request that the manuscript which was prepared during Abu Bakr's regime and was in her custody, should be lent to him; and an assurance was given that it would be returned to her. On receiving the manuscript, 'Uthman entrusted it once again to the old scribe of the Qur'an, Zayd ibn Thabit (RA), with the request that its copies should be prepared, compared and corrected for spelling mistakes.

The Holy Qur'an is the first document in the Arabic language. It is possible that in the initial stages the Arabic script had certain inadequacies and shortcomings. 'Uthman, therefore, issued a directive to carry out necessary reforms in the script in the interest of evolving a uniform system of pronunciation. He pointed out regional disparities on this score. The tribes of Najd pronounced a word in one way, while the people of Madinah pronounced the same word in a different way. 'Uthman ordered that in the event of a difference in the pronunciation of a certain word, the pronunciation of the people of Makkah should be followed. Zayd ibn Thabit carried out the order and prepared copies of the entire manuscript with the help of a few assistants. 'Uthman also directed that in the event of a difference of opinion on any issue during the copying of the manuscript, the matter should be referred to him.

Unfortunately we do not possess information about the words whose pronunciation led to the quarrel in the army

stationed near Erzerum. Perhaps the basis of the dispute was the difference in various dialects which are spoken in different accents. For example, in the Qur'an, we come across a word *tabiit*. It means "box". In the dialect of Madinah it was pronounced as *tabuh*, with an *h* at the end, while the people of Makkah pronounce it with a *t* at the end. The people charged with preparing an absolutely mistake-free version could not reach a consensus on this issue. The matter was referred to 'Uthman who ruled that the word should be written with a *t*.

#### **'Uthman's role in the compilation of the Qur'an**

This is perhaps not a matter of much significance but we mention it to bring out the nature of 'Uthman's contribution to the compilation of the Holy Qur'an. All that happened during his regime was that copies of the Holy Qur'an were prepared, and orthography or spellings were corrected at places. The sound of words was not changed but the writing of the sound registered some difference. Four, or according to another account, seven copies were prepared. To meet the high standard of intellectual integrity obtaining at the time, 'Uthman ordered that all the seven copies should be read aloud, one by one, from beginning to end in the Prophet's Mosque so that not a shadow of doubt remained in the mind of anyone that he had introduced any change in the Qur'an.

When all the manuscripts were read out in this manner and everyone was satisfied that they were correct, 'Uthman

dispatched a copy each to different provincial capitals of his vast empire with instructions, that in future, copies should be made only from the official authentic text. If anyone had a copy with a different text, it was required to be destroyed. One does not know exactly how far this directive was carried out. It was practically impossible that the police should go to every house in the three continents of the empire and compare copies of the Qur'an found in the houses with the official text and destroy those found different from the authentic version. We do not come across any event of this kind in history.

All the copies of the Holy Qur'an which have come down to us from the first century of the *Hijrah* are the same as the four or seven copies sent to different capitals by 'Uthman. Some of them are still extant. The Tashqand (popularly, Tashkent) Museum has one. How did it reach there? This copy was first found in Damascus, the capital of the Umayyads. When Tamerlane conquered Damascus, the most precious treasure he came by in the loot was 'Uthman's personal copy of the Holy Qur'an. He brought it to Samarqand, his own capital, and preserved it there. The copy remained there until the Russians conquered the city in the nineteenth century. The famous copy of the Qur'an was shifted by the Russian commander-in-chief to St. Petersburg.

Russian historians suggest that it was sold by the ruler of Samarqand to the Russian commander. The idea is to establish that the Russians had not stolen but had bought the copy. In any case, it remained in St. Petersburg until the end of

the First World War. When the Communists came to power, many who did not wish to live under the new regime, emigrated to different countries. One of them was General Ali Akbar Topchi Bashi who went to Paris. I had an opportunity to meet him. He told me this story:

I was present in St. Petersburg as a senior officer of the army when the Tsar was killed. I sent a commando force to take over the royal palace and seek out 'Uthman's personal copy of the Qur'an from the royal library. As an army general I went to the railway station and demanded an engine from the station master. I placed the Qur'an in the engine compartment and ordered the engine driver to take it with an army escort to Turkestan as quickly as possible. Thus the copy reached its destination. A few hours later the Communist army commanders got wind of the incident. They sent another engine with an escort to chase the one I had dispatched. But they missed it. Thus the copy reached Tashqand.

When the Communists took over Tashqand (commonly spelled as 'Tashkent'), they did not transfer the copy in question to Leningrad with the result that it is still there in Tashqand. During the days of the Tsars, fifty copies, based on the photo of the manuscript, were printed. I know about a few of them. One is in America; another in England. I saw a copy in Kabul. Another copy is in Cairo. I have its microfilm. Another manuscript is preserved in Topkapi Museum of Istanbul. It is attributed to 'Uthman. I have seen it myself. The page bearing the verse: "But God will suffice you.. (11:137) has red spots on it. It

is said that it is the blood of 'Uthman who was martyred while he was reading the Qur'an. The third manuscript is in the India Office Library. I have its photocopy. It bears official seals and a statement that it is 'Uthman's copy of the Qur'an. There is no difference in the script or the size of all these manuscripts. It seems they are contemporaneous. They are written on skins, not on paper. It is possible that these manuscripts are 'Uthman's own and it is also possible that they belong to the same period or were written a little later than 'Uthman's own copy of the Qur'an. In any case, it is a matter of pride and satisfaction for all of us that there is not the slightest difference between these copies and the text of the Qur'an in use today.

'Uthman is known as *Jami'* al-Qur'an. This does not mean that he collected the Qur'an. Muslim historians interpret the title to mean that he brought the Muslims around to a uniform reading of the Qur'an. To save Muslims from the differences of pronunciation, he selected the Makkan pronunciation. 'Uthman held that it was no longer necessary to avail of the Prophet's permission to read it according to the pronunciation of any of the dialects because the standard dialect of Makkah had been introduced all over the world of Islam. Thus 'Uthman was instrumental in creating a common language and gathering all Muslims around an absolutely uniform reading on the Qur'an. May God bless his soul!

### **Authenticity of the Qur'anic Text**

Some time back the Christian clergy of Germany thought of collating the an-

cient manuscripts of the New Testament. As the original Bible in Aramaic (the language of Jews) is extinct, the oldest available Bible is in Greek. It is from Greek that the Bible has been translated into all other languages of the world. The Greek manuscripts, they thought, should be collected and compared with each other. Thus all the Greek manuscripts of the Bible in the world, whether complete or incomplete, were collected. The report published after this global exercise stated: "Some two hundred thousand contradictory narrations have been found". And then there is a sentence: "Of these one-eighth are of an important nature". This is the story of the Bible.

After the publication of the report some people probably felt jealous of the Qur'an in the University of Munich. An Institute for Qur'anic Research was set up. The idea was to collect all the oldest available copies of the Holy Qur'an, in original or photocopies. The process of collection lasted for three generations. When I was at the University of Paris in 1933, the third Director of the Institute, Mr Pretzl, came to Paris to get photocopies of all the ancient manuscripts of the Holy Qur'an available in the Public Library of Paris. The professor told me personally at the time (1933) that the Institute had 43,000 photocopies of the Holy Qur'an and that the work of collation was proceeding apace. During the Second world War, a bomb hit the building of the Institute destroying the edifice, the library and the staff. An interim report published shortly before the beginning of the Second World War stated, *inter alia*, that the work

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# Du'a as a Goal-Setter

*Uwaymir Anjum*

Dua is worship, said the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and then he recited the words of Allah: And your Lord says: Call on Me; I will answer you; verily those who are too arrogant to worship Me will surely enter Hell-Fire, abased [Sûrat Ghâfir, 40:60].

Dua, supplication to Allah, is, in other words, the essence of all acts of worship. What could be a greater statement about its value? After all, it is the essence of the very purpose the entire project of human creation was taken up for. Its spiritual benefits are countless. Only the most wretched would deprive themselves of this divine gift.

I want to talk here about just one aspect of dua, which, in one way encompasses all other aspects. Particularly, by dua I will mean the ma'thûrât—the regular supplications that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) taught us to say day and night, before, after and during each and every important action we do. There is a special charm to these beautiful and heart-warming supplications, from day-to-day life perspective, besides their multiple benefits and rewards.

## **Planning in the Context of Niyah (Intentionality)**

The management and planning gurus would have us believe that 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.' This smart, nutty statement happens to be quite true. Experts of Islamic psychology too describe the significance of planning in the context of niyyah, or intentionality. Intentionality simply means to be and act in our life with good intentions and avoid both bad intentions and no intentions. Because it is enough for the satanic forces in the world to overwhelm you that you are living pointlessly and listlessly, without clear intention, purpose, goals, and objectives, even if you have no bad intentions. It is this very lack of good, considered intentions that becomes bad intentions and then, subsequently, bad actions, and finally, a very bad day on the Day of Judgment.

The bottom line is, don't fail to plan, especially for your Hereafter. The first step in any book of planning is goal-setting. You got to decide where you want to go before you even begin to plan for your journey. If you are going to moon, for instance, your preparation is going to be – it better be – very different than if you were going to the closest grocery store. The most important aspect of supplications is that they do this most crucial part of planning for you, and do

so in the best possible way and in the most beautiful words.

Let us take the planning workshop analogy a little further. If you attend one of these high sounding new age workshops on planning and organization, you are likely to spend a lot of time, after the first lesson on goal-setting, on how to write good, catchy, precise and workable mission statements. The next important lesson focuses on how to remember your mission, and remember it all the time. The big shots in the field then charge us an arm and a leg to tell us about things like how to keep our planners handy so we can review our mission statements every day and so on and so forth.

The Prophetic supplications do all that for us, and more, and all that for free. They remind us of our true and ultimate mission in life, and set our goals appropriately. In fact, they remind us of our means and strategies as well. And they do so in the most eloquent and concise way. They remind us of the right aspect of this mission, and the right means to adopt, at the right occasion. Of course, for the particular aspects of our individual lives, we need to set our own specific goals and strategies, like excelling in our field of study or trade. Still, we can incorporate supplications for these specific goals in our daily routine. Imagine a student who aims really high in her academic career and makes *duĉa'* every day sincerely to achieve the goal, and one who never consciously thinks about her academic goals? There are at least two great advantages the first of these two persons enjoy: one, she is always motivated to achieve what she is praying for, and, two, she does not make the mistake of unconsciously put-

ting any of her academic or worldly goals ahead of the goal of the Hereafter, because she makes *duĉa'* to Allah regularly and remembers the right place of her specific goal in the larger picture.

### **Sûrat Al-Fâtihah, Best Example of Goal-Setting**

The master of all supplications, the greatest of all Sûrahs of the Quran, Al-Fâtihah, is also the best example of goal-setting and, indeed, means-setting, if you will. Recite it in your heart with meanings and imagine how it does that. In the name of Allah, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent. Praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, Most Merciful and Most Beneficent, Master of the Day of Judgment. [Sûrat Al-Fâtihah, 1:7] These phrases remind us of what is the kind of world we are living in, that is, the most fundamental questions of existence: What is our origin and end; who, if any, is our owner and our sustainer; who, if any, are we answerable to? Is our creator, owner and master good or bad? Merciful and just or merciless and unjust? For if the creator were not good and merciful, there could be no hope for goodness, morality, and happiness for us; there would be no rationale for us to act righteously, ethically, and selflessly. Our existence would be manifestly bleak and miserable. The first and the greatest chapter of the final Message of Allah assures us again and again, day and night, that our Creator and our Lord is indeed Good, Merciful, in fact, Most Merciful. This assurance of Al-Raĥmân, Al-Raĥîm is repeated twice so as to emphasize and assure.

Next comes our pledge to that Most

Merciful and Most Beneficent Creator and Master: we will reserve our worship, love, devotion, obedience and supplications only for You, O Allah. This is a statement of means for achieving our goal.

Next comes our ultimate request for Allah, our goal: the Straight Path that will lead us to Allah, His pleasure and His Promise. This imploration for continuous guidance, while seeking Allah's help, also reminds us of our final, ultimate goal. A true believer never loses sight of this goal of guidance to Allah's ultimate pleasure.

The examples are many, and left as an exercise for us to think about how they constantly remind us of our end as well as means. The message is: if you want to change your life for the better, one great way to start is to memorize and understand these supplications. Check out an Islamic bookstore for a book of supplications suited for you.

Blessed are those who memorize the supplications of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) for all occasions, and say them with an awakened heart and mind. They let the words of Allah and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) set their goals and take care of their planning. Those who care about success in their ultimate mission of life, what more could they ask for?

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World Bank, and other shylocks who have been enriching themselves at the expense of the poor out of business in the Muslim countries.

Even for our economic problems, Islam is the solution. If only we would give it a chance.

### Quotable Quotes

*Sit with those who constantly repent, for they have the softest hearts. Sayyiduna Umar ibn Khattab (RA)*

*Arguments bring disaster. Sayyiduna Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA)*

*"The best women are those who do not see the men and who are not seen by the men." Sayyida Fatimah (RA)*

*If a slave abstains from the world, his heart becomes illuminated with wisdom & his limbs reciprocate in worship" Salman Farsi*

*Disputation is a source of evil. Imam Dhahabi*

*Don't report any event unless u r satisfied u r able to prove it in a court either here or Hereinafter. Mufti Muhammad Shafi*

*Those who submit to the divine essence of life will live in unperturbed tranquility and peace. Hazrat Shams Tabriz*

*"Worst kind of self-delusion is for someone to sin excessively, then to hope for forgiveness without feeling remorse. Yahya Ibn Muadh*

*I am surprised at someone who reads the Qur'an yet does not know its interpretation; how can he have enjoyed it? Ibn Jarir*

*"I would mix with the rich & always be unhappy. I began to mingle with the poor & found myself at peace." Ibn al-Mubarak*

*The end of action is to serve God. Ibn Hanbal*

# They Are Not Intellectuals

*Dr. Jafar Idris*

It is common these days to see the term “intellectuals” being used to describe those who follow paths inclined from the right path in regard to understanding Islam and explaining its texts. This indeed is a misnomer for many reasons.

FIRST: It acknowledges that the mind can be in contradiction to the Sharī‘ah. In fact, those who employ this term agree that there is no contradiction between the plainly rational and the authentically transmitted. Why then do we use a term that accepts something we all deny?

SECOND: We cannot find in Allah’s Book nor the Prophet’s Sunnah that a person strayed from the right path because of his mind. Instead, we find that those who go astray are those who do not comprehend, do not devise, do not think, and do not observe. Guided people are those who comprehend and understand:

Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, they are the people of understanding. Sûrat Al-Zumar, 39:18

THIRD: There is a fundamental difference between intellect and desire. A person strays from the right path because he chooses to and not because his mind directs him. Our righteous predecessors,

Al-Salaf, used to call the Al-Mu‘tazilah, and their likes, people of desires, ahwâ’, not intellectuals, as some contemporary people now call them in imitation of orientalis.

FOURTH: There is a difference between having an opinion and being intellectual. Not every opinion is realistic even if it is not based on desires. There are two kinds of opinion, a right opinion, which is always in accordance with the mind and a wrong opinion, which cannot be in harmony with it.

FIFTH: Describing them as intellectuals appeals to them. It might make them more selfish and make them say things out of pride, “yes, we are intellectuals. We think and you are only empty-minded, repeating what you do not understand.”

SIXTH: The Imams of the Sunnah like Abû Sa‘îd Al-Dârami and Ibn Taymiyyah did not only state that the true path is always in accordance with the mind, they actually showed it in convincing detail. They also used rational proof to show that those who do as they please in actuality contradict the mind. They also proved that what those people alleged as rational was actually ignorance.

SEVENTH: Every religious detail,



be it in belief, worship, or conduct, has behind it a rational explanation. This point asserts that intellectuals are indeed those who follow the true course, the way of the people of Sunnah and Jamâ'a.

To be convinced with a rational proof depends on two factors:

FIRST: The person being spoken to has to be sane and rational. If he isn't, there is no way to reason with or convince him.

SECOND: The reasoning used must be correct and should be based on the right assumptions which will in the end, lead to the desired results.

Some lines of reasoning are clear on their own—an intelligent person sees their clarity by employing his intellect. Others may require proof. Usually, this is the deciding factor in how long your argument can be with your audience. If your assumptions are not acceptable to the person you are talking to, he may demand proofs for them.

The verse: Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators [Sûrat Al-Ṭûr, 52:35] is one of the very concise proofs found in the Quran for the fact that this world has an existing Creator. This proof is led to by two intuitive and logical facts stated by the verse:

FACT 1: No creation comes from nothingness, and

FACT 2: Nothing creates itself.

This is indisputable except to the arrogant.

But let us assume that a person alleges that resurrection is an impossibility. To answer this allegation, one would use as an argument what the Quran has as-

serted: Allah the One Who created people the first time can bring them back after their death. This, however, depends on the assumption that this person already believes that Allah created him. If he denies this fact, then one needs to first prove to him that the Creator exists.

It might be said that such an example is a simple and clear one. This is true. However, that person may argue that there are things to which most would submit as being true facts of life, but this would not hold true for all religious issues.

I, however, argue that submission is a necessary requirement for reasoning and intellectuality to hold true. Submission, I say, is an absolute wisdom. How is that? Let us take an example:

Suppose that someone asks: "On what basis do you submit that the Maghrib Ṣalâh is three rak'ahs?"

The answer would be: "On the basis that this is what the Prophet ﷺ ordered." And, for the sake of furthering the argument, we would elaborate by saying: in fact, the Prophet ﷺ does not speak out of his own desire. Everything he ordered is actually a revelation from Allah. Only Allah decides what the truth, Ḥaq, is. Only He orders the good. Listen to the Quran stating this:

The word of your Lord shall be fulfilled in truth and justice. [Sûrat Al-An'âm, 6:115]

A rational person listening to you will realize that your reasoning leads to a mandatory submission that the Maghrib comprises three rak'ahs. He should recognize this fact even if he does not believe what you do (i.e., your religion).

If this person now wants to submit as you submit, he will then ask for a proof. He will ask you: "What proof do you have that the Prophet said what you say he did? Or, he may ask: "What proof is there that Muhammad is Allah's Prophet?"

All these questions have rational proofs. If you know them you should say them. If you do not, you should refer them to someone who knows. This is the rule set for us by the Quran.

Suppose that this person indicates that he does not want a religious proof. Instead, he says, "I want a direct proof."

I say that person is not rational because, in essence, results are dependent on whatever assumptions are given as a foundation for the argument. And when one accepts the assumptions, he should accept the results they lead to. It is that simple. If, he is not convinced with the truthfulness of the assumptions, he can ask for proofs to them.

Furthermore, ask this person: "What is the proof that four times five is twenty?" If he says that four times five means four plus four plus four plus four plus four (five times); tell him, "I do not want proof based on the 'addition assumption.' Instead, I want a direct proof."

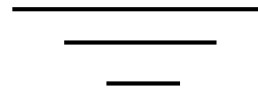
He will answer, "Multiplication is based on addition; and if you do not acknowledge the addition assumption and do not submit to it, then I cannot give you proof for the multiplication phenomenon."

The very same concept and reasoning applies to the case of the number of rak'ahs for the Maghrib Ṣalâh. The proof for them is based on submission to the assumption that Muhammad is a Mes-

senger from Allah.

This is our stand regarding intellect and the use of rationality. So what is the stand of the people of the desires?

The scholars of Islam, have dealt with this kind of people in all times, and we have received much of their heritage about the subject. It remains to be said that we, today, do the same and judge modernists on the same basis.



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of collation of the Qur'anic manuscripts had not yet been completed. But the result of the examination conducted until then suggested that while some mistakes of calligraphy had been detected in the manuscripts, not a single discrepancy in the text had been discovered. A calligraphic or a typographical error found in one manuscript does not recur in another. Suppose, for example, that in a manuscript of the Qur'an one word is missing from the text. This mistake will remain confined only to that very manuscript, the rest will have the complete text. The omission is the result of an oversight on the part of the scribe who has inadvertently missed a word. Should there be a difference in narration it will be found in many manuscripts. This is not so in the case of the Qur'an.

All the events narrated so far categorically prove the Divine claim in the Qur'an: "Verily it is We Who revealed the Remembrance and verily We are its guardians . . ." (15: 9).

# Please, Pass it on...

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*Dr. Rumana Makhdumi*

This is the usual complaint. Women feel neglected, left off or rather to themselves and their fate. Men don't contribute in any way to their learning and knowing—what I mean here precisely in learning and knowing Islam. Men have the access, means and freedom to learn any world from any corner. But my question is, do they pass it on, pass it on to the most needy most deserving and to the desiring women their household? I know they don't, for the simple reason their women have other jobs to attend to (i.e.,) children, household and all that. Why bother to teach them something else?

Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has left behind an honourable and unique tradition of preaching not only men i.e., his Sahaba but also the women in and around his household including his blessed daughters and wives. The women thus taught their children, friends etc., and hence Islam expanded both in dimension as well as in thought. Prophet's wisdom was above every other human being's yet he relied on the wisdom of his beloved wife when Qur'an was first revealed to him, trusted her faith in him and Allah and this all went on to make her the first to em-

brace Islam. Sayyida Aisha (RA), the blessed wife of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was an ocean of knowledge, wisdom and had a powerful analytical and sharp mind which made her an authority on Islam and Prophet's life and mission. Greatest Ulemas and thinkers of Islam owe their understanding of Islam to this great lady.

Over the ages, Muslim women have carried on the tradition of learning and knowing Islam and in their quest for Islamic knowledge men have played a significant role—be it fathers, brothers, or husbands. Islam being a religion which follows a strict moral code of conduct does not allow free mixing of genders, thus restriction women from freely acquiring Islamic knowledge. In the present day world women's institutions for learning Islam are hardly any, perhaps due to over enthusiastic, overpowering male domination who want all for themselves—knowledge, thought, spiritually, and paradise.

Looking at the bright and talented Muslim women we have today in all spheres—I feel sad. Wouldn't these be better, if seasoned with Islamic knowledge? Don't they all possess brains

to be interpreters, thinkers and scholars? Isn't Islam blamed for being unjust to women? Couldn't these women be its ambassadors, the ones who could refute these blames with proofs?

I remember in my childhood I used to accompany my mother to some 'majlis' exclusively for women. I remember women going to mosques and occupying a corner but the present day all those corners in mosques for women are non-existent. No scholar spares his time for women. And I am sure 'Ulema don't' work hard on their household women, with the result Islam is getting polarized day by day. If the present trend continues, the apprehension of having single gender Muslims doesn't seem a delusion.

I remember having learned a lot from my father and my uncles but then that's it. I am lucky that my father was generous enough to do that—presently father however knowledgeable they are, in most cases never pass it on to their daughters. And marriage is a contract they say, it includes all elements of a contract except imparting or at least sharing Islamic knowledge. Do our men feel threatened or they feel insecure.

As I close this column, I have a duty to help my daughters memorise a few surahs who with all their heart do it. Their father will never do the job—he is learning Islam in another corner, I wonder for whom - not me, not the children; then for whom...

*Cont'd from page 13*

Hadhrat Umar (RA) told him that he should not do Tayammum even if he did not get water until one month. Hadhrat Ammar bin Yasir (RA) who was also present there told Hadhrat Umar (RA) "if you remember once we (i.e., he and Hadhrat Umar) were rearing cattle in a forest and Gusul became obligatory upon both of us and you postponed your Salaah while I dusted by body by turning sides on the earth in a lying down position. Then we mentioned this incident to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and he said that it was not needed. He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that it was enough to strike hands on the earth and blow off the dust from them and rub them on face and hands".

Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhi (RA) says:

*"To blow off the dust from the hands is preferable (and not a must) if extra dust is sticking to the hands in order to avoid disfigurement of the face".*

*Cont'd from page 15*

*"Whoever stays up during Laylat al-Qadr out of faith and in the hope of earning reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." (Bukhari; Muslim)*

"Whoever fasts the month of Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of earning reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven, and whoever stays up during Laylat al-Qadr out of faith and in the hope of earning reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." (Agreed upon).

The phrase "out of faith and in the hope of earning reward" means, believing in Allah's promise of reward for this, and seeking the reward, with no other aim or purpose, such as showing off etc." (Fath al-Baari)

# Zakaah

*Khalid Baig*

Money. These days it is hardly of secondary importance for those who don't have it. And even for many who do! What does Islam say about it? Islam recognizes the value of wealth. It refers to it as:

*"Your property which Allah has made for you a means of support." [4:5].*

But it also warns about its dual nature: it could be a blessing or a curse. It is a blessing if used to do good. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) declared that person to be in an enviable position who has lot of wealth and he spends it day and night in the cause of righteousness. Otherwise it is a curse. No one who reads the following verse can think of it in any other way:

*"And there are those who hoard gold and silver, and spend it not in the way of Allah.*

*Announce unto them a most grievous chastisement. On the day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. `This is the treasure that you hoarded for yourselves. Taste then the treasure you hoarded.'" [9:34-35]*

The two characters are brought together in a beautiful juxtaposition in a hadith. "The case of a miser and a giver of charity is similar to that of two persons clad in armor from their breasts to their collar-bones. Every time the generous person gives charity, his armor expands, till it covers his finger tips and toes. Every time

the miser intends to spend something, his armor contracts, every ring of it sinking into his flesh. He tries to loosen it but cannot." [Bukhari and Muslim]. It should be remembered that here a generous person is one who spends generously in the path of Allah. A miser is one whose love of money keeps him from such spending even though he may be spending lavishly in other areas.

Such love of money is a disease of the heart and the first purpose of charity in Islam is to work as an antidote against that. That is why the Qur'an asked the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

*"Of their wealth take alms to purify and sanctify them." [9:103].*

Hence the name Zakat (purification) for the main form of that obligation. And it is for this reason that Zakat remains obligatory even if there are no needy persons in a community.

Of course, the system of Zakat is designed to help the poor and the needy and it is a highly desirable characteristic of the believers that in addition to prayers and other acts of worship they are always conscious of this duty.

*"And in their wealth there is due share for the beggar and the deprived." [51:19].*

They do it for no other motive but to please their Lord.

*"And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, say-*

*ing: 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone. No reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.'" [76:8-9]*

Charity itself has been a cherished institution in all human societies. It remains so even in the capitalistic society. But without a strong belief in Allah and the Hereafter, a charitable act can only be motivated by a desire for fame or some other worldly reward. Human beings are driven by rewards. The only truly selfless act is one in which the reward is sought from Allah instead of other human beings. And that is the change in orientation that Islam provides and that remains its most distinguishing feature. Once a goat was slaughtered in the Prophet's household and its meat was distributed. Later on the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked Aisha (RA), what was saved from the goat? "Nothing but a shank," she said. "Everything but the shank," said the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). For what was given away in charity was truly saved for the hereafter.

There are other distinct features of Islam's system of Zakat. The Qur'an mentions where it can be used.

*"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer." [9:60].*

These are very precise and specific categories, the seemingly general category of "cause of Allah" referring to Jihad by consensus of scholars.

We can better appreciate the im-

mense wisdom in this arrangement if we compare it with Tithe. Under that system, adopted by the Christian Church, lay people were forced to pay a tenth of their income to the church to "support the clergy, maintain churches and assist the poor"--mostly in that order. The system led to widespread abuses. It was for this reason that tithe was abolished in France in 1789 during the Revolution and in other countries after that. England finally ended it in 1936. It was never accepted in the U.S.

Zakat, on the other hand, cannot be used to maintain mosques or support the scholars. Neither can it be used to support the normal functioning of the government. No one can change its rate, sources, or application, which are all pre-determined by the Qur'an and Sunnah. All these distinguish Zakat as an act of worship rather than a tax and have been responsible for keeping the system mostly free of corruption, even at a time when some Muslim countries have generally fallen victim to the corruption epidemic. Yet the problem is that a very large number of those who should be paying Zakat are careless about their responsibility.

To be sure, a Muslim has financial obligations other than Zakat (to support mosques, schools, and other community projects on an as needed basis), but Zakat itself remains the most potent system for addressing the economic problems of the Ummah. With 2.5% of the savings of the rich people throughout the Ummah going to its poor people every year, the basic needs of everyone could be satisfied. In fact if used properly, it could put IMF, the

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# He is the Best of Planners

Shariffa Carlo, a former Christian, was recruited in order to "free" Muslim women from oppression. She was a women's rights advocate and tried to explain to Muslim women that they were an oppressed lot in society. But eventually she found herself accepting Islam.

The story of how I reverted to Islam is a story of plans. I made plans; the group I was with made plans, and Allah made plans. And Allah is the best of planners. When I was a teenager, I came to the attention of a group of people with a very sinister agenda. They were and probably still are a loose association of individuals who work in government positions but have a special agenda — to destroy Islam. It is not a governmental group that I am aware of, they simply use their positions in the US government to advance their cause.

One member of this group approached me because he saw that I was articulate, motivated and very much the women's rights advocate. He told me that if I studied international relations with an emphasis in the Middle East, he would guarantee me a job at the American Embassy in Egypt. He wanted me to eventually go there to use my position in the country to talk to Muslim women and encourage the fledgling women's rights movement. I

thought this was a great idea. I had seen the Muslim women on TV; I knew they were a poor oppressed group, and I wanted to lead them to the light of 20th century freedom.

With this intention, I went to college and began my education. I studied Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic history. I also studied the ways I could use this information. I learned how to twist the words to say what I wanted them to say. It was a valuable tool. Once I started learning, however, I began to be intrigued by this message. It made sense. That was very scary. Therefore, in order to counteract this effect, I began to take classes in Christianity. I chose to take classes with this one professor on campus because he had a good reputation and he had a Ph.D. in Theology from Harvard University. I felt I was in good hands. I was, but not for the reasons I thought. It turns out that this professor was a Unitarian Christian. He did not believe in the trinity or the divinity of Jesus. In actuality, he believed that Jesus was a prophet.

He proceeded to prove this by taking the bible from its sources in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic and show where they were changed. As he did this, he showed the historical events, which shaped and followed these changes. By the time I finished this class, my deen (religion) had

been destroyed, but I was still not ready to accept Islam. As time went on, I continued to study, for myself and for my future career. This took about three years. In this time, I would question Muslims about their beliefs. One of the individuals I questioned was a Muslim brother with the MSA (Muslim Students' Association).

Alhamdulillah, he saw my interest in the deen, and made it a personal effort to educate me about Islam. May Allah increase his reward. He would give me dawaa (i.e. tell me about Islam) at every opportunity which presented itself. One day, this man contacts me, and he tells me about a group of Muslims who were in town. He wanted me to meet them. I agreed. I went to meet with them after Isha prayer. I was led to a room with at least 20 men in it. They all made space for me to sit, and I was placed face to face with an elderly Pakistani gentleman. Mashallah, this brother was a very knowledgeable man in matters of Christianity. He and I discussed and argued the varying parts of the bible and the Qur'an until the fajr.

At this point, after having listened to this wise man tell me what I already knew, based on the class I had taken in Christianity, he did what no other individual had ever done. He invited me to become a Muslim. In the three years I had been searching and researching, no one had ever invited me. I had been taught, argued with and even insulted, but never invited. May Allah guide us all. So when he invited me, it clicked. I realized this was the time. I knew it was the truth, and I had to make a decision.

Alhamdulillah (All praise be to Allah), Allah opened my heart, and I said, "Yes. I want to be a Muslim." With that, the man led me in the shahadah (the testimony of faith) — in English and in Arabic. I swear by Allah that when I took the shahadah, I felt the strangest sensation. I felt as if a huge, physical weight had just been lifted off my chest; I gasped for breath as if I were breathing for the first time in my life. Alhamdulillah, Allah had given me a new life - a clean slate - a chance for Jannah (Paradise), and I pray that I live the rest of my days and die as a Muslim. Ameen.

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posed fines against 25 U.S. passenger airlines for maintenance violations that occurred during the past six years. This only represents a small fraction of the actual problem, because "about 90% of maintenance violations don't result in fines but warning letters or other reprimands by the FAA."

Even if we make the drastic and false assumption that the new policies will completely eliminate all possibility of sabotage, it will only improve the overall picture by 9%. In other words, the odds of a passenger dying in an air carrier accident will be changed from 1 out of 2.067 million to 1 out of 2.271 million. It is for this "gain" in security that they are asking every traveler to submit to the digital strip search. The molehill of added security has been used to create the mountain of the new security procedures that trample human dignity, modesty, and privacy.