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RADIANT REALITY

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This magazine is dedicated to the greatest and the last Prophet Sayyidna Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on whom the succession of Prophethood ended and was sealed forever.

Editor, Printer & Publisher:	Contents	
Maulana Hamidullah Lone	1. Question Answer	02
*Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.	2. Lesson from the Qur'an: Din and Islam	07
*The Editor reserves the right to abridge letters and any other material received for publication.	3. Lesson from Sahih al-Bukhari	09
*Published articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Radiant Reality.	4. Resolutions, Stepping Stone to Transformation	12
*Articles may be reproduced free of charge with due acknowledgement.	5. The Only Way to Guidance	15
Press: Khidmat Offset Press, The Bund, Srinagar.	6. Tiny Steps towards a Big Journey	18
Mailing Address: Editor In-Charge,- Radiant Reality P.O. Box 974 G.P.O. Srinagar, J&K, 190001, India.	7. The Beauty of Allah's Creation	20
Subscription: Yearly: Rs 300/- Postage: 240/- Regd. 30/- Normal	8. Personalities: Hakim ibn Hazm	22
Contact: siteadmin@islamkashmir.org	9. The Station of Adab-II	24
  +918491895043	10. Why is the Qur'an in Arabic? - 2	36
	11. The Impact of Sins on Society	29
	12. Seerah: His Kindness	32
	13. But She Must be a Virgin	35
	14. Way to Lower the Gaze	38
	15. Qur'an, Science and Certitude	41

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Question.

I read the following Hadeeth: “Allaah has cursed those women who practice tattooing, those who get tattooed, those who pluck the hair of eyebrows, those who have their eyebrows hair plucked and those who make up gaps between their teeth to become more beautiful, changing thereupon the creation of Allaah.” Can you please elaborate on “those who make artificial spaces in between their teeth”? What does this mean and is dentures allowed in Islam?

Answer.

Sayyiduna Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud Radhiyalahu Anhu said, “Allah has cursed those women who practice tattooing or get it done for themselves, and those who remove hair from their faces, and those who create spaces between their teeth artificially to look beautiful, and such women who change the features created by Allah. Why then shall I not curse those whom Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam has cursed and who are cursed in Allah’s Book too?” (Bukhari)

In the above narration, the creating of spaces between the teeth refer to altering normal teeth and creating space between them. This is an alteration to the creation of Allah, which is prohibited. As such, one is not allowed to alter the natural appearance of oneself.

In terms of using dentures, they do not fall in this prohibited category as dentures are merely covering up a defect and not altering one’s natural teeth. When one extracts his teeth, a denture is made to fill the space of the extracted teeth due to appearance and medical reasons.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If a person had to cut his hair in ihraam due to some excuse for instance he needed some stitches on his head, will Damm become necessary.

Answer.

In the state of Ihraam, if due to the requirement of stiches on one’s head, one shaves/cuts a quarter or less of the head, then it would be necessary to compensate for it by giving Sadaqah.

However, if more than a quarter of the head is shaved/cut, then a Damm will be necessary. (Hidaayah 1/158)

Damm: refers to slaughtering a sheep, goat etc. within the precincts of the Haram.

Sadaqah: refers to the discharging of the Sadaqatul Fitr amount. The Sadaqatul Fitr amount can be discharged anywhere, although it is better to do so within the precincts of the Haram. (Shaami 2/558)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can Zakaat be given to a person who owns a television? His living condition is normal but he has other luxuries as well.

Answer.

The general rule is that if a person possesses the threshold of Zakaat, over and above one's necessities, it will not be permissible to give such a person Zakaat.

In determining the threshold of Zakaat in the enquired case, the total value of the television together with all other luxuries will be taken into consideration. Hence, if total value of the television together with all other luxuries reaches the threshold of Zakaat, then one cannot give Zakaat to such a person.

However, in such a case, it is possible that other members of his household do not possess the threshold of Zakaat. Therefore, Zakaat may be given to such members of his household instead.

If on the other hand, the value of the television is valued at R1000, then it will be permissible to give such a person Zakaat as he now does not possess the threshold value of Zakaat. (Fataawa Fareediyah 3/367-368)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Please advise me on the ruling regarding 'telling other people about the dreams that you have'.

Answer.

It is not necessary to mention one's dreams to anyone or everyone. If one sees a good dream, then one may mention it to one's well-wishers. If one sees a bad dream, then one should seek refuge in Allah and not mention it to anyone. (Mazaahirul Haqq 5/330)

Sayyiduna Abu Saeed Al-Khudri (ra) narrates that he heard the Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam say, 'When someone amongst you sees a good and pleasing dream, he should

know that it is from Allah, and so he should praise and thank Allah, and may describe to others what he saw in his dream. But if he sees something that he dislikes then it is from Shaitan, so he should seek refuge in Allah from its evil and should not mention it to anyone.' (Bukhari)

Mufti Taahir

Question.

Is a bring and share Walima permissible where every person brings food to share at a Walima?

Answer.

There is no prohibition in bringing and sharing food at a Walima to assist the groom or his family in hosting a Walima. This following is part of a Hadith relating to Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam's marriage to Sayyidatuna Safiyya Radhiyallahu Anha as recorded in Sahih Bukhari:

Sayyiduna Abdul Azzi Bin Suhaib Radhiyallahu Anhu reports from Sayyiduna Anas Radhiyallahu Anhu, "... whilst on the way, Umm Sulaim Radhiyallahu Anha dressed her (Sayyidatuna Safiyya Radhiyallahu Anha) for the marriage (ceremony) and at night sent her as a bride to Nabi Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam. Nabi Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam said, 'Whoever has anything (food) should bring it.' He spread out a leather sheet (for the food) and some brought dates and others brought butter. So they prepared a dish of Hais (a kind of meal) and that was the Walima (the marriage banquet) of Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam!

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can a woman in the state of Haidh touch a book of Tafseer, Hadith, Duas or any book of Islamic literature?

Answer.

It is permissible for a woman in the state

of menses (Haidh) to read or touch any book except the Holy Quran. Therefore, a woman in menses may read or touch books of Tafseer, Hadith, Duas and Islamic literature in general.

This ruling is subject to the content of Quran being lesser than the content of Tafseer, Hadith, Duas and Islamic literature. In such a case, it will not be permissible for a woman in menses to touch the printed verses of the Holy Quran.

If, however, the content on Quran is more, then it will follow the ruling of touching the Quran i.e. it will not be permissible to touch it without Wudhu.

N.B. In normal circumstances, it is preferable (Mustahab) to touch such books in the state of Wudhu. (Shaami 1/177-Tahtaawi Ala Maraaqil Falaah 1/83-Ahsanul Fataawa 2/71)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My husband gave me one revocable Talaq and I sat for the Iddah period of three menstrual cycles, for about four Months. It is one year later and he wants to issue me a second and third Talaq. Can he do that?

Answer.

In the enquired case, if after the issuance of one Talaq-e-Rajee (revocable divorce), your husband did not reconcile with you during the Iddah period and the Iddah period terminated, then the Nikah has terminated.

As you have observed the Iddah period without your husband reconciling, his issuance of a second and third Talaq will be invalid as the bond of Nikah does not remain between the two of you.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is it necessary to respond to the Azaan of the Khutbah of Jumuah? What is the ruling of saying Ameen to the Duas of the Khutbah of Jumuah?

Answer.

One can reply to the Azaan called out before the sermon/Khutbah of Jumuah in one's heart, but not verbally on one's tongue.

The same ruling will also apply to saying Ameen to the Dua's made during the sermon/Khutbah of Jumuah. (Fataawa Mahmoodiyyah 7/28-Kifayatul Mufti 3/220 - Aap ke masaa'il aur unka hal 4/140)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the ruling when a woman is following the Imaam in the Harm for Salaah and after performing one Rakaat with the Imaam, and during the second Rakaat she breaks her Salaah to secure her child who has ran off whilst she is performing Salaah. Then, she joins the Imaam in the same second Rakaat. Is her Salaah valid and does she continue from where she has stopped?

Answer.

In the enquired case, it will be permissible for you to terminate your Salaah and secure your child as there is a fear of losing your child if you do not do so. Thereafter, you will begin Salaah again and join the Imaam in Salaah as a latecomer (Masbooq) and make up the first Rakaat after the Imaam completes his Salaah. You may not continue your Salaah from the point of terminating your Salaah. (Shaami 2/52-Aap ke masaa'il aur unka hal 3/574)

N.B. The permissibility of terminating ones Salaah depends on the circumstance and if there exists a legitimate reason to do so, for e.g. fear or loss of life and property. It is not permissible to terminate one's Salaah without a legitimate reason.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

How do I respond to my non-Muslim staff who greet me with Assalaamu Alaikum?

Answer.

As a general rule, a Muslim should not initiate the official greeting of Muslims - Salaam with non-Muslims. One of the main reasons being that the official greeting of Muslims - Salaam, is a Dua (supplication) that encompasses a Dua of peace for this world (Dunya) and the hereafter (Aakhirah) which is applicable to Muslims and not to non-Muslims. (Badaai-us-Sanaai 5/128)

A Muslim may greet a non-Muslim with a customary greeting instead. (For e.g. by saying Hi, Good Day/Afternoon/Evening etc.)

If there is a need to initiate Salaam to a Non-Muslim, Salaam should be made with the following words:

Transliteration: Assalaamu Ala Ma-nitta-ba-'al Hu-da

Translation: May peace be upon the one who follows the guidance.

In the case where a Non-Muslim makes Salaam to a Muslim, a Muslim should reply with the words:

Transliteration: Wa-alaikum

Translation: And to you to.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What is the ruling of Ramal and Idhtibaa' in Tawaaf? Is it done in all rounds of Tawaaf?

Answer.

Idhtibaa' refers to covering the left shoulder and exposing the right should (during Tawaaf).

Ramal refers to a brisk walk whilst lifting ones shoulders (during Tawaaf).

Idhtibaa' is Sunnah during all 7 rounds of Tawaaf (Tawaaf of Umrah/Hajj) and Ramal is Sunnah during the first 3 rounds of Tawaaf only. (Shaami 2/495 - Jawaahirul Fiqh 4/125/126)

Sayyiduna Ibn Abbaas Radhiyallahu Anhu reports that Nabi Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam placed the cloth/Ihraam under his right armpit with the end over his left shoulder (Idhtibaa'), made Istilaam (of the Black Stone), recited Tak-

bir and walked briskly (Ramal) in three rounds of Tawaaf. When they (the Companions) reached the Yamani corner, and disappeared from the eyes of the Quraysh, they walked as usual; When they appeared before them, they walked briskly. Thereupon the Quraysh said: They look to be the deer (that are jumping i.e. active). Ibn Abbas Radhiyallahu Anhu said: "Hence, this became the Sunnah." (Abu Dawood)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I have reflux in pregnancy but I'm trying to fast today and it's already came up my throat twice. will my fast be accepted?

Answer.

An Acid reflux occurs when part of the stomach contents travels back up the oesophagus (sometimes into the throat and even into the mouth). Acid reflux happens unintentionally/involuntarily.

If one experiences acid reflux whilst fasting, the fast will only break if the contents enter the mouth and is then swallowed intentionally.

If the contents enter the mouth and is swallowed involuntarily or spat out, the fast will not break. (Kitaabul Fataawa 3/389)

In any event, the fast will not be effected if it does not reach the mouth or if it is not swallowed.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Kindly advise if women are allowed to wear 9 carat gold, silver or platinum rings? Moreover, are they allowed to wear imitation jewellery rings? Shukran Was Salaam

Answer.

A woman may wear rings of gold and silver only. Rings made from other metals apart from gold and silver are not permissible. Platinums rings are therefore not permissible. (Shaami

6/359-360)

It is permissible for a woman to wear a 9-carat gold ring (under 50% gold content) if the ring looks like a gold ring as is generally the case. If the ring does not look like a gold ring, then it will not be permissible to wear.

Rings that are not made from gold and silver but are gold and silver plated will be permissible for women to wear on condition that the base metal is completely covered by the plating. (Hindiyyah 5/335)

As for other types of imitation jewellery for women (excluding rings) such as necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings etc, a woman will be permitted to wear them as they can be of any metal. (Jaami-ul-Fataawa 3/217)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I run a T-shirt printing business. I buy plain T-shirts, print on it and sell it to schools, colleges, hospitals, hotels, small business owners, etc. Can I print T-shirts of people, cartoon characters, mobile phones, symbols, buildings, logos, slogans, taglines, business names, trees, plants and flowers?

Answer.

It is permissible to run a T-shirt business if the T-shirts printed do not contain any animate pictures.

Therefore, in the enquired situation, it would be permissible for you to print T-shirts of mobile phones, symbols, buildings, logos, slogans, taglines, business names, trees, plants and flowers so long as they do not contain any impermissible elements.

Hence, it will not be permissible for you to print T-shirts of people or animate cartoon characters.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

There a few partner's in a business. One of the partners passed away. Do the heirs of the

deceased partner automatically become partners in the business?

Answer.

The partnership of a partner in a business terminates upon death. The heirs of a partner do not automatically become partners in the business. The heirs are entitled only to a payout of their shares in the business.

However, the heirs may discuss an option of continuing the partnership with the existing partners, which will be subject to the terms and conditions of the new partnership. (Shaami 4/327)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Can the trustees of a Masjid accept donations from non-Muslims for the construction or renovation of a Masjid?

Answer.

There are many people in the Muslim community who would appreciate the opportunity of donating towards a Masjid. The wealth of Muslims, which is pure and Halaal should be given preference over the wealth of non-Muslims. More so, the Masjid is considered the pride and honour of Muslims and not non-Muslims.

In any event, if non-Muslims wish to donate towards the construction or renovation of a Masjid, their donation can be accepted under the following conditions:

1) They make their donation freely and willingly as an act of charity.

2) They do not expect Muslims to reciprocate them by supporting them or attending their religious programmes and events.

3) There is no fear of them boasting of their donations and making the Muslims feel indebted to them. (Kitaabul Fataawa 4/209/Fataawa Uthmaani 2/537)

Mufti Ismaeel

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



Din and Islam

Truly, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam.

And those who have been given the Book did not differ (among themselves) except after the knowledge had come to them, (and all this) due to envy against each other. And whoever denies the verses of Allah, then, Allah is swift at reckoning. [3:19]

The word, Din has more than one meaning in the Arabic language, one of them being 'the way'. In the terminology of the Qur'an, the word, Din is used to stand for principles and injunctions which are common to all prophets from Sayyidna Adam (as) to the last of the prophets, Sayyidna Muhammad al-Mustafa (saws). The words, 'shari'ah' or 'al-minhaj' or the word, 'madhhab' from among the later-day terms, are used to cover subsidiary injunctions, which have been different during different ages and different communities. The Holy Qur'an says:

Allah made you follow the same religion with which He bound Nuh (and other prophets) - 42:13.

This tells us that the din of all our blessed prophets was one and the same, that is, belief in the most perfect Being and Attributes of Allah, in His being free of all shortcomings and that He alone is worthy of worship, believing in this from the depth of one's heart and confirming it verbally; belief in the Day of Judgement, in the final reckoning of deeds, the reward and the punishment and in Paradise and Hell and in every prophet and messenger sent by Him and in all commandments and injunctions brought by them, believing all this in one's heart and confirming such belief verbally as well.

Now the real meaning of the word, Islam is to submit oneself to Allah and be obedient to His commands. Given this meaning, those who believed in the prophets and messengers of their time and were obedient to the commands of Allah they brought to them, were all entitled to be called Muslims, and their religion was Islam. It was in this sense of the word that Sayyidna Nuh said:

(I have been commanded that I be from among the Muslims - 10:72) and therefore, Sayyidna Ibrahim (A.S) described himself and his community as Muslims when he said:

(Our Lord, make us Muslims, the submitting ones to Thee, and from our progeny a community of Muslims submitting to Thee - 2:128).

And it was in this very sense of the word that the disciples of Sayyidna 'Isa (A.S) said:

(And bear witness that we are Muslims - 3:52)

Sometimes this word is applied particularly to the din and shari'ah, the religion and the law brought finally by the last among the prophets, Sayyidna Muhammad al-Mustafa (saws). This law abrogated all previous ways in religion and this shall sustain right through the Day of Judgment. Given this meaning of the word Islam, it becomes particular to the religion brought by the prophet of Islam and to the large community of his followers. In a well-known hadith of Jibra'il, the Holy Prophet has explained Islam in this very manner.

The word, 'Al-Islam' as it appears in the verse here carries the likelihood of both meanings. If the first meaning is taken, it would mean that the only religion acceptable with Allah is Islam, that is, becoming obedient in complete submission to the commands of Allah, believing in all prophets of all times and in whatever commandments they brought, by acting accordingly. Although, the religion brought by Hadhrat Muhammad has not been specially identified here, yet, in persuance of the general rule, once the last among the line of prophets had been sent, the belief and practice of all injunctions he brought becomes binding, and inclusive under this rule. As such, the outcome will be that the religion acceptable during the period of Sayyidna Nuh was what he brought; during the period of Sayyidna Ibrahim, what he brought. Similarly, the Islam of the period of Sayyidna Musa was what came in the form of the tablets of Torah and the teachings of Moses and the Islam of the period of Sayyidna 'Isa was what came as Injil and the teachings of Jesus (as). At the end of this chain of prophets, the Islam of the period of Sayyidna Muhammad (saws), the last among the prophets, shall be what took shape on the pattern given by the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Now if we take the second meaning of Islam, that is, the Shari'ah the way and law brought by the last of the prophets, the verse would come to mean that in this period of time only that religion of Islam which is true to the teachings of the noble prophet is the one acceptable. No doubt, previous religions too, during their age of currency, were known as Islam, but they are now abrogated. So, the end-result is the same both ways, that is, during the age of every prophet, the religion acceptable in the sight of Allah is that particular Islam which conforms to the revelation and teachings credited to that prophet. No religion, other than this, even if it be a previously abrogated one, is acceptable and certainly not deserving of being called "Islam" at a later stage. The Shari'ah of Sayyidna Ibrahim was the Islam of his times. When the time of Sayyidna Musa came, the abrogated laws of that code did not remain the Islam of his time. Similarly, any laws of Moses abrogated during the time of Sayyidna 'Isa were not to be labelled as Islam any more. It is exactly like this when laws and injunctions of previous religious codes were abrogated during the time of the Last of the prophets, they no more remained valid as Islam. Therefore, whatever meaning of Islam is taken, general or particular, in relation to the community being addressed by the Holy Qur'an, the outcome of both is nothing but that, following the appearance of the noble Prophet, the only religion which shall be deserving of the name, Islam, will be the one that conforms to the Qur'an and the teachings of the blessed recipient of revelations and that alone shall be acceptable in the sight of Allah. Since no other religion is acceptable to Allah, it cannot become a source of salvation either. This subject has appeared in the Holy Qur'an in many verses separately. The exact words used in one such verse are: that is, whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him (and what is done under its dictates shall be wasted).

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of the Times of Salah

Chapter 10 : Delaying Zuhr until it gets cooler when on a journey.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

Here Imām Bukhāri wants to convey that to delay zuhr salāh until it is cooler outside is not particular to a Muqem (resident) only but applies to a Musaffir (traveller) also.

Hadith No. 509

Narrated Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari

We were with the Prophet on a journey and the Mu'adhdhin (call maker for the prayer) wanted to pronounce the Azaan (call) for the Zuhr prayer. The Prophet said, 'Let it become cooler.' He again (after a while) wanted to pronounce the Azaan but the Prophet said to him, 'Let it become cooler till we see the shadows of hillocks.' The Prophet added, 'The severity of heat is from the raging of the Hell-fire, and in very hot weather pray (Zuhr) when it becomes cooler.'

Comments

According to the majority of the learned scholars it is preferable to delay zuhr salāh a little during the hot season till it is relatively cooler. Imām Shafā'ee seems to differ with this view.

It is said:

“Shafā'ee said that delaying zuhr salāh till it is cooler is a relaxation for those whose mosque is far away; and the one who offers salāh alone or those who offer salāh in their (nearby) mosque, I prefer for them not to delay the salah because of intense heat”.

Here Imām Tirmidhi's differs from the view held by his teacher Imām Shafā'ee. He says that during journey people stay together, so, Imām Shafā'ee's argument is not valid; but according to Allama Kirmani it is not right to say that people stay together during journey because they might get scattered e.g., by going after their grazing animals, sleeping under trees and so on. Imām Nawwani comments:

“We saw in the hills' means that he (i.e., Rasulullah (saws)) delayed the salāh a bit till the shadow of the hills fell on the ground, and the hills are flatly placed and not erect; their shadow usually does not fall on the ground except after a long time after mid noon.

From this hadith the Hanafite jurists deduce the conclusion that the shadow of hills falls on the ground after 'Mithli Awwal' i.e., when the shadow of an object equals its height. What they want to prove by this is that the timing of zuhr salāh lasts till the shadow of an object becomes double than its height which is also the begin-

ning of asr salāh.

Chapter 11 : The time of zuhr is when the sun begins to decline.

Jābir said, “The Prophet (saws) used to offer salāh at midday.”

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

In previous chapters it was said that it is preferable to delay zuhr salāh during hot season. Now in this chapter under discussion, Imām Bukhāri wants to convey the starting time of zuhr salāh. When the sun is right over head the shadow of objects does not fall on ground. After some time, when the sun starts declining towards west, the shadow of objects begins to fall on the ground. This total time, i.e., ‘when the sun was overhead and when it starts declining westward’, is called ‘zawaal’ which lasts about 10-15 minutes. During this time it is prohibited to offer any salāh. Soon after, when the time of zawaal finishes, the zuhr time starts. The statement of Sayyidna Jābir that Rasulullah (saws) used to offer zuhr salāh during the heat of noon proves that the timing of zuhr salāh starts soon after zawaal. ‘Al-Hajiraah’ means ‘the noon time or midday’ when people avoid walking on the roads due to intense heat.

Hadith No. 510

Narrated Anas bin Mālik

Allah’s Apostle came out as the sun declined at mid-day and offered the Zuhr prayer. He then stood on the pulpit and spoke about the Hour (Day of Judgment) and said that in it there would be tremendous things. He then said, “Whoever likes to ask me about anything he can do so and I shall reply as long as I am at this place of mine. Most of the people wept and the Prophet said repeatedly, “Ask me.” Abdullah bin Hudhafa As-Sahmi stood up and said, “Who is my father?” The Prophet said, “Your father is Hudhafa.” The Prophet repeatedly said, “Ask me.” Then Umar knelt before

him and said, “We are pleased with Allah as our Lord, Islam as our religion, and Muhammad as our Prophet.” The Prophet then became quiet and said, “Paradise and Hell-fire were displayed in front of me on this wall just now and I have never seen a better thing (than the former) and a worse thing (than the latter).”

Hadith No. 511

Narrated Abu-I-Minhal

Abu Barza said, “The Prophet used to offer the Fajr (prayer) when one could recognize the person sitting by him (after the prayer) and he used to recite between 60 to 100 Ayat (verses) of the Qur’an. He used to offer the Zuhr prayer as soon as the sun declined (at noon) and the Asr at a time when a man might go and return from the farthest place in Medina and find the sun still hot. (The sub-narrator forgot what was said about the Maghrib). He did not mind delaying the ‘Isha prayer to one third of the night or the middle of the night.”

Hadith No. 512

Narrated Anas bin Mālik

When we offered the Zuhr prayers behind Allah’s Apostle we used to prostrate on our clothes to protect ourselves from the heat.

Comments

According to Sayyidna Anas once Rasulullah (saws) offered zuhr salāh soon after the zawaal i.e., when the sun started declining westward. From this incident Imām Bukhāri wants to prove the actual beginning time of zuhr salāh. According to Sayyidna Anas, after completing the salāh, Rasulullah (saws) stood on the pulpit and delivered a heart touching sermon about the Qiyaamah that left the Companions in tears.

Whoever likes to ask me about anything he can do so”

This statement clearly shows that Rasu-

lullah (saws) at that moment was at some extraordinary spiritual status. He asked his companions to ask him anything they wish and that he would reply them. At that instance, Abdullah bin Hudhafa asked him about his father because people questioned his parentage. Rasulallah (saws) told him that Huzafah was his father. Rasulallah (saws) again said, "Ask me and I will reply as long as I am at this place". Realising the situation, Sayyidna Umar turned apprehensive that people might ask such questions whose reply might be difficult for them to obey. Therefore, he sat in front of Rasulallah (saws) on his knees and proclaimed, "We are pleased with Allah as our Lord, Islam as our religion, and Muhammad as our Prophet".

Was Rasulallah (saws) having Ilm-ul-Ghayb (knowledge of the unseen).

Some people present this hadith as a proof claiming Rasulallah (saws) possessed Ilm-ul-Gaib (knowledge of the unseen) but majority of the learned scholars prove with the same hadith that it is not so. They argue that it was a special occasion confined to that particular moment and place as is evident by the statement of Rasulallah that "I shall reply as long as I am at this place."

The Paradise and Hell were also displayed in front of him at the time which also indicates that it was a special and unusual occasion. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an.

With Him are the keys of the Unseen. (6:59)

In the second hadith Sayyidna Abu Barza (RA) says that they used to offer fajr salāh with Rasulallah (saws) at such a time when one could recognise the person next to him. This statement favours the scholars who consider it better to offer fajr salāh during the emergence of morning light and not in complete darkness as is the opinion of some scholars. It is to be noted that Masjid-i-Nabawi had a low roof and it had no lighting arrangement during the period of Rasulallah (saws), despite this the recognising

the person next to someone indicates that the day had dawned upon them.

Regarding the zuhr salāh, he says that they used to offer it soon after the zawaal or noon. According to him, they used to offer asr salāh at such a time that if a person would go and return from the farthest place in Madinah he would find the sun still hot with no signs of setting. It is said that at that time the Madinah city had a 4-kms radius. The issue regarding the time of asr salāh will be discussed in the coming chapters.

The third hadith also shows that the Companions offered zuhr salāh soon after the zawaal as they prostrated on their clothes to protect their foreheads from the hot ground.

Increase your Radiance
Sayyiduna Nuaym Bin Mujmir (ra)
reports, 'Once I went up the roof of
the Masjid, along with Abu Huraira
(ra) who performed Wudhu (ablution)
and said, "I heard Nabi Sallallahu
Alayhi Wasallam saying, "On the Day
of Resurrection, my followers will
be called "Al-Ghurr-ul-Muhajjalun"
from the trace of Wudhu and whoever
can increase the area of his radiance
should do so (i.e. by performing Wudhu
regularly)." (Bukhari)

Resolutions

*Straight
Talk*

Stepping Stone to Transformation



Sadullah Khan

We realize that another year has passed; minutes move into hours, hours into days, days into weeks, weeks into months and months into years—seemingly faster than ever before; yet every moment is a precious component of life and every moment counts. (We are now into the second decade of the 21st century.)

We are commanded in the Qur'an to carefully consider what we are sending forth for the future. This introspective question should evoke critical self-evaluation in each individual. What am I doing with my today?

The Capital of Life

Our attitude towards time indicates our attitude towards the value we give to the capital of life. That is why the Qur'an exhorts us to value the time we have before life is up [Qur'an 63:10]; to realize that time is the measure of life, an *amaanah* (trust); and be conscious that what we do with time is what we do with our lives.

The Times we Live In

We seem to be living in times of tremendous negativity, great stress, devastating anxiety, overwhelming fears and ever-growing uncertainty. Social, economic, political and environmental conditions of the world are deteriorating. Injustice, crimes, violence, evil and injustice abound everywhere. Many feel pessimistic and disheartened. Wars are waged in the interest of

multi-national corporations and conglomerates in different parts of the world at the expense of the poor and downtrodden, and in the process thousands of innocent men, women and children are dying, millions of refugees are going through most tragic difficulties.

Peoples of the world are undergoing the most radical, far-reaching, and challenging transformation in history. The stakes are high... the very survival of life on our planet. There are options: we could tread the path of either chaos and destruction, or the way of creative transformation leading to the birth of a new consciousness. Forces, which have been at work for centuries, have in our day reached a climax that have the power to draw the human race into a global network of co-operation and link the religions of the world into a global spiritual community, or total annihilation of communities and even of life as we know it. What shall we choose to do?

Resolution

The new calendar year being ushered in is a good time to make personal resolutions. A resolution is a commitment that an individual makes to an attitude, a moral task, personal habits, or a lifestyle change that is advantageous to the self and others. These commitments set goals to be achieved and is a means of self-assessment and repentance that demands personal honesty, moral commitment, humility and dedication.

Pre-Resolution Questions

For a meaningful resolution, there needs to be pre-resolution questions...Where am I, where could I be? Our lives are continually being shaped by the choices we make and the convictions and values that underlie them. In this sense, our lives are like works of art, in progress. We can take the material of life and either react to it in a passive way, always remaining life's victim or take it and use it creatively, becoming the architect of one's life and a participant in shaping one's destiny and in designing one's true potential.

Reflect on ...

- what excites you
- what are you committed to
- what would make you happy
- what are you proud of
- what are you most grateful for

How does your excitement, commitment, joy, honor and gratitude fit in to your resolution?

What is "my" role in a troubled world at a difficult time? There is a dire need for introspection and an honest evaluation of our potential and limitation.

Stop living an unconscious life; rather live from the very core of your being, an intentional living for a meaningful life. To actualize a resolution one has to be ready. Ask ...

- Am I ready to discover my personal mission, pursue my

purpose and realize my vision in life?

- Am I ready to break away from the shackles of the past to chart a positive future?

- Am I ready to rise above the limitations of where I am to the potential of where I could be?

Learn to recognize the purpose of your existence, and realize the value of what you could offer. No person is insignificant and no good deed is too small. Every little counts; the desert is vast, but it is constituted of tiny grains of sand. No grains, no desert. We may be a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less without that drop and if every drop was to be removed, there'd be no ocean.

Towards Excellence

There is a fundamental reality we have to acknowledge, and that is that no human being is perfect, but every single one is a work in progress. Commit yourself to excellence in everything you do, but do not seek perfection; and have the wisdom to know the difference. The quest for excellence is not a quest for perfection, for only Allah is perfect. The quest for excellence is actually a willingness and determi-



nation to maximize the potential which Allah has granted to you in spite of your weaknesses and limitations.

Wise are the words of the one who said, "A person would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one could find fault." Remember that excellence can be attained by man, while perfection is the domain of the Divine. So, there is nothing wrong with making a mistake provided that you learn from errors and setbacks, so that your past serves as a lesson to you and you get better and wiser each and every day.

Do not let obstacles in your path prevent you from reaching your destination. Prophet Yusuf (pbuh) was betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, went through tremendous trials and tribulations; but eventually reached a position of great honor (religiously and politically) despite the dishonorable things that were done to him by those who were supposed to be closest and dearest to him. Prophet Yusuf, like all the emissaries of the Divine (pbut) lived meaningful lives and remain models of excellence.

Shift in Perception ~Change in Life

Meaningful living comes from honoring each moment and making every action count. It is a tiny shift in perception that assigns meaning and importance to each moment. It means stopping to notice the beauty and love around us, and within us. It means being fully present in each moment, because only the present moment truly exists.

So many of us worry about the future, hold regrets about the past, and completely ignore the present. When we give the now our full attention, even mundane tasks can take on an aura of significance. It is then that our lives become millions of meaningful moments, and we learn to value the Prophetic advice to be in this world as if you a stranger or a passer-by, appreciating every moment

Part of a Story

Though our lives are but footnotes on the pages of history; each has his/her own life and each life is a unique story. Sometimes we enter into each other's lives and become a temporary part or a permanent part of each other's stories. All our lives are but part of a larger story. The fundamental question remains: How do we contribute to the larger story?

Give your Best Anyway

A companion of Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "When going to sleep do not assume you will live to see the dawn, when waking up do not assume you will live to see the sunset; take precaution from your health against sickness, take from your life what will benefit you in death."

Part of reality is to hope for the best but to be prepared for the worst. The experience of life shows that those who befriend you may betray you, those who benefit from you may belittle you, those whom you fight for may forsake you, those whom you favor may forget you, those whom you assist may abandon you, those whom you elevate may humiliate you. Indeed, we live in a cynical world where the good you do may be minimized while your errors are magnified. But that is the very world we need to make into a better place; and take comfort in the words of Mother Teresa who advised ... "Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world your best anyway. In the final analysis, it is between you and God, it was never between you and them anyway."

As fallible human beings with limitations, there is yet the potential to do remarkable things, IF there is a firm resolve to do so. Let each one, therefore, make a resolution to be the best that he/she can be; and that is a stepping stone towards an improved self and hopefully a better world.

The Only Way to Guidance

S Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi (ra)

The holy Quran repeatedly warns that only the messengers of God are qualified to expound the nature and attributes of God, for the knowledge vouchsafed to them is free from every mistake; misconception and misinterpretation.

Nothing else, neither the lambent flame of intellect, nor soundness of judgement, nor yet the brilliance of apprehension can discern the unfathomable-cognition of God. Knowledge and experience do not help one to penetrate the mystery of Infinite Being. The dwellers of Paradise who have had an experience of the great Truth, and the validity of whose testimony cannot be questioned, thank God for showing them the right path.

“And they say:.. The, praise to Allah, who has guided us to this. We could not truly have been led aright if Allah had not guided us.” (34:46)

They also admit that, it were only the prophets. who helped them to the awareness of the Ultimate Being.

“Verily the messengers of our Lord did bring the Truth.” (7:43)

These verses of the Quran allude to the compelling necessity of prophethood which is the only means provided by God for leading man to His cognizance and ultimate success in the

world to come.

It would not be out of place to examine in this context, how limited, weak and unreliable are intellect and intuition, the mental capacity and subconscious perception of man in apprehending metaphysical realities. Let us see what eminent gnostics known for their learning as well as spiritual enlightenment have to say on this subject.

Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi popularly known as Mujaddid Alf Thani (d. 1034/1626) has repeatedly emphasised in his epistles that human intellect can affirm the existence of God and grasp, the indispensability of the Absolute Being, bUt it cannot fathom the secrets of Divine nature and attributes nor can it attain the mystic stages of sanctity, purity and Unity in the cognition of Ultimate Being. He Writes in one of his letters:

“In short, human intellect is incapable of finding its way to this treasure and, devoid of prophetic guidance, it cannot even reach the doorsteps of the Divine mansion.”

The history of philosophy, mysticism and religion bears witness to the fact that all those who placed reliance on human reason or intuition to attain cognition have always been misguided by the figments of their own imagination. In his letters Mujaddid Alf Thani clinches the point that prophethood surpasses intellect in the same way as intellect excels the Senses. He also

proves that there is a world of difference between something transcending the understanding of man and its being illogical or against reason. He has cited numerous examples of the stupidity of Greek philosophers and fantastic visions of the seekers of Ultimate Reality which, more often than not, pass under the name of spiritualism or mysticism.

In one of his letters to Khwaja Abdullah and Khawaja Ubaid Ullah, the sons of his spiritual mentor, Khwaja Baqi Billah, Mujaddid Alf Thani explains why the prophets of God are the sole media for acquiring knowledge of God's nature and attributes and his commandments. He shows that both intellect and beatific visions try to develop harmony and concord with the Infinite but, dwelling, as they do, in the human body, they cannot cast off their concomitances absolutely, nor can they attain perfection. Oftentimes one feels that the enlightenment one has had was got mixed up with impure perceptions acquired through doubt or imagination, but the pity is that one fails to discover it at the time of these illuminations. The Mujaddid's letters throw light on several other matters which give insight into the inner dimensions of the spiritual realm seldom found in the treatises of other mystics.

The concluding verses of Surah As-Safat which contradict the erroneous beliefs of the polytheists, read:

“Glorified be thy Lord, the Lord of Majesty, from that which they attribute (unto Him).

And peace be unto those sent (to warn).

And praise be, to Allah, Lord of the worlds!’

These three verses, it would be seen, refer to the essential privity between the undefiled concept of God's attributes and prophethood. Repudiating the blemished view of Godhood held by the polytheists, these Quranic verses immediately deal out peace and blessings to the prophets since the constitute the intermedium

for transmitting correct knowledge about the Absolute and Infinite Being, the Lord of the worlds Who alone deserves all the praises.

Setting forth the sublime spirituality of the prophets of God, Sheikh Mujaddid Alf Thani writes in a letter, “The prophets are the best of creation, possessing the most precious wealth of knowledge. The highest lap of the mystics ascent is the beginning of prophetic journey of spirit. The mystics can never reflect the prophetic qualities. ‘Duteous proximity’ is all that the mystics can achieve by following the prophets; for, the former cannot hope of attaining the least merit of the latter, not even as much as a drop in the ocean.”

Another mystic possessing remarkable intuitive vision and spiritual integrity was Makhdoom Yahya Maneri who had, even before Mujaddid Alf Thani, thrown light on the higher reaches of prophethood and the prophets. In one of his letters he writes: “Not having the large heartedness of the prophets, the saints cannot confer the same benefit on mankind as the prophets do. The prophets are really so great-hearted that their, absorption in the thought of God Almighty does not stand in the way of rendering service to humanity nor their altruistic Zeal for human beings distracts their attention from God.” Comparing the saints and prophets in the same letter he says, “A breath of the prophets outweighs the entire life of the saints... in clarity and purity of spirit and in virtue and sanctity the entire bodily frame of the prophets is like the head and heart of a saint intoxicated with the Love Of God. There is thus a great difference between the two, for the former find entrance to the place Which for the latter remains the goal of their heart's ambitions.

A Distinctive Characteristic of the Prophets

The prophets of God are marvellously unique among all men for nobody else shares the life-giving knowledge they possess, which is the fount of all blessings and salvation. Theirs

is the light which illuminates the relationship between man and God, divine attributes which have brought the world and man into existence and subsist them, the beginning and end of man, the position of man in the universe and the attitude he should bear to his Lord and Creator. The prophets enlighten us about good and bad behaviours which invite the wrath of God or meet His good pleasure, or which make us successful or doomed in the Hereafter, and the creeds and beliefs, manners and actions, their consequences and the retribution they are likely to produce ultimately. The knowledge acquired through the prophets of God is, precisely, the knowledge of Salvation.

The prophets of God, are endowed with innermost recesses of heart, sound understanding, intellectual talents and refined sensitivity but they never meddle with the arts and sciences of their time nor they ever claim mastery over them. Keeping themselves aloof from every other business, they wholeheartedly pursue the course for which they are commissioned by God. They always engage themselves with the transmission of divine message on which depends the salvation and doom of man's earthly existence.

FORM IV
(See Rule 8)

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Tiny Steps towards a Big Journey

Noor Ali

One of the first pictures our children identify is that of the Ka'bah. There it is: A black cube. Simplistic in taste. Overwhelming in presence. Surrounded by a sea of people clad in white. This is Allah's House, our children know.

My child knows the story of Hajj and 'Eid Al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), at least in broken, incoherent pieces. But this year I want to make it a bit more whole for him. Now that he's a big boy, "almost 7," as he calls himself—much more of the journey should begin making sense to him.

And here is my point. The journey toward Hajj begins much before we board the plane. It starts in childhood. All our lives we hear of family, friends, relatives, neighbors, and elders going for Hajj. We have a lifelong consciousness that this is a sojourn we are obliged to make before we depart to the mercy of Allah.

As children, we overhear stories that sink in, become indelible marks in our memory, real life associations, or expectations for when we do actually find ourselves there. From my earliest days I heard how big a thing Hajj was. I believed it without ever having been there. When finally I did go, it came true for me. How could years of memory and association be false?

I had heard Hajj was tiring. It was. I had heard it was beautiful. It was. I had heard it was

hard. It was. I had heard it was easy. It was. I had heard Allah would reconnect things, and He did.

As I walked the streets of Makkah, Madinah, and the sacred precincts, I saw with my own eyes what had always been described to me, and felt a lot of the emotions that people talked about.

The journey to Hajj started for the family of Prophet Abraham much before they reached there. As they walked the desert alone, Hajar, his wife and Prophet Ismail's mother, began the lessons with her child long before her very own footsteps and pace would become obligatory rituals for billions on the path to Paradise.

The consummation of faith in One God and submission to Him alone—these are the goals of Hajj. Such were the lessons conveyed to Ismail when he was still an infant, witnessing a miraculous call to salah from his Lord. As a young boy, he then prepared himself for ultimate sacrifice. As a young man, he purified himself in the service of Allah, as he built the edifice of Allah's House, the Ka'bah, for His sake. He knew his goals well. He knew well the purity needed for any Pilgrimage. His expectations of the awesomeness of an experience of submission were all well ingrained in his soul.

This is the talk that should be known to our children. This is what needs to be part of their built-up memory and association before they

finally make Hajj sometime later in their lives. This is not like any other ordinary traveling experience, where their knowledge points them to the best restaurants and cleanest bathrooms. This journey's expectations are of a completely different nature.

A wonderful guide to this is the scholar Al-Junayd Al-Baghdadi. He asks a returning pilgrim some questions about his Hajj. That's when the pilgrim's expectations are corrected, and the pilgrim realizes that his journey was by far off the mark of an extraordinary experience because it never occurred to him what Hajj truly was, and what it really could do for him.

I do not wish for my soon-to-be 7-year-old to just think and know that Hajj is a big thing, without ever realizing what potential lies in it for him. I do not want him to be a returning pilgrim who finds out that he lost much and gained but little.

Al-Junayd asked the returning pilgrim several questions. Had he really pledged to give up sins when he left his home for Hajj? The man had, of course, never thought of that. For him, the journey was simply Hajj, but Al-Junayd insisted that the Hajj would not even start correctly if based on just a vague intention, rather than a serious pledge to abandon wrongdoing.

I want my child to know that Hajj is a beautiful opportunity that Allah gives us to make us pure like new-born children, sinless, with no misconstrued perceptions, and with a humble reliance on and trust in Allah. So now when my son meets someone returning from Hajj, he will know that this person has truly been through a major life change, where he has decided to maintain a state of newborn purity.

Next, Al-Junayd questioned whether the pilgrim thought of attaining nearness to Allah when he halted for the night at his various stations? Again, the returning pilgrim had no idea it was supposed to be like that.

We need to make sure that our children have this consciousness in them right from the start,

so that they know one can "really" become close to Allah. The more one surrenders his soul to Him by doing what He asks of us, goes through hardships to walk the places that are special to Him, gathers with others to make a Pilgrimage, the nearer one draws to Allah, which is our goal in life and death, a goal that goes far beyond completing Hajj rites.

When we talk about donning the white cloths of ihram, we need to tell our children what they symbolize. They are humble and minimalist in the presence of Allah, for He does not like extravagance. It's a time when we focus on what is inside us, not outside. Just like white will clearly show any bit of dirt on it, so should we be conscious of even the slightest impurity we have within ourselves.

The ihram is a lot like the kafan (cerement) we shall wear when we are prepared for burial, and the closest thing to exposing our nakedness, as when we stand before Allah, Who knows all our secrets. Al-Junayd wants us to know that when we put on the ihram garments and discard ordinary dress, we also at that point need to make up our mind to abandon our ways of evil and excess.

His advice teaches us that when we stand in the Plain of 'Arafat and implore Allah, it should make us feel like we are truly in His presence looking at Him.

At Muzdalifah, we are to realize that vain desires are to be abandoned.

One ought to catch glimpses of Divine Beauty when moving round the House of Allah, and recall the angelic Throne Bearers circumambulating the Divine Seat, or else one has not moved around the Ka'bah at all.

Sa'i between the Safa and Marwa hillocks captures the wisdom and significance of the objective human effort to fulfill the arduous commands of God with all striving and total trust in Him.

Slaughtering an animal at the place of

Cont'd on page 31

The Beauty of Allah Creation

S. Umar

The Prophet (saws) has said that Allah is beautiful and He loves beauty¹. It is for this that the whole of Allah's creation has been designed and created according to the highest heavenly standard of splendor and order impossible to be ever emulated by anyone. According to Ibn al-'Arabi, who epitomized the Sufi speculative ontological thought, the divine beauty through which God is named "Beautiful", and by which He described Himself as loving beauty, is in all things. There is nothing in existence but beauty, for God created the cosmos only in His image, that is, in the image of His infinite beauty. Hence all cosmos with all its objects and events is beautiful.²

Allah says on this:

"Such is the Creation of Allah: now show Me what is there that others besides Him have created..." (Luqman 31:11).

"...(Such is) the artistry of Allah, Who disposes of all things in perfect order..." (al-Naml 27:88).

Since man has been created as the vicegerent on earth to whose use all things in the heavens and on earth had been subjected (Luqman 31:20), man stands for an essential part of the intricate picturesque network of creation, serving the Creator's universal plan:

"We have indeed created man in the best of moulds" (al-Tin 4).

"It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape - and made your shapes beautiful -, and has provided for you Sustenance..." (Gafir 40:64)

"He Who created all things in the best way and He began the creation of man from clay" (al-Sajdah 32:7).

Man is created as the most beautiful creature on earth. He is given the power of reasoning and insight. He is created as the vicegerent on earth never to be forsaken by God's words of guidance. This is so lest man should lose his way, rebel against the will and plan of his Lord, and gradually become puffed up with egotism, self-exaltation and innumerable superstitions pertaining to his own existence and existence taken as a whole. When these exceptional qualities of man are paired with one's submission to the Creator, Lord and Cherisher of the worlds, one confidently sets out proving his worth, elevating his status over that of the angels in the process. Conversely, no sooner does one start mishandling and abusing the same qualities and gifts than one starts drifting away from the plane

of truth, debasing his self lower than the level of animals in the process.

What is more, Adam, the father of mankind, has been created in Allah's own image, as declared by the Prophet (saws)³. This means that "Adam has been bestowed with life, knowledge, power of hearing, seeing, understanding, but the features of Adam are different from those of Allah, only the names are the same, e.g., Allah has life and knowledge and power of understanding, and Adam also has them, but there is no comparison between the Creator and the created thing. As Allah says in the Qur'an:

'There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer' (al-Shura 42:11)."⁴

While actualizing his vicegerency mission on earth by means of holding fast to the values and philosophy divinely given, as well as by means of constant constructive interaction with the rest of creation, man is bound to comprehend rightly the mission and purpose of creation (including the creation of his very self), penetrating through some of its highest mysteries with his powers of reason and insight. In doing so, man will only be answering the divine call, over and over again reiterated in the Qur'an, the thrust of which is the meticulous study, exploration and reflection on the perfectly executed order in the universe's hierarchy: from the gnat, fly and spider to the sun, moon, stars and other majestic cosmic objects. Man's initial impression of amazement with regard to the awesome sights in the universe, as a result of Allah's supreme artistry, followed by his in-depth study of what is viable thereof, is meant to lead man to an unwavering spiritual awakening, thus prompting all his spiritual and mental faculties to assertively declare:

"...Our Lord not for naught hast thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us Salvation from the Chastisement of the Fire" (Alu 'Imran

3:191).

Allah Almighty says - for instance:

"He Who created the seven heavens one above another: no want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of the Most Gracious. So turn thy vision again: seest thou any flaw? Again turn thy vision a second time: (thy) vision will come back to thee dull and discomfited, in a state worn out" (al-Mulk 67:3 - 4).

Also:

"On the earth are Signs for those of assured Faith; as also in your own selves: will yet not then see?" (al-Dhariyat 51:20 - 21).

Thus, everything in the universe has been created beautiful, with purpose and in proportion and measure, both qualitatively and quantitatively (al-Qamar 54:49). The traces of divine wisdom and plan underpin each and every aspect of creation. Only man's ungodly and self-centered tempering with the existing total artistic setting is able to render things ugly, harmful, evil and obsolete. Man's own self, status and mission are no exception to this rule, in that man is capable very much of rendering them repulsive, dull, worthless and pathetic, too.

The order and beauty of the earth, of the vast spaces surrounding it, and of the marvelous bodies that follow regular laws of motion in those enormous spaces in the visible world, they are our tangible and all-encompassing reality. However, we were not to stop just at marveling at its corporeal manifestations and the aura they generate. By discovering and mulling over the signs readily available in all things around us -- big or small -- which inevitably point to Allah's Oneness, Presence, Authority and Clemency, we were, furthermore, to try to form from these some a priori intuition of the Supreme Beauty and of the vastly greater invisible world.

Hakim ibn Hazm

History has recorded that he is the only person who was born inside the Kabah itself. Together with a group of friends, his mother had gone inside this ancient House of Allah to inspect it. On that particular day it was open because of a festive occasion. She was pregnant and labour pains suddenly gripped her. She was unable to leave the Kabah. A leather mat was brought to her and she gave birth on it. The child was named Hakim. His father was Hazm who was the son of Khuwaylid. Hakim was therefore the nephew of the Lady Khadijah RA, the daughter of Khuwaylid. Hakim grew up in a wealthy and noble family which enjoyed a high status in Makkan society. He was also an intelligent and well-mannered person who was well respected by his people. He was held in such esteem that he was given the responsibility of the Rifadah which involved giving assistance to the needy and those who had lost their property during the season of pilgrimage. He took this responsibility seriously and would even help needy pilgrims from his own resources.

Hakim was a very close friend of the Prophet (saws) before the latter's call to prophet hood. Even though he was five years older than the Prophet (saws), he used to spend much time talking to him and enjoying hours of pleasant companionship. Muhammad (saws) in his turn felt great affection for Hakim. Their relationship was further strengthened when the Prophet (saws) married his aunt, Khadijah bint

Khuwaylid RA. What is truly amazing is that in spite of the close friendship between Hakim and the Prophet (saws), Hakim did not become a Muslim until the conquest of Makkah, more than twenty years after the start of the Prophet's mission.

One would have thought that someone like Hakim whom Allah had blessed with a sound intellect and who was so well-disposed to the Prophet (saws), would have been among the first to believe in him and follow the guidance he brought. But that was not to be. Just as we are astonished at the late acceptance of Islam on the part of Hakim, he himself later in life was also amazed. In fact, as soon as he accepted Islam and tasted the sweetness of Iman (faith), he began to feel deep regret for every moment of his life as a Mushrik (Polytheist) and a denier of Allah's religion and of His Prophet (saws). His son once saw him weeping after his acceptance of Islam and asked: "Why are you weeping, my father?" "Many things cause me to weep, my dear son. The most grievous is the length of time it took for me to become a Muslim.

Acceptance of Islam would have given me so many opportunities to do good which I missed even if I were to have spent the earth in gold. My life was spared at the battle of Badr and also at the battle of Uhud. After Uhud, I said to myself. I would not help any Quraysh against Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and I would not leave Makkah. Then,

whenever I felt like accepting Islam I would look at other men among the Quraysh. Men of power and maturity who remained firmly attached to the ideas and practices of Jahiliyyah (ignorance) and I would fall in line with them and their neighbours... Oh, how I wish I had not done so. Nothing has destroyed us except the blind following of our forefathers and elders. Why should I not weep, my son?"

The Prophet himself was puzzled. A man of sagacity and understanding like Hakim ibn Hazm, how could Islam remain "hidden" from him? For a long time, the Prophet had dearly hoped that he and a group of persons like him would take the initiative and become Muslims. On the night before the liberation of Makkah, he, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said to his companions: "There are four persons in Makkah whom I consider to be above having any dealing with shirk and I would dearly like them to accept Islam." "Who are they, O Messenger of Allah?" asked the companions. "Attab ibn Usayd, Jubayr ibn Mutim, Hakim ibn Hazm and Suhayl ibn Amr," replied the Prophet (saws). By the grace of Allah, they all became Muslims.

When the Prophet (saws) entered Makkah to liberate the city from polytheism and the ways of ignorance and immorality, he ordered his herald to proclaim: "Whoever declares that there is no god but Allah alone, that He has no partner and that Muhammad is His servant and His Messenger, he is safe... Whoever sits at the Kabah and lays down his weapons, he is safe. Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufyan, he is safe. Whoever enters the house of Hakim ibn Hazm, he is safe..." The house of Abu Sufyan was in the higher part of Makkah and that of Hakim was in the lower part of the city. By proclaiming these houses as places of sanctuary, the Prophet (saws) wisely accorded recognition to both Abu Sufyan and Hakim, weakening any thought they might have of resisting and making it easier for them to be more favourably disposed to him and his mission.

Hakim embraced Islam wholeheartedly. He vowed to himself that he would atone for whatever he had done during his Jahili days and that whatever amounts he had spent in opposing the Prophet (saws), he would spend the same amounts in the cause of Islam. He owned the Dar an-Nadwah, an important and historic building in Makkah, where the Quraysh held their conferences during the days of Jahiliyyah. In this building the Quraysh leaders and chieftains would gather to plot against the Prophet (saws). Hakim decided to get rid of it and cut himself off from its past associations which were now so painful to him. He sold the building for one hundred thousand Dirhams. A Quraysh youth exclaimed to him: "You have sold something of great historical value and pride to the Quraysh, uncle." "Come now, my son," replied Hakim. "All vain pride and glory has now gone and all that remains of value is Taqwa - consciousness of Allah. I have only sold the building in order to acquire a house in Paradise. I swear to you that I have given the proceeds from it to be spent in the path of Allah Almighty."

Hakim ibn Hazm performed the Hajj after becoming a Muslim. He took with him one hundred fine camels and sacrificed them all in order to achieve nearness to Allah. In the following Hajj, he stood on Arafat. With him were one hundred slaves. To each he gave a pendant of silver on which was engraved: "Free for the sake of Allah Almighty from Hakim ibn Hazm." On a third Hajj, he took with him a thousand sheep - yes a thousand sheep and sacrificed them all at Mina to feed the poor Muslims in order to attain nearness to Allah.

While Hakim was generous in his spending for the sake of Allah, he also still liked to have much. After the battle of Hunayn, he asked the Prophet (saws) for some of the booty which the Prophet gave. He then asked for more and the Prophet (saws) gave him more. Hakim was still a newcomer to Islam and the Prophet (saws) was

Cont'd on page 37

The Station of

Adab-II

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim Jawziyah (ra)

The First of the Three Levels of the Station of the Sought

The author of *Manâzil Al-Sâ'irîn* [Shaykh Abdullâh Al-Ansâri Al-Harawi, d. 482/1089] said [therein]: “The station of being sought has three levels. At the first level, the servant is protected by way of his own compulsion against disobedience from it. The delight of disobedience is thus spoiled for him, its opportunity diminished, and its doors closed.”

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.

In this way, Allah narrows the servant's 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.

Moreover, the paths of sin that incur wrath are closed to him, even if he dislikes this. This is

a mark of (divine) compassion for and protection of him.

The Second of the Three Levels of the Station of the Sought

[Al-Harawi] said: “The second level is that [Allah] shelters the servant against any occasions of shortcoming, protecting him from marks of blame, alerting him to the consequences of his lapses. He did this with [prophet] Solomon, when he slaughtered the steeds [that had distracted him from the late-afternoon prayer]. Thereafter, Allah carried him upon the wind of bounty. Allah did this also with Moses, when he cast down [in a rage for the sin of the Children of Israel in fashioning the Golden Calf] the Tablets [just inscribed for him by Allah on Mount >ûr], and then seized [by the hair and beard] his brother's head. He did not show displeasure to them [for their shortcomings] as He did show with prophets: Adam, Noah, David, and Jonah.”

The difference between this [second] level and the one preceding it is that in the preceding one falling into occasions of disobedience is prevented by force, whereas in this one when a shortcoming deserving of blame occurs, Allah does not blame and chastise the servant. This is a kind of indulgence (*dalâl*), for this occurs only to the elect and beloved of Allah; for a beloved one is forgiven for what others cannot be forgiven, for love is the most

persuasive of intercessors.

So when a misstep occurs, Allah gives the reins of the error to him [the elect, the beloved one of Allah], making it an excuse for raising the servant's status; an occasion for sincere repentance, exceptional humility, and meekness before Him; and an increase in righteous deeds that earns him nearness to Allah many times more than what it was prior to his misstep. Thus, his misstep becomes more beneficial to him than many righteous deeds. This is a mark of divine attentiveness toward a servant and a sign of his being among His beloved friends.

The Shaykh has adduced the story of Solomon, of when his steeds distracted him from afternoon prayer. Overcome by rage and protectiveness for [the sake of] Allah, he was led to slice their ribs and necks with the sword, thus destroying the property that distracted him from Allah, for His sake [see *Sûrat Sâd*, 38:31-40].^[1] Allah replaced them for him by mounting him upon the wind, thus handing him the reins of this misstep, making it a cause of nearness and elevation to that lofty status.

He also adduced the story of [Prophet] Moses, of when he threw down the Tablets upon which there was inscribed Allah's Word, breaking them, and [violently] seized the beard of his brother, who was a prophet like him [see *Sûrat Al-Arâf*, 7:142-157; and *Sûrat >â Hâ*, 20:83-98]. Allah did not take Moses to account for this, as He had taken Adam to account for eating from the tree; or Noah for asking for the salvation of his [disbelieving] son [when the latter refused to embark with his father upon the Ark]; or David concerning a woman of Orba (see *Sûrat Sad*, 38:21-26); or Jonah, concerning his abandonment [of his mission to his people of Nineveh] (see *Sûrat Al-Sâffât*, 37:139-148).

I heard Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, say: "Similarly, Moses struck the eye of the Angel of Death and knocked it out, but his Lord did not reproach him for this. [2] Also, during the [Prophet's] Night Journey (*Isrâ'*), Moses quarreled concerning the Prophet

(saws) when Allah raised [Prophet Muhammad (saws)] above [Moses], and [the latter] raised his voice [to Allah] about this. Yet Allah did not reproach him for this either." [Ibn Taymiyyah] said: "That is because Moses stood on the lofty stations that earned him this indulgence, for he combated the Pharaoh, the greatest of Allah Almighty's enemies, opposing him and his people. Moreover, he strove most diligently to set aright the Israelites and struggled most assiduously for the sake of Allah, against the enemies of Allah, and was zealous for the sake of his Lord. Thus, he is tolerated [by Allah] in what others are not."

In contrast, [prophet] Thu Al-Nûn [the 'Companion of the Whale,' Jonah], since he had not reached this status, was imprisoned in the belly of the whale due to Allah's displeasure. Allah has, indeed, made a perfect measure for all things.

[1] This is one interpretation, that Solomon, slaughtered his prancing steeds because, as a worldly indulgence, they had distracted him from the worship of his Lord. Another is that, after offering his belated worship after its office, he summoned for the steeds to be returned to him, whereupon he himself, as king, engaged in the menial grooming of the steeds, in humility.

[2] The reference is to a report in Muslim and Nasâ'i: Abû Hurairah reported that Allah's Messenger (saws), said: "The Angel of Death came to Moses and said: "Respond to (the call of) Allah (i. e. be prepared for death). Moses delivered a blow to the eye of the Angel of Death and knocked it out. The Angel went back to Allah u and said: "You sent me to your servant who does not like to die and he knocked out my eye." Allah restored his eye to its proper place (and revived his eyesight) and said: "Go to My servant and say: 'Do you want life? And in the case that you do want life, place your hand upon the body of the [specified] ox, and you shall live such number of years as the (number of) hairs your hand covers." Moses said: "What, then?" He said: "Then you will die." Whereupon he (Moses) said: "Then why not now?" (He then prayed:) "Allah, cause me to die close to the sacred land [meaning Jerusalem]." Allah's Messenger (saws) said: "Were I near this place, I would show [you] his grave by the side of the path at the red mound"

Why is The Qur'an in Arabic?

Part -2

Tariq Jalal

In Part 1 we discussed the Nominal Sentence of Arabic grammar and gave an extended example to show how English translations have fallen short of conveying all the elements entailed in Arabic text of a familiar verse from Sûrat Al-Fâtihah, 1:2.

Here in Part 2 we look at a second typical sentence structure in Arabic grammar and the literary technique of Ellipsis, which is so much a part of the Arabic Quran.

The Verbal Sentence of Arabic

Another example of how compactness and brevity uniquely yields more subtleties of meaning is the way that implicit, or “understood,” components work both with Nominal Sentences and with Verbal Sentences.

Recall that the Nominal Sentence entails permanence and un-changeability as components of meaning. The Arabic Verbal Sentence is the counterpart of the Nominal Sentence, and it conversely implies change and transience.

Why ‘Understood’ Meaning Matters

The technique of building implication, or entailment, or indirect conveyance, of meaning

into a text is what linguists call ‘ellipsis.’ Ellipsis is the non-direct expression of one or more sentence elements whose meaning can be reliably known, or reconstructed ... from the context.” [i] Simply put, words can be “elided” (left out) and still the meaning remains—based upon the totality of language elements that are present.

The Arabic Quran in numerous instances leaves the reader to conjure up the deliberately concealed elements, and to construct the meaning accordingly. The Arabic reader or listener to the Quran does not find such elision a weakness; in fact, he finds it a strength! Elision is part of the literary flair of the Arabic Quran, one element of the Quran’s toolkit that helps to take him/her on an exhilarating journey of the mind and soul.

“Then came Our Messengers to Abraham...”

In Sûrat Hûd, 11:69-73, God recounts the story of Prophet Abraham and the angels who come to give him the good news of his wife’s imminent conception. The angels and Abraham trade greetings of peace (11:69):

The angels: qâlû salâmân

Abraham: qâla salâmûn

In all below English translations of this short interchange of greeting, Abraham's salutation is identical to that of the angels:

They said, "Peace." He said, "Peace." [Sahih International]

They said: Salâm (greetings of peace!) He answered: Salâm (greetings of peace!) [Muhsin Khan]

They said: Peace! He answered: Peace! [Pickthall]

They said, "Peace!" He answered: "Peace!" [Yusuf Ali]

They said: Peace. Peace, said he. [Shakir]

The Arabic text has it differently though. The angels say: salâmân, whereas Abraham says: salâmûn. The single sound difference between the two words hides beneath it more than meets the eye.

Parsing the Grammar of the Two Greetings

1. Arabic grammarians state that Abraham's salâmûn is a grammatical Complement of an omitted word, i.e. the complete understood utterance is not a single word but a full Nominal Sentence, which can read:

"[This (is)] salâmûn!"

How do we know this? It is through the ûn ending of the Arabic noun salâm which is the clue to deducing the elided part. Again, here the Nominal Sentence structure implies that Abraham's reply of "Peace!" implies permanency in the same way that permanency is implied in al-Hamdu lillâh, as explained in our first example of a Nominal Sentence.

2. By contrast, the ân in the angels' salâmân is our indication that the elided part is a verb which makes the understood missing part a verb and salâmân its grammatical Object. The complete initial greeting, then, is a Verbal Sentence that can be read:

"[We greet you (with)] salâmân."

The nuanced meaning of each of the two slightly varying greetings has been implied by the minimal sound difference between the two

Arabic word forms.

Parsing Abraham's Experience

What is the meaning of all this interplay of words? Commentators say that Abraham's greeting in reply foreshadows a more enduring peace:[ii]

1. because he knows that when you are greeted with a greeting, [you should] greet [in return] with one better than it or [at least] return it [in a like manner]," [Sûrat Al-Nisâ, 4:86] and

2. because as host he shows indefatigable hospitality when he hurries to entertain the guests with a fat [roasted] calf [Sûrat Hûd, 11:69]

3. Also, when Abraham knows of the forthcoming punishment about to befall the villages of the People of Lot, he tries to relieve them from annihilation: Abraham gently pleads with the angels that surely they cannot destroy Lot's village because Indeed, within it is Lot [Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:32]. True to Abraham's secure trust in God, Lot was rescued from the punishment of his people.

Actually Prophet Abraham was reprimanded for making this intercession because it was basically meant to ward off the punishment from the village of sinners, and mentioning Prophet Lot was more like a pretext. Here are some verses that support this implication:

And when the fright had left Abraham and the good tidings had reached him, he began to argue with Us concerning the people of Lot. Indeed, Abraham was forbearing, grieving and [frequently] returning [to Allah]. [The angels said], "O Abraham, give up this [plea]. Indeed, the command of your Lord has come, and indeed, there will reach them a punishment that cannot be repelled." [Sûrat Hûd, 11:74-76

[Abraham] said, "Indeed, within it is Lot." They said, "We are more knowing of who is within it.

We will surely save him and his family, except his wife. She is to be of those who remain behind.” [Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:32]

On the other hand, the angels’ greeting of peace is not one entailing permanency and un-changeability.

Pooling various accounts [Sûrat Hûd, 11:69-83; Sûrat Al-Hijr, 15:51-60; Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:3231-35], the rest of the story goes like this: Abraham says: Peace. Indeed, we are fearful of you [Sûrat Al- Hijr, (15:52)]. When he saw their hands not reaching for [the fat roasted calf], he distrusted them and felt from them apprehension [Sûrat Hûd, 11:70]—because guests hardly needed to be invited to eat.[iii] Fear not, they assured him We give you good tidings of a forbearing boy [Sûrat Al-Hijr, 15:53].

This marks the end of the peaceful first part of their mission. We have been sent to the people of Lot (15:58). The angels decline his plea for delay of punishment of the Sodomites on account of Prophet Lot being among them: We are more knowing of who is within it. We will surely save him and his family, except his wife. She is to be of those who remain behind [Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:32], they expostulated; Indeed, we will bring down on the people of this city punishment from the sky because they have been defiantly disobedient [Sûrat Al-Ankabût, 29:34].

The angels came with glad tidings to Abraham and with a scourge of punishment to the sinners among Lot’s people. This is what their salâmân elegantly conveys—a lack of constancy of peace and security. And this is what the translation misses.

Just a Taste of the Arabic Quran

In this limited article we have presented some examples with less complicated grammar, meant to give just a taste of the limitless array of entailed meanings woven into the Arabic Quran. The above example of the exchanged

salâm’s of the angels and Abraham is a case in point to show the kind of profundity of intra-textual dialogue which loses its vigor when the Quran is separated from its Arabic origin.

One can accordingly imagine how inappropriate it would be to reverse the salâm’s of the angels and those of Abraham: if Abraham were to greet the angels with salâmân or for the angels to salute Abraham with salâmûn.

One More Comment

In fact, there is nothing in the Arabic Quran that is accidental; Arabic is the perfect tool for precisely communicating the nuances of its intended message. The Quran’s message comes alive the more one digs into the jewels of the Arabic verses. Our traditional scholars have noted many of these in their commentaries; no doubt other jewels remain to be uncovered or re-discovered.

But, you may suggest, is it really true what you began by saying: The Arabic language is the only appropriate vehicle of meaning for the final Book of God. Isn’t it reasonable to argue that the other ancient Semitic languages also possessed the same traits which Arabic boasts having? And the answer is yes, they did. And yes, we cannot definitively test the above thesis with just a few easy examples—but let us point out that when God chose Arabic for this noble mission, He added honor to distinction.

It behooves all of us, as much as we can, to find our individual-appropriate way to dig into the intricacies of the Arabic Quran, to understand our Book and to be maximally guided, each of us, in our earthly journeys.

[i] Marjorie J. McShane, *A theory of Ellipsis*, 2005

[ii] Al-Tahir Ibn Ashûr, *Al-Tahrîr wa Al-Tanwîr*, 1984, 1, 16

[iii] Ibrahim Ramadhan, *Al-Tafsîr Al-Qayyim ibn Al-Qayyim*, 1410 h, 1, 489

The Impact of Sins on Society

S. Husayn al-Shaykh

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all the worlds. May peace and blessings be upon the Messenger, his household and Companions.

Brethren! in faith! Allah does not command men but to do what will bring them benefits in this world and the Hereafter. Hence sins are among the greatest evils that affect men in this world and the next. Sins had actually removed many blessings and caused many afflictions.

Fellow Muslims! The effects of sins show in the individuals and the society; they affect the heart and the body and bring about calamities whose gravity is known to none but Allah.

Among the evil impacts of sins is deprivation of blessings. The Prophet said,

“Indeed man may be deprived of his provision because of a sin that he has committed.” Ibn Abbaas said, “Surely, good deed puts illumination on the face; light in the heart; blessings in the wealth; strength in the body and love in people’s hearts. Sin also has a darkness on the face and in the heart; weakness in the body; reduction in the provision and hatred in the hearts’ of the people.”

When sins become widespread in a society, its affairs become difficult and the members of that society find all gates of good and well being closed in their faces. For Allah says,

“And whoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him.”

(At-Talaaq 65:4).

Sins make man despicable in the sight of his Lord. Al-Hasan Al-Basree said, “The sinners are despicable to Allah, that is why He made them commit sins; had they been honourable in His sight, he would have protected them from committing sins.” Whenever someone becomes despicable in the sight of Allah, no one will honour him. Allah says,

“And whoever Allah disgraces, none can honour him.” (Al-Hajj 22-18)

Whenever sins become widespread among the Muslim society, they will be the cause of its humiliation in the sight of other nations. The Messenger of Allah said, “And the ignominy and humiliation are made the lot of those who disobey my order.”

Therefore, glory lies only in obeying Allah and His Messengers. Allah says,

“Whoever desires honour (power and glory) then to Allah belong all honour power and glory.” (Faatir 35:10)

When Cyprus was conquered, Aboo Dardaa started weeping and he was asked, “What is making you weep on a day that Allah gives glory to Islaam and Muslims?” He said, “How despicable are men to Allah when they neglect His Commands! This conquered nation was a powerful nation who used to wield enormous authority, but when they abandoned the Com-

mand of Allah, their fate is what you see now.”

The Prophet said,

“Nations will call one another from all horizons to fight you as eaters call one another unto their plate of food.” The Companions said, **“Is that because we will be fewer then, O Messenger of Allah?”** The Prophet answered, **“No, you will rather be in great numbers then, but your multitude will be as useless as the foam of a torrential flood. Your fear will be removed from the hearts of your enemies and “Wahn” will be put in your hearts.”** They said, **“What is Wahn?”** He answered, **“Love of this world and aversion for death.”** (Ahmad).

The Prophet also said,

“When you transact by ‘Eenah, take hold of tails of the cattle and you are satisfied with farming and you abandon Jihaad, Allah will impose ignominy on you which He will not remove from you until you go back to your religion. (Aboo Dawood).

That is why some righteous predecessors used to say, **“O Allah, give me honour and glory through Your obedience and do not humiliate me on account of my sins.”**

Brethren in faith! Among the impacts of sins is that they create all kinds of evil in the sea, air, harvest, fruits and homes. Allah says,

“Evil has appeared in land and sea because of what the hands of men have earned (by oppression and evil deeds) that He (Allah) may make them taste a part of that which they have done in order that they may return (by repenting to Allah, and begging His pardon).” (Ar-Room 30:41).

The evil in this verse means reduction in blessings, and hardships and pains that happen in the land whenever men commit sins. Whenever they commit a sin, Allah subjects them to a punishment. Mujaahid said, **“When an unjust ruler takes the rein of power, and he commits injustice and evils; Allah will, as a result, withhold rain and the crops and cattle will be de-**

stroyed.”

The Prophet said,

“O you Muhaajiroon! There are five things I seek refuge with Allah that they should not affect you: When adultery appears among a people and it is so widespread that they do it publicly, Allah will afflict them with epidemic and pains that were unknown to their predecessors; when a people cheat in dry measure and scale, they will be afflicted with years of drought, hardships and unjust rulers; when a people refuse to pay Zakaah due on their wealth, they will be denied rain from the heaven and if not because of animals they will not have rains; when a people fail to fulfill covenants of Allah, He will impose an enemy on them who will seize some of their wealth, and when people’s leader fail to judge by what Allah has revealed in His Book, Allah will create enmity among them.”

The Prophet said,

“You should enjoin good and forbid evil or else Allah will send a torment to you and then you will call Him and your call will not be answered.” (At-Tirmidhee)

Fellow Muslims! Among the punishment of sins in that it removes blessings, brings about calamities, and brings fear in the place of security and misery in the place of happiness. Allah says,

“And whatever misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He (Allah) pardons much.” (Ash-Shooraa 42:30).

Alee said, **“No calamity befalls except as a result of a sin, and it cannot be removed except through repentance.”**

Whenever men disobey Allah, are ungrateful for His favour and seek after causes of His wrath instead of causes of His pleasure, He will turn their well-being to punishment and their happiness to misery. Allah say,

“Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition

of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves (by committing) sins. But when Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning back on it and they will besides Him no protector." (Ar-Ra'd 13-11)

Dear Muslims! Among the impact of sins is the spread of psychological diseases among people, fear and distress. This is because; sins expose the heart to diseases and perversion. So the effect of the sins on the hearts is the effect of diseases on the body and the only remedy for the heart diseases is to abandon sins and to repent. Allah says,

"Verily, the pious will be in delight, and verily, the sinners will be in the blazing fire." (Al-Infitaar 82:13-14).

Ibn Al-Qayyim said in his comments on the above verse: "Do not ever think that the delight and the fire in this verse are restricted to that of the Hereafter alone. It is rather meant for the three stages that man passes through: this world, the world between his death and the Hereafter and his last abode in the Hereafter. Some men will be in delight while others will be in blazing fire. Is there any delight in this world greater than that of the heart? Is there any torment greater than fear, sorrow and distress? That is why the upright and pious people are free from sorrow and distress. Allah says,

"So whoever believes and does righteous good deeds, upon such shall come no fear, nor shall they grief." (Al-An'aam 6:48).

Brethren in faith! Sins remove the blessings of religion and of worldly life. They erase the blessings of knowledge, good deeds and sustenance. Allah says,

"And if the people of the towns had believed and had piety, certainly, We should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth." (Al-A'raaf 7:96)

Hence, the impact of sins affects the sinners and others and causes harm to all. Aboo Hurayrah said, "Indeed the bustards do die in their nest as a result of the sin committed by man." Mujaahid said, "The animals do curse the sinners among men whenever there is a severe drought and rain is withheld and they say: This is evil the impact of the sins of men."

Sins embolden devils to attack man with insinuations, fright, and sorrow as they make him neglect all that can bring him benefit. Sins also make devilish people attack him either in his presence or absence, as they embolden his servants, children and neighbors to maltreat him. One of the righteous predecessors said, "Whenever I commit a sin, I see the impact of that in the behaviour of my wife and my riding animal towards me." This is because Allah do protect the believers who obey Him from the evils of this world and the Hereafter." Allah says,

"Truly, Allah defends those who believe." (Al-Hajj 22:38)

Cont'd from page 19

sacrifice reminds us of our need to sacrifice selfish desires in the way of Allah or else no real sacrifice is made.

Al-Junayd lastly tells us through his pilgrim that when we cast stones at the Jamarat, one materializes his resolve to rid himself of evil companions and influences, otherwise no real stones are cast.

We may have mock Hajj days at schools, or walk our children through the several rituals that make up Hajj. But that really is not the goal. It is not the pilgrimage itself, but what we find therein, and the journey that follows.

Early on, children need to know the real benefits that lie in a once-in-a-lifetime journey as momentous as Hajj. They will learn the details of ritual when they get there in any case. It's the spirit of sacrifice and submission that we need to inculcate in them now.

His Kindness



Ali Zohery

The Prophet Muhammad taught love, kindness and compassion to his people, and was seen to be the most loving, kind, and compassionate of all of them. The Quran mentions his kind and gentle behavior in these words:

“O Messenger of Allah! It is a great Mercy of God that you are gentle and kind towards them; for, had you been harsh and hard-hearted, they would all have broken away from you” (3:159).

There are many instances that show his kindness and gentleness, especially to the weak and the poor. Anas, who was his helper, said: “I served Allah’s Messenger for ten years and he never said to me, ‘Shame’ or ‘Why did you do such-and-such a thing?’ or ‘Why did you not do such-and-such a thing?’” (Bukhari).

Once he said to his wife: “O ‘A’ishah! Never turn away any needy man from your door empty-handed. O ‘A’ishah! Love the poor; bring them near to you and God will bring you near to Him on the Day of Resurrection”. He also went much further on to say:

“Seek me among your weak ones, for you are given provision, or you are given help only by reason of the presence of your weak ones”. (Rahman, Encyclopedia of Seerah, VOL. VIII, p. 151)

God Almighty is Kind, and the Prophet imitated Allah’s example in its perfection by showing kindness to his servants and all creatures without any regard for their beliefs, color or nationality. The Prophet said:

“God is kind and likes kindness in all things” (Bukhari).

His heart ached within him at the corrupt state of his fellow-Meccans and their rejection of One God. The Holy Quran testifies to it in these words: “O Muhammad, you will, perhaps, consume yourself with grief because the people do not believe” (26:3). In Surah Kahf, we read: “Well, O Muhammad, it may be that you will kill yourself for their sake out of sorrow if they do not believe in this Message.” (18:6). And Surah Fatir says: “So let not your life be consumed in grief for their sake.” (35:8).

He took a great interest in the welfare of all people and had great compassion for people in trouble. The Prophet Muhammad imitated the attributes of God par excellence and translated them into practice in the highest form possible for man. Kindness is an attribute of Allah, which has no limits. It is extensive and encompasses all things and all beings without discrimination. Likewise was the kindness of the Prophet. He extended it to all beings, both animate and

inanimate and benefited all without measure. The Quranic words for the Prophet's kindness, ra'ufu-r-rahim (9:128) are very intensive and comprehensive in meaning and convey the true nature and extent of the Prophet's kindness to people. The Prophet said:

"One of the finest acts of kindness is for a man to treat his fathers' friends in a kindly way after he has departed" (Abu dawud)

The issue of treating friends well was also extended to include relations:

"He who wishes to have his provision enlarged and his term of life prolonged should treat his relatives well" (Bukhari).

He emphasized on this matter because he deeply held the view that

"Only kindness prolongs life, and a person is deprived of provisions for the faults he commits" (Ibn Majah).

Bahz b. Hakim, on his father's authority, said that his grandfather told him that he had asked Allah's Messenger to whom he should show kindness and that the Prophet had replied: "Your mother." He asked who came next and he replied: "Your mother." He asked who came next and he replied for the third time: "Your mother." He again asked who came next and he replied: "Your father, then your relatives in order of relationship" (Abu dawud). He dwelled on the issue of treating orphans humanely as he stated that

"The best house among the Muslims is one which contains an orphan who is well treated, and the worst house among the Muslims is one which contains an orphan who is badly treated" (Ibn Majah).

This means that the Prophet cautioned his followers against general maltreatment of anyone regardless of his status. By extending good treatment from friends to relatives and now to neighbors, Prophet Muhammad was intent in making all humans interdependent as he emphasized in the following words:

"All creatures are Allah's dependants, and those dearest to God are the ones who treat His dependants kindly" (Rahman, VOL VIII, p. 154).

He emphasized the kind treatment of women again and again in his speeches:

Treat women kindly, since they are your helpers; . . . you have your rights upon your wives and they have their rights upon you. Your right is that they shall not allow anyone you dislike to enter your bed or your home, and their right is that you should treat them well. (from the Farewell Sermon of the Prophet)

Once a number of women complained to the Prophet's wives about their ill-treatment by their husbands. On hearing of this, the Prophet said: "Such persons among you are not good persons." (Abu Dawud). This condemnation by the Prophet himself was an indication that no one will be accepted before God who, while on earth, decided to be unkind to women. Another person said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of Allah! My relatives are such that although I cooperate with them, they cut me off; I am kind to them but they ill treat me." The Prophet said this in reply: "So long as you continue as you are, God will always help you and He will protect you against their mischief" (Muslim). This was not only a way of bringing comfort to the mind of the worried person but one of the communicative techniques of the Prophet to assure who ever found himself in that situation to look up to God to be consoled and protected. So it was pointless to preach vengeance to this kind of people suffering from this similar fate. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad was nothing short of a competent counselor.

He was always counseling people to be good-hearted regardless of their sex, age or gender. Once Asma bint Abu Bakr's mother, who was still an unbeliever, came to see her in Madinah. She told this to the Prophet and said: "My mother has come to see me and she is expect-

ing something from me. May I oblige her?" The Prophet said: "Yes, be kind to your mother" (Muslim,). This attitude of the Prophet was equally extended to Zainab as-Saqafia, the wife of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud and an Ansari woman. She went to see the Prophet and to inquire whether it would be a charity if they spent something on their husbands and on the orphans under their care. The Prophet said: "They will get a two-fold reward, one for kindness towards their relatives and the other for charity" (Bukhari).

There are many Ahadith concerning his kindness to animals, birds and insects: "God prescribed kindness towards everything; so when you slaughter any animal, slaughter it well; when you sacrifice, make your sacrifice good. And let everyone sharpen his weapon and make it easy for his sacrificed animal" (Muslim). He made this kind of statement to demonstrate his love for both humans and animals. In essence, Prophet Muhammad was equally showing his followers that he too is feels pain.

Primary Objective of Prayer

A non-Muslim once asked the following question during a discussion: "I can understand why Muslims were required to pray five times a day during the early days of Islam. They did not have many things to do in those days so the Prophet kept them busy with prayer. But our sophisticated and modern life leaves man with little spare time. He is much too busy to be expected to pray five times a day."

The answer given was what is the primary objective of prayer.

The Qur'an says: "...and establish prayer for My Remembrance." [20: 14]

As man is by nature forgetful, prayer reminds him of the allegiance due to his Creator and Lord. If prayer was needed fourteen hundred years ago when man did not lead such a busy lifestyle, then it is even more necessary in today's hectic world.

On the one hand, education and work keep people occupied constantly. And when it is time to relax. Shaitan (Satan) has found many new channels to operate through, such as television, the cinema and videos. Man becomes so engrossed in this life that he has no thought for Allah and the Hereafter. The need to remind man of the realities of his existence has thus intensified, and not declined in modern times. Prayer is still of utmost importance and benefit in our high-tech lives.

Prayer acts as a shield against evil. Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an: "...Verily, As-salat (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahsha (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse etc.) and al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed etc.)..." [29: 45]

Dr. Suhaib Hasan

But She Must Be

a Virgin!

Umm Zakiyah

What Will He Think of Her?

Tamika's heart pounded, and sadness overwhelmed her. Part of her wanted to marry him, but she couldn't. There was so much he didn't know about her, and she doubted he would want to marry her after he found out. Tamika hung up the phone feeling as if she had given up a piece of her heart. A lump developed in her throat, and she wondered if she had made a mistake telling him no.

There was a part of Tamika that resented this Muslim man who wanted to marry her. Tamika knew her feelings were unjustly critical. But he'd spoken against college students having boyfriends and girlfriends, and his words opened up wounds that she had hoped to heal.

Tamika had made many mistakes before becoming Muslim. Caught up in the social life of high school, she hadn't seen herself drowning. Parties and clubs were regular scenes for her, and they were always filled with alcohol, marijuana, and good-looking men. She dressed the part, played the part, and eventually became the part. She partied, drank, and did whatever everyone else did.

Later, when Tamika saw the Muslim man again, she let him know she changed her mind. She would marry him after all. And finally, as a cruel climax to her degenerate life, she became

involved with a young man who was known for crushing hearts. It was a harsh introduction to the world of men. He would be the first and last boyfriend she had. Scarred by the experience, she had turned to the church and vowed to give her life to God. Now, as a Muslim, she wanted to forget about her past sins.

"What were you afraid of?" he asked.

Tamika grew silent, unsure how to respond. She had pushed her insecurity about her past to the back of her mind, and her healing was in choosing to forget. It was easier to pretend it had never happened than to risk that her confession would sour what they had found in each other. But now she felt cornered, and as her mind raced in search of a safe response, she realized honesty was her only option.

She tried to gather her thoughts. "You," she said finally.

He wrinkled his forehead in confusion. "What do you mean?"

"I wasn't always Muslim," she said, letting the implications of her words sink in.

With an empathetic sigh, he shook his head in self-reproach. "I'm no angel, Tamika," he said, "and I didn't expect you to be one."

"Tamika." He drew in a deep breath and exhaled slowly. He couldn't look at her. He bit his lower lip and stared distantly in deep thought. "I

was always Muslim,” he said finally, confessing his sins as their eyes met, “so I have no excuse.” “I was afraid you’d judge me for it,” she said.

Is Being a Virgin Really That Important?

In the excerpt from my novel *A Voice*, Tamika is reluctant to agree to marry a Muslim who proposed to her because she’s afraid that he will judge her for a past sin. She is no longer a virgin, and she thinks this will be a “deal breaker” for him. However, to her surprise she learns that although he himself grew up in a Muslim family, he is not a virgin himself. It makes no difference to him whether or not Tamika fell into sin in her past life.

In fact, when he asked to marry her, he had never assumed she was a virgin in the first place. In any case, it is apparent that Tamika’s regret for her past sin is affecting her sense of self-worth as a Muslim even though her sin occurred before she even accepted Islam.

And Tamika is not alone. Many Muslim women, including those who grew up in Muslim families, are facing a similar struggle. They fell into sin and lost their virginity. But later they felt bad, gave up the sin, and repented to Allah. Yet they still despair over their wrongs.

Allah (SWT) says,

“Say, O My slaves who have wronged their souls! Despair not of the mercy of Allah.

Verily, Allah forgives all sins.

Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”(Qur’an, 39:53)

However, humans are not so merciful.

Hypocrisy and Double Standards of Muslims

It’s a scenario that can make any Muslim woman upset. A Muslim man lives a life of sin in youth, and he might even have a girlfriend that even his parents and other Muslims know about. But they look the other way. He is a boy after all, they might say. Then when it’s time to

get married, this man demands to marry only a virgin. If he finds out that the woman he wants to marry had a single “inappropriate relationship” with a man, he refuses to even consider her for marriage.

Furthermore, even if the woman never committed zina (fornication or adultery), the man will likely refuse to marry her if she is divorced. His refusal will likely be even more adamant if he learns that she had children from her previous husband. This hypocritical attitude is sometimes prevalent even amongst men who are themselves divorced with children

Most Muslim Men Will Judge You

Though Allah is All-Forgiving of our sins, the harsh reality is that human beings are not so forgiving. It is an unfortunate fact that humans are overly judgmental of others, especially regarding matters that they have not experienced firsthand.

“Don’t judge someone just because they sin differently than you,” a popular saying goes. But regarding the non-virgin bride, many Muslim men are judgmental of women whose sins mirror their very own sexual transgressions. And if a potential bride was previously married, the divorce stigma alone carries a stain amongst many Muslims that, socially and culturally, makes divorce as shameful as (if not more shameful than) having fallen into zina.

Not only are these double standards unjust, they are also un-Islamic, as the Qur’an and Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) do not support these views. Moreover, they are generally rooted in cultures and mindsets that are based on misogyny (hatred of women).

Often when a woman is expected to be “pure” before marriage while a man is not, this expectation is rooted in the idea that only men are fully human whereas women are objects that exist only for a man’s pleasure and social image. In this misogynistic view, there are only two categories of females: those who fulfill a man’s sex-

ual needs before marriage, and those who fulfill a man's sexual and cultural needs after marriage. The former are viewed as "impure" and that latter as "pure."

Thus, if a man comes from this cultural mindset, most likely he will judge a woman harshly for any past mistakes.

He Doesn't Have to Marry You Though

However, it's important to remember that while the culture of misogyny is indeed un-Islamic and sinful, it is not sinful for an individual man to prefer a virgin for marriage, even if he is not a virgin himself. Likewise, a woman who is not a virgin has the right to prefer a virgin man.

However, if men (or women) are living a lifestyle of zina and have not repented, it is sinful for them to marry a chaste spouse, regardless of whether or not the woman or man is a virgin.

Allah (SWT) says,

"The [male] fornicator does not marry except a [female] fornicator or polytheist, and none marries her [a female fornicator] except a [male] fornicator or a polytheist. That has been made unlawful to the believers." (Qur'an, 24:3)

So What's the Solution?

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said,

"A woman is sought as a wife for her wealth, her beauty, her nobility, or her religiousness, so choose a religious woman and you will prosper" (Muslim). The Prophet also said, "The whole world is a provision, and the best benefit of this world is the righteous woman" (Muslim).

Thus, when looking to solutions, Muslim men must ask themselves at least two questions: "What do I want from life?" and "Who will best help me achieve this?" Those men who want prosperity and success in this world (and

the Hereafter) while enjoying the greatest benefit and pleasure on earth will look at potential wives and say, "But she must be a righteous believer" and view this as a foundational requirement for marriage.

Yes, other men will say, "But she must be a virgin" or "She must be extremely wealthy, beautiful, or noble" as foundational requirements for marriage. In that case, Allah will likely give those men what they desire. And in the process, He will protect the truly worthy, righteous women (virgins, non-virgins, and divorced) from falling into the unfortunate situation of having such men as husbands.

Cont'd from page 23

more generous to newcomers so as to reconcile their hearts to Islam. Hakim ended up with a large share of the booty. But the Prophet peace be upon him, told him: "O Hakim! This wealth is indeed sweet and attractive. Whoever takes it and is satisfied will be blessed by it and whoever takes out of greed will not be blessed. He would be like someone who eats and is not satisfied. The upper hand is better than the lower hand (it is better to give than to receive)." The kind words of advice had a deep and immediate effect on Hakim. He was mortified and said to the Prophet (saws): "O Messenger of Allah! By Him who has sent you with the truth, I shall not ask anyone after you for anything."

During the caliphate of Abu Bakr RA, Hakim was called several times to collect his stipend from the Bayt al-mal but he refused to take any money. He did the same during the caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab whereupon Umar RA addressed the Muslims: "I testify to you, O Muslims, that I have called Hakim to collect his stipend but he refuses." Hakim RA remained faithful to his word. He did not take anything from anyone until he passed away. From the Prophet (saws), he had learnt the great truth that contentment is riches beyond compare.

source: radioislam

WAYS TO LOWER THE GAZE

Aiman Azlan

The eyes have desires that have a great tendency to want to be fulfilled, as if there is a gravity-like force that pulls the sight to the things we should not be looking at. Like gravity, those who resist will feel the force acting on them, while those who just go with the flow will feel little or nothing at all. Like gravity, it takes a lot of strength to escape it.

One of the desires of the eyes is the sexual desire. Some follow this desire willingly, some struggle to keep the gaze down, and others are somewhere in between. If this desire is not kept in check, it can affect our productivity. Looking at what we should not distracts us, and when we are distracted, we stray away from our focus and lose much of our precious time on useless things.

“Tell the believing men to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what they do. And tell the believing women to reduce [some] of their vision and guard their private parts...” [24:30-31].

Not only does the Qur’an make a connection between the gaze and sexual desires, it does so explicitly by specifying the physical area of the body associated with sexual desires: the private parts. The explicit nature of the verse should catch our attention. It should also make us realize the seriousness of the issue, considering that the ultimate

sin of the private parts is zina (fornication).

It is incredible to realize that something as serious as zina can start from something as simple as a gaze! The path to zina can be short or long. For some, Shaytan may slowly whisper for years and years before the individual falls into the trap of zina. Shaytan is relentless and he is patient. Whatever small opportunity he sees, he will take it, as long as it leads us closer to zina.

The danger is that we might be oblivious to all the more reason why we should cultivate the awareness of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) in ourselves. Those who are most aware of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) (those who have more taqwa) are those who are hardest for Shaytan to lead astray. And in this context, it makes perfect sense that more taqwa leads to the protection from Shaytan. This is the reason why Allah (glorified and exalted be He) prohibits not only zina itself, but anything that leads to it, as He says:

“And do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way” [Qur’an: Chapter 17, Verse 32].

We have all heard that “prevention is better than cure”, and preventing zina starts from lowering the gaze. So, how can we fulfill this command?

Find Good Friends

As much as we are autonomous and in control,

we cannot deny the power of the environment we are in. We are all directly or indirectly influenced (in a good way or bad way) by the people we hang out with. They shape a large part of who we are. If you want to know who you are, look at the people whom you spend most of your time with. We must be wise in choosing our friends. If we choose friends who are guarding their gaze, In sha Allah we will follow their footsteps. Good friends help each other in the struggle to lower the gaze by reminding each other when one forgets and succumbs to the gaze. Even being in the presence of people who lower their gaze is a form of reminder in and of itself. Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

“The example of a good companion in comparison with a bad one, is like that of the musk seller and the blacksmith's furnace; from the first you would either buy musk or enjoy its good smell while the furnace would either burn your clothes or your house, or you get a bad nasty smell thereof.” [Bukhari]

Therefore, it is essential to surround yourself with friends who are unlike the obviously lustful and those who make quick comments on the appearance or attractiveness of the opposite gender. If you notice the people around you behaving as such, either remind them to lower their gaze, or surround yourself with those who do so and whose presence are constant reminders of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) and His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

Carry a Book

This one is a personal tip from me. Sometimes I find myself in situations, for example when waiting for a bus, where my eyes tend to wander. To avoid that, I try to always carry a book with me. Whenever I am in such a situation, I take out my book and read. It is a good way to spend time and learn something. Reading off your phone or e-book reader is a good substitute as well.

Fight the Second Gaze

At times we find ourselves unintentionally looking at something we should not look at. For example, while we are walking in a mall, we might come upon an inappropriate sight. In such a situation, we should avert our gaze immediately and actively fight to avoid looking at it again (as tempting as it might be). We will not be held accountable for the first unintentional gaze, In sha Allah.

Ideally, we should strive to avoid the first gaze but that is not always under our control and is not always practical. But what we can do is try and avoid going to places where there will be sights we should not see, if we are able to. For example, if there is no need to go to the mall, it is best to avoid going there in the first place.

However, there are instances where that is impractical, like being in a workplace with non-Muslims, for example. Some of them might be wearing clothes that are not particularly modest. You cannot avoid the place you work in. So, what do you do? In such a situation, we should avoid their unnecessary company whenever possible (e.g. during lunch breaks).

A place where avoiding the second gaze is very challenging is the internet. Even when we surf through innocent parts of the web, we are never entirely free from inappropriate images, for example, in pop-up ads or banner ads. Alhamdulillah, there are ways to go around it like installing an ad-blocker on our browsers. However, cutting out unnecessary and time-wasting web pages is essential.

Get Married

One a related note, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) recommended two sure-fire solutions for fighting the urge to look again: marriage for those who can afford it, and fasting for those who cannot. He said:

“O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding one's chastity. And whoever cannot afford it should fast, for it will be a shield for him.” [An-Nasai]

Without a doubt, being married protects you

from fulfilling your natural desires in unlawful ways as you have a spouse whose company and comfort you can enjoy day and night. As for those whose circumstances do not permit them to commit to marriage yet (such as financial reasons, bad temper, or those who are not mentally fully committed to all aspects of marriage), fasting gives them time to build themselves up, and particularly helps diminish their sexual urge and their inclination to look at what is unlawful.

On the other hand, if one is already married yet having trouble with their wandering gaze, they should make some time in their day to bond more with their spouse. Discuss what pleases you/them and what else you/they can do to be more attractive and pleasing, such as smelling good, wearing nice clothing, giving proper attention, listening, conversing etc. Also, if you wear glasses/contact lenses and are not incredibly vision-impaired, keep them off whenever you can and your spouse will appear more beautiful to you and other people less relevant.

Remember Allah (glorified and exalted be He)

When our parents are around, would we feast our eyes on things we should not see (out of shame and respect for them)? Hopefully we would not. Of course, they are not with us all the time. However, Allah (glorified and exalted be He) is. We should be more ashamed and more respectful towards Allah (glorified and exalted be He) than we are towards our parents. Constantly remind yourself that Allah (glorified and exalted be He) is All-Aware of every gaze, every glimpse, and every peek we take. Making it a habit to constantly remember Allah's (glorified and exalted be He) presence will help us be careful about our every move, including the movements of our eyes. Most importantly, the reward for constantly remembering Allah (glorified and exalted be He) and trying our best to avoid shameful deeds is nothing but Paradise, as Allah (glorified and exalted be He) says:

“But as for he who feared the position of his Lord and prevented the soul from [unlawful] inclination,

Then indeed, Paradise will be [his] refuge” [79:40-41].

By creating a habit of constant dhikr throughout the day it can help you trigger the thoughts of your Creator, in front of whom you should have utmost humility.

Ask Allah (glorified and exalted be He) for Help

Lowering the gaze is not easy. It is a constant struggle, especially if we are in a society where inappropriate sights are almost everywhere. No matter where we look, it is there. It goes without saying that we will slip up once in a while.

However, know that Allah (glorified and exalted be He)'s Mercy is bigger than our sins. Therefore, as long as we are still breathing, we should always be in a state of asking for Allah (glorified and exalted be He)'s forgiveness and help. Since lowering the gaze is not an easy thing to do, we need all the help that we can get. What better help to have than Allah (glorified and exalted be He)'s Help? Ask Him and ask abundantly!

In an effort to avoid committing the same sin repeatedly, we should pinpoint the source of the sin and cut it at the source. For example, if we find that we are more likely to indulge in corrupting our gaze when we are with certain friends, then it might be a good idea to distance ourselves from those friends.

We are not alone in our struggle and we are in need of help, so we should build a positive and healthy support system for ourselves. Surrounding ourselves with good company and frequenting spiritually rejuvenating gatherings and places like the masjid and iman-building courses and conferences boost our remembrance and awareness of Allah (glorified and exalted be He).

I ask Allah (glorified and exalted be He) to give us the strength to lower our gaze, to protect us from inappropriate sights, and to purify our eyes so that they may be crystal clear when we set our ultimate gaze at the most beautiful sight of all, His Face (glorified and exalted be He). Ameen.

Quran, Science and Certitude

Shafi A. Khaled

About science's presence in Quran, there have been countless analyses and associated claims. Finding prescient elements in the Quran should not be viewed as something eerie. After all, if the Quran is to be believed as the unadulterated, fully preserved product of The Lord of the Worlds (Rabbul 'Alameen) meant to elucidate and guide mankind for all posterity, then it would not be unnatural to find allusion to scientific elements scattered about in its pages. As mankind matured in knowledge and understanding, some passages that heretofore appeared odd could very well become alive and carry sense.

But in case we fall into error, let us remember two things: the Quran is a guide for the God-fearing believers (2:2-4) and that life is simply a test no matter whether life is blissful or challenging (89:15-17). Neither the mystery of such tests nor those underlying the axiomatic Aqeedah (Creed)[1] will ever be accessible to our senses. Their truthfulness will only be attested to, by variously cited circumstantial evidences. The occasional scientific eureka moments connecting to science can only do so much to enhance or confirm faith. They are not to be viewed as more definitive than those circumstantial. All of which brings us to the Quranic verse below.

Beginning?

Yes, technically speaking, what does "Be! So, it

is!!" (2:117) have to do with the genesis of the universe?

Does it not appear to be the precursor event to 'Big Bang'? Well, the Quran suggests no other. Right away or instantaneity is insinuated here. It also suggests mind over matter. Physical and Chemical realities began then and there. Biological reality to follow down the pike. Incredibly, God says: "and Our ordaining [a thing and its coming into being] is but one [act], like the twinkling of an eye. (54:50) -

Further, this divine command projects spiritualism as a vaster canvas that includes materialism as the second act. The latter, based on its secular proponents' point of view, is limited to having to explain material reality with materialism alone. Because of its breadth, the former is more promising in being able to guide humanity objectively and properly.

However, current extant literature about Quran's version of Big Bang quotes: "Do not those who disbelieve see that the Heavens and the Earth were meshed together then We ripped them apart? ..." (20:30).

This appears to connect with the following verse: "Then He directed himself to the Heaven when it was SMOKE, and then said to it and to Earth: 'Come willingly or by force' they said 'We do come willingly'" (41:11).

I am making the point that the above two verses

indicate a stage later than the point of “nothing to something, materially.” This is quite in congruence with current astronomical view of the process of creation of the universe. So, unlike claims made to date by interested Muslim writers, I think that is not the Big Bang moment!

“Be! So, it is” is.

At that time there was no smoke and there were no Heavens and Earth!! There was just an incredible explosion. Perhaps neither fusion nor fission existed then. Some other Godly transitional or initiator reaction/concoction probably was at play. Truly, it was *the* metaphysical moment.

As addressed above, in this age of science and technology, excitement of literally putting words into Quran’s mouth does bring on potentially dangerous mischaracterization or misidentification. It can easily entrap Muslim down the line. As some ‘ulul albaab’ (people of knowledge and insight; 3:190, 38:29) may have reflected, protested and expressed, Quran should confirm science and not the other way around. It is, of course, comforting intellectually to find validation. In fact, did not Prophet Ibrahim (p) ask His Lord to show how things come back to life after death? Was his Lord not perturbed about the quality of Ibrahim’s faith? Then did he not reply that, while he believes, he only seeks to understand and put his heart at rest, presumably by gaining ‘aynul yaqeen’ or certainty brought on by seeing? Did His lord not meet his request (2:260)? But that was a special case. Human puzzlement will not be so easily dignified with ‘physical and sensual’ insight for only a handful are deserving of God’s special classroom and pedagogy over and above revelation. Recall Moses (p) being called up to the mountain-top to receive the 10 commandments. Muhammed (p) taken to the far reaches of the universe for an intimate visitation with the Lord of the Worlds. Yet, while God is unchanging, science keeps changing, albeit positively. If we peg our confidence in the Quran based on a shaky scientific

confirmatory process, where will we take refuge when that science speeds ahead or changes direction?

Textual Clarity.

From the outset, the Quran itself identified two types of verses (3:7): Muhkamat (bearing single meaning - clear, precise, unambiguous and foundational) and Mutashabihat (ambiguous or with multiple interpretations and non-foundational). Uncannily, this has protected us from over-simplifying verses of the latter type. It appears now, even verses with scientific import potentially carry Mutashabihat characteristics. Historically, the verses considered Mutashabihat were those that appeared to describe the Creator’s being/essence, or action. Before now Mutashabihat ‘scientific’ verses (MSV) were not explored with as much zeal and enthusiasm. So, they have presented little danger of causing misdirection. Now, a hurriedly done wrong attribution of MSV could, in the long run, make the Quran appear unreliable. As for Mutashabihat verses related to God (MVG), a standard practice has been to avoid making literal interpretation producing anthropomorphic images. The best linguistic expertise and supportive theological knowledge were employed for their exegesis.

Just so that we are clear, three simple examples of MVG follow. The first two are Muhkamat and the remaining, Mutashabihat: “there is nothing like unto Him” (42:11), “and there is nothing that could be compared with Him” (112:4), and “Allah is the Light of the Heavens and Earth” (24:35)

In the first two instances, clearly, God is distinct from His own creation. There are no buts or ifs about it! In the third case, that He is such a Light is open to various perceptions.

For a century or so, at least, science began to lead Muslims’ attempt to understand more of the Quran. This modern brand of science does not have proportional representation of Muslim

scholarship. Before then, the Muslims were explaining the Quran using other devices. There were the Salafs of the first 300 years following the Prophet (p), and the Khalafs after that[2]. By some measures, the latter were literalists. They dismissed wholesale many of the previous group of scholars. In fact, their take was 'do no interpretation and say it as you read it'. This left the Creator looking much like His creation. These scholars, perhaps seeking simplicity, were not spurred on by linguistic and other nuances, to say the least. Imbibing Quranic exhortation as well as Prophetic standards, the Salafs were sensitive to misrepresenting God by giving Him an identity of their own making. So, they went to great pains being respectful about interpreting MVG. However, it appears to me that since the Quran identified them as Mutashabihat verses, they should have been read literally but, their meaning, not read into literally. Having treated such verses allegorically, their explanation should have stayed open. Allahu 'Alam (Allah knows best) could have been the closing refrain. For example, does God have a face or a hand? While it would appear some of the Khalafs threw caution to the wind in that regard, the Salafs of earlier times demurred saying so. Thus, "...everything will perish except His Face/His Self/His Dominion" (28:88) –

The Salafs used His Dominion, whereas the Khalafs used His Face, and modern translators such as Yusuf Ali and Muhammed Asad used His Self. While the latter is not anthropomorphic, it is rather narrow. So, are they implying God will lose everything else - His authority, His realm, and that Only He will survive the End of Time? Do we not need to read between the lines, pick-up the meta-meaning beyond the quickest, easiest, plain meaning of the word: His Face?

In another instance pertaining to God's role in His creativity, relating to the conception of Isa (p) by Marium (p), what did the Creator say and how was it interpreted by the two scholarly

groups? "whereupon We breathed of Our spirit into that [which was in her womb]" (66:12) -

Taken literally, it would mean Allah Himself blew a part of His soul into Marium (p)'s womb. One would think the Prophet (p) had provided an explanation that led to a more nuanced understanding of the Salaf: Allah ordered Jibreel (p) to undertake that task. Of course, with Adam (p), Allah Himself did blow a part of His soul into him (38:71-72). Now, in Marium (p)'s case, even if Jibreel (p) did the exact same task, the plan, permission, and bidding were all God's. So, the differentiation would appear meaningless. No doubt Adam (p) was made in the Heavens, while 'Esa (p) was conceived on earth. That may make God's role in the creative process slightly nuanced. In that case, the Salafs may have a point. The background issue cannot be entirely dismissed, however: God's proximity to Marium (p) in this matter could appear to endorse the divinity of Esa (p). On the other hand, why should that matter when we have several places in the Quran where categorically this claim is not only denied but condemned (3:59; 4:171; 5:17; 5:72-78; 5:116-118)?

Organization and Balance. Delving further into Quran's scientific aspect, if there ever has been an acute organizer, it is the Author of the Quran. He says that much very clearly in Suratul Mulk (The Kingdom - 67:3-4) when He mentions that no human eye can ever find any error or anomaly in the heavens above. Our eyes will tire themselves out under the strain of trying to find disorder therein. In, say, yet another place, Surat Rahman (The Merciful - 55:7-8), He speaks of scale and balance in His creation. He advises mankind not to abuse balance in all their dealings.

Yes, organization leads to balance. Balance leads to durability in natural order. Balance leads to equity, peace and stability in human matters, big and small. Leading a balanced life is a challenge. Balance allows a constant mass of traffic to flow relentlessly, smoothly on a highway with the

authority sitting quietly in some remote place. Similarly, balance causes a healthy rhythmic heart to smoothly pump blood throughout the human body for decade upon decade without any let up. Hunger, thirst, or illness are signs of imbalance that people fervently seek to address. Having to rest or sleep is a sign of imbalance that needs to be corrected. Likewise, in lifestyle choice, a care-free, existential life reeks of imbalance for it violates and seeks to up-end life's biological and social cycle. A person sometimes dies from hunger, thirst, injury, or disease because the balance is so off that the former self cannot be restored.

Further, Muslims have been dubbed "people of the middle way" (2:143), meaning a people balanced. That Muslims have lost their way may be attributed to a loss of balance brought on by manifest disorganization. In their rituals, the Muslims fortunately continue to display substantial inherited organization. Because the five daily prayers have been identified as barriers to lewdness and evil (29:45); because charity out of acceptable sources of income purifies a person (9:103); because fasting during Ramadaan produces righteousness, i.e., induces a sense of fair play (2:183); and because respecting the rites of pilgrimage (22:32) gravitates Muslims toward imbibing Ibrahimic recognition of pure monotheism, trustfulness of the Almighty as was done at various times, sometimes repeatedly, by Hagar (p), Isma'il (p) and Ibrahim (p) and washing away of sins (Bukhaari: 1449; Muslim: 1350), Muslims may yet be blessed with a comeback and as a source of light and relief for today's inventive and rich yet languishing humanity.

Retrieving Stored Information.

Pointing to His creativity, the Lord of the World reminds us to find the extraordinary hidden in the ordinary. Does the dead soil not become verdant after a brief shower brought on by the processes He has placed in the natural order (16:10; 22:63)? Does life not follow a predefined,

well-trodden cycle: from human non-existence to existence, from youth to old age and death in all living matters (30:54)? Why should it not be easy for Him to bring about a rebirth of His creation? Did He not make it in the first place from a situation of non-existence even in the imagination of its parents? In making the case for a rebirth, does He not say that even our finger-tips will be restored (75:3-4)? What meaning did that claim carry for the Arab pagans and nomads? Perhaps they thought about the shape, size and color differences showing up in the restored fingers among individuals. But now, we know about fingerprints and their uniqueness. Indeed, it is a prescient statement. While such a statement has always been Muhkamat, it has grown in clarity with time. Today, claiming to restore fingertips is doubly profound for it also points to restoration of distinctive fingerprint on every fingertip.

We are told that the Almighty created death and life, in that order, so that man may be tested regarding its goodness (67:2). What do we get from it? Since God is eternal, to be unlike Him, whatever He makes must be transient (39:21). The concept of end, expiry or death does not apply to the Almighty. In His realm, an end concept is immaterial. So, before saying 'Be!' He had to invent death. So, life was preceded in concept by death in the hands of the Creator. Yes, life and death are mundane. We see this cycle to proceed from life, yet life's genesis was preceded by a tour into the reality of death. Thus, if we do not catch God's philosophy about our existence, we are rather liable to miss the big picture.

Our Lord tells us to look for signs in the Quran, in our lives, and in the natural order around us to ascertain the veracity of His existence, His uniqueness (27:93; 41:53; 45:3-5 & 13; & 16:10-17). Once this is done, the rest of the creed can easily fall into place. How can one believe that, on Judgment Day, every minutiae about us will become available to Him, the Master of Ceremonies (Al Maalik), to peruse, review and eval-

uate? Today, we find information stowed away in nature in a permanent manner: our fingerprints, of course; age of a tree revealed by the rings in its sawed-off trunk; murmur picked up by radio-telescopes is said to be the sound of the earliest ear-shattering moment that followed 'Be!' We no longer need a forensic expert to tell us that our DNA is very revelatory, right? Our retina is unique. Some have suggested, even our ears bear the tell-tale signature of their wearer. "Formed fully at birth, they do not change except that the lobe may descend a little." For diabetic patients, A1C test reports average glucose level over the previous three month period. So, when the Creator says that He will inspire our body parts to bear witness for or against us on Judgment Day, why should that be a surprise (24:24; 36:65; & 41:21)?

The Colors.

Al Hakeem (The Wise) made tall mountains upon which precipitation fall in abundance, owing to condensation brought about by the atmospheric coolness in high places. From rain or melted snow gather streams and rivulets to form mighty rivers roaring downhill and beyond for hundreds of miles to the sea. Paraphrasing the Quran: "that produces fruits and vegetation of various colors just as the colors of the mountains over which the water washes down. Even people and animals carry varying shades of color" (35:27-28). That is, all the nutrient or minerals that colorful vegetation, flower and fruits display come from colorful mountainous rocks and soils. For millennia, crops, flowering plants and fruit trees depended on whatever succor the earth had to provide directly. This correlation, as pointed out by the Quran (35:27-28), is so startling in its obviousness and scientific import.

Ironic.

In Suratul Hadid (57:25), the Almighty says that He sent down iron in which there is military

might and benefits for mankind. But the Quran was also sent down. Exactly the same verb is used for both events. Such a parallel is perplexing until one checks out the role supernovae (exploding star) has had on planets and other such bodies. Before our time, this portion of the verse was Mutashabihat. Now, it is Muhkamat. Surely, swords and shields, tips of bow and spears are gifts produced from the provision of iron. Likewise, pots and pans, hammer and nail, and bridges are great contributors to human welfare. Those are underlying Muhkamat elements of the verse. However, the real reasons have lain latent until only recently: the magnetic poles that spread a web of cover around Earth against the Sun's deadly ultra-violet rays and the red blood cells that courses through most animals causing them to live while also energizing them. Today's civilization brought about for over 200 years by windmills, looms, steam locomotives, motors, cars, electricity, computers and MRIs are then but just a small sample of iron's vital presence in our lives. Thus, the Muhkamat scope of this verse has expanded just as the verse on restoration of the fingertips. It is hard to imagine an Arab pagan or a desert nomad asking Prophet Mohammed (p) 1453 lunar years ago about the role of iron on earth and in the lives of animals, in particular, human beings! So, toward whom, other than today's humans, is this allusion directed?

The End.

Finally, long ago, as an undergraduate and graduate student of Economics, I learned about equilibrium. High School Physics, Chemistry and Biology, too, were replete with varied concepts of equilibrium. I spoke earlier about how the human body, when removed from equilibria of various types, seeks to restore it with food, water, sleep, medicine, etc. As we look around, we see hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. as means to restoring atmospheric equilibrium. Jet streams and ocean currents are driven toward attain-

ing equilibrium of temperature. Even osmosis in plants takes place for attaining equilibrium between solutions. Authentic faith speaks to equilibrium as being born of spiritualism and materialism. It also categorically signals the dual importance of personal freedom and social involvement. Without them, the physical and psychological well being of the individual will be endangered owing to a lack of equilibrium. A lack of balance in food is now blamed squarely for the widespread incidence of blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, asthma, and even children's autism. We are told by environmentalists, that if we are not careful quickly enough with effluents brought on by industrial production, we dare nature to violently and unexpectedly restore equilibrium by closing in upon us. So, these aspects of a human's life on earth appear to be the mirror image of the equilibrium or balance of the supreme order governing the creation and maintenance of the universe (67:3-4). Then there is this from the Quran, at the Creator's signal, a single blast of an angel's trumpet will bring the heavens and the earth crashing down (39:68). With everything be-stilled what will be nigh but the moment of resurrection (following a second trumpet blast; 50:20) and gathering together of all of mankind from Adam (p) onward (following a third and final trumpet blast; 69:13) in front of Al Maalik. A question arises: why is an external trumpet blast needed to shatter the equilibrium of the universe? Can it not self-destruct? Is there nothing organic about the universe that will shake it to its foundations and bring about its ruin? Apparently not, if we believe the self-sustaining equilibria with which it has been endowed! Our universe came about through an external intervention: 'Be!' It will perish, if my understanding is not shallow and my communication glib, by a similar external intervention. An exploding sun or a supernova, now and then, here and there, are too irregular and too far apart spatially and temporally to cause the demise of the universe.

In fact, interestingly today, among scientific community, having measured the energy of the Higgs-Boson field, there are rumblings afoot about the stability of the universe. It does not matter how long the scientists eventually say the universe has left to live, that it will end is in agreement with Quran. How long the universe will last is not theologically interesting to a Muslim. It is also of no practical value. Once queried about this by a companion, the Prophet (p) in turn asked the questioner what he had done to prepare for it (Bukhari: 3688/Bk-62, H-38). This matter is known only to God (7:187). After all, every person's end of time is the moment of his death!

So, yes, the Quran is replete with science and meta-science. An inquisitive, doubting, 'modern', 'rational' mind can find peace in its pronouncements. A belief in an All-Knowing, All-Powerful Creator is hardly far fetched when we realize He is the One Who dictated the wondrous Quran. In conclusion, here is a verse crying out for exploration: "The creation of the heavens and the earth is definitely a greater thing than creation of mankind, however, most of mankind knows not" (40:57). We could, of course, as we have been wont to for some time now, wait to see what science has say to about this matter and then use it to justify the verse and find comfort in doing so.

Allahu 'Alam!

[1] *God exists and is One; Resurrection and Day of Judgment will happen; God holds authority over everything good and bad; Angels; Revealed Books; and God's chosen messengers from among people, living among them, elected to transmit His message to them for their earthly guidance and heavenly welfare.*

[2] <https://alsunna.org/the-muhkamat-ayat-and-mutashabihat-ayat.html#gsc.tab=0>

Regarding interpreting such Mutashabihat verses, Fakhrudin Ar-Razi (r) eschewed literalism/anthropomorphism, whereas Taqi- Ad-Deen Abul Abbas Ahmed Ibn Tayymiah (r) appears to have taken the opposite position.

Appeal

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