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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.

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Question.

How does injection not break the fast? Please let me know how this conclusion was arrived and where is the result derived from?

Answer.

If the things that break ones fast reaches one's brain or stomach through the main channels of the body i.e. the mouth, nose, front or back passage etc. or through the temporary channels of the body i.e. a deep cut in the stomach in which medication is taken, it will nullify ones fast.

However, if it enters through the veins, it will not nullify ones fast.

As such, if a person is given an injection, the medication enters the veins of the body in which the blood of the body is greater than the amount of medication and eventually turns into blood by the time it reaches the brain or stomach. As it reaches the brain or stomach, it turns into blood and thus, it will not nullify ones fast.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is zakaat waajib on shares? If yes, then how will it be calculated?

Answer.

Zakaat is Waajib on shares. However, it should be noted that Zakaat is not Waajib on the entire share. Rather Zakaat is only Waajib upon the Za-

kaatable assets of the company (i.e. the market value of the merchandise contained in the share of the company). As far as the non-Zakaatable assets of the company are concerned e.g. fixtures, fittings, transport vehicles, etc. which are not part of the merchandise of the company, the value of all these things will be evaluated in the share and will not be taken in account when discharging the zakaat. If it is difficult to differentiate between the zakaatable and non-Zakaatable assets of the company, then as a precautionary measure one should discharge the Zakaat on the market value of the entire share.

If a person purchased shares in a company that hires out vehicles, e.g. a trucking company or leases out properties, estates, flats, etc., Zakaat will not be Waajib on this type of share. Instead, Zakaat will only be Waajib on the profits accrued from the share.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

What is the Shar'ee ruling regarding a person who did not discharge the zakaat of his jewellery, wealth and stock in trade for many years? How should he discharge the zakaat of the previous years?

Answer.

It is compulsory upon one to discharge the zakaat during the year the zakaat became compulsory. After calculating the zakaat on the zakaat

date, one should begin discharging the zakaat. Before the following years zakaat date, all the zakaat should be discharged. If one delays in discharging the zakaat until the following years zakaat became compulsory, one will be sinful. The law pertaining to zakaat of the missed years is that one will evaluate his zakaatable assets and discharge 2 ½ % of the total for each missed year. E.g. A persons zakaatable assets are evaluated at R100 000. He will discharge 2 ½ % of R100 000 (R2 500) for the first year. He will be left with R97 500. Thereafter he will discharge 2 ½ % of R97 500 (R2 437,50) for the second year. He will be left with R95 062, 50. He will discharge 2 ½ % of that amount for the third year. In this manner he will discharge the zakaat of the remainder years. This is in the case where one did not spend the wealth.

In the case where the person spent the wealth or sold the stock in trade and he is unable to ascertain the exact amount of wealth he possessed for each year of the ten missed years, he will apply his mind to the best of his ability in trying to work out the amount which he possessed for each year and accordingly pay 2 ½ % of that amount for the respective years.

If he is true and honest in working out his zakaat for the ten missed years and sincerely repents for the sin of delaying the zakaat, then Insha Allah, Allah will forgive him.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

I am due to calculate zakaat today. I am in possession of wealth in excess of nisaab for which I have calculated the zakaat payable. However Yesterday I received an amount of R105000-00 as a gift . Will I be required to pay zakaat on this amount as well as I did not have this money for the year . Please advice

Answer.

Yes, you will pay Zakat on this amount (R 10,5000-00) even if it was received a day before

your annual Zakat date.

It does not matter that you did not have this amount for a year because as long as a person possesses the nisab at the beginning and at the end of the year, Zakat will be due on the total amount of his wealth at the end of the year. As a result, any amount received even a day before your annual Zakat date will be added to your total wealth and Zakat given on it.

Likewise, any wealth that leaves your ownership even a day before your annual Zakat date will be subtracted from your total wealth and will not be included in your wealth for calculating Zakat.

Mufti Sohail

Question.

Does a woman have to keep Qadha of fasts missed due to menstruation?

Answer.

Yes, Sayyidatuna A'ishah RadiallaahuAnha reports from Rasulullah Sallallaahu Alayhi Wa-Sallam that a menstruating woman will keep the Qadha of missed fasts but there is no Qadha for Salaah missed during menses.

(I'laaus Sunan V: 1, P: 372, Idaratul Qur'an)

Question.

I would like to obtain some clarity on women that miss fasts in the month of Ramadaan due to being pregnant or are breastfeeding. Are they required to fast after Ramadaan the missed fasts or can they just pay the Fidyah?

Answer.

Women who are breastfeeding or pregnant may postpone the fast during Ramadaan if fasting will be detrimental to their health or the health of the child. After Ramadaan, they will have to make Qadha of the fasts they had missed when they are in a position to do so. Paying the Fidyah will not suffice if one is physically able to make Qadha of the missed fasts.

Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)

Question.

If a female starts menstruating whilst fasting in Ramadaan, can she eat (discreetly) when she is in seclusion? Similarly can she do so when she stops menstruating during the day? What if in both cases she kept the entire fast for that day. Will her fast be valid as she has completed some part of the fast as a pure/paak person?

Answer.

If her menses has commenced whilst fasting then she may eat discreetly (out of people's sight). However if her menses had terminated during the day, then she should abstain from eating and drinking etc. both in private and public and act as a fasting person. In both cases her fast will be invalid as menstruating women cannot fast. She will have to make Qadha for these days as well after Ramadaan.

(Ahsanul Fatawa, V: 4, P: 438, Sa'eed)

Question.

What is Kaffarah?

Answer.

The term Kaffarah refers to the penalty upon a person who intentionally breaks his fast for no valid Shari' reason by either eating, drinking or engaging in conjugal relations during the fast of Ramadaan. In the case of Kaffarah becoming obligatory on a person, a person will have to fast for 60 days consecutively. If a person cannot fast for 60 days consecutively due to a valid Shari' reason, for e.g., old age or a chronic illness, then he would have to feed 60 poor people two full meals for 1 day, or feed one poor person two full meals a day for 60 days or give them the equivalent in monetary value. The average type of a meal is 1.6kg of wheat or flour or its value.

(Maraaqil Falaah 1/250/1)

Question.

What is the shari ruling regarding the last time one is allowed to eat sehri? Are you supposed

to stop as soon as the time finishes or can you finish the food during or after the Azaan.

Answer.

Sehri time ends with subh-e-saadiQuestion. Once subh-e-saadiq has come in it is not permissible to eat or drink anything. If the Fajr azaan was called out a while after subh-e-saadiq had entered, and one continued eating after subh-e-saadiq had entered, then the fast of that day will not be valid.

Mufti Ibrahim

Question.

a) Can the Fidyah amount for old people or people who cannot fast due to health issues be given before Ramadaan starts? B) Who should it be given to? c) How much do we have to give?

Answer.

a) The Fidyah amount cannot be discharged before the commencement of Ramadhaan. The Fidyah amount may only be discharged after the commencement of Ramadhaan.

(Khairul Fataawa 4/89)

b) The recipients of Fidyah are the same as the recipients of Zakaat. Hence, all the conditions related to the discharging of Zakaat to Zakaat recipients also apply to the recipients of Fidyah. for e.g. the Fidyah amount has to be given to poor and needy Muslims and not non-Muslims.

(Shaami 2/369)

c) The Fidyah amount for people who are unable to fast the entire month of Ramadaan 2017 due to old age or ill health is R600.00 (R20 per fast x 30 fasts).

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I was told that to fast on Fridays is makrooh, please advise regarding the Shawwal fast will it still be makrooh?

Answer.

It is permissible to fast on a Friday only. It is not Makrooh (disliked to do so). However, one

should not regard fasting on a Friday to be compulsory.

(Badaai'-u-Sanaai' 2/79)

One may observe the fasts of Shawwal consecutively or individually. In doing so, a person will be observing the fasts of Shawwal on a Friday as well. This is permissible and will not have a negative effect on the fasts in any way.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Upon whom is Zakaat compulsory?

Answer.

Zakat is compulsory on every sane, mature Muslim who is owner of Zakatable assets equivalent to the Nisaab after a passing of a lunar year.

Question.

Who is regarded to have Nisaab?

Answer.

A person who has Zakatable assets equivalent to or more than the Nisaab after deducting liabilities will qualify as a Nisaab holder.

Question.

What is Nisaab?

Answer.

The Nisaab is a threshold. One who possesses Zakatable assets equivalent to the Nisaab amount, will be regarded as a Nisaab holder and will have to check one lunar year later if he still possesses Nisaab amount to pay Zakaat.

Question.

What is the value of Nisaab?

Answer.

The Nisaab is the value of 612.36 grams of silver.

Question.

How much will I have to pay?

Answer.

One will have to give 2.5% of one's total net assets.

Question.

What if one's wealth fluctuates during the course of the year?

Answer.

It makes no difference whether one's wealth increases or decreases during the course of the year. Only if one becomes insolvent then one's Nisaab date will expire.

Question.

Is there Zakaat on one's house and car?

Answer.

There is no Zakat on personal items which take the form of living necessity. e.g. a house, clothes, utensils, furniture, car and all household appliances without which life would fall into difficulty etc.

Question.

Is intention necessary?

Answer.

Intention at the time of giving Zakaat is a pre-requisite for the valid discharge of Zakaat.

Question.

Can a husband pay Zakaat on behalf of his wife?

Answer.

It is permissible to discharge somebody else's Zakaat from one's own wealth on condition one has approval and acknowledgement from the other party.

Question.

Is Zakaat compulsory on personal gold?

Answer.

Zakaat is compulsory on gold & silver in one's ownership for whatever reason and whichever form.

Question.

Is Zakaat binding on cash in a bank account?

Answer. Zakaat is obligatory on all cash whether in one's physical possession or in a bank account.

Question.

Do I have to pay Zakaat on money I have given to a brother as a loan?

Answer.

Zakaat is compulsory on debt receivables arising from forwarding a loan or selling stock on credit. The total outstanding balance will be added to one's gross assets.

Question.

I am in debt; do I deduct my debts when calculating Zakaat?

Answer.

Debts are deductible from your Zakatable total if they are to be repaid in full within the next 12 months.

Debts not repayable at all in the next 12 months are NOT deductible.

If debts are payable by instalment, then 12 months debt is deductible.

Question.

I have a business, on what value will I calculate Zakaat for my stock?

Answer.

One will pay Zakaat on the current market value of the stock of trade. Market value refers to the price that the consumer (i.e. the public) gener-

ally pays to obtain the item regardless of whether one purchased it for a higher price or lower price and regardless of whether one is selling it for a higher price or lower price.

The one who is involved in a retail business will calculate Zakaat according to the retail market value of the stocks. The one who is involved in a wholesale business will calculate his Zakaat according to the wholesale market value of the stock. The one who sells goods in retail and wholesale will calculate Zakaat according to a value that is between the retail and wholesale value. (Jadeed Fiqhi Masail, Vol.1 Pg.71)

Question.

We manufacture goods. Do we have to pay Zakaat on those goods?

Answer.

For businesses involved in manufacturing goods, all finished goods must be valued at their sale price, and all unfinished goods at market price.

Question.

Who can I give Zakaat to?

Answer.

Zakaat can only be given to either a needy Muslim who does not own in excess of his personal needs any surplus asset that is equal to the value of Nisaab or a debtor whose liabilities exceed Zakatable and surplus assets.

Zakaat cannot be given to construction projects, rich people, non-Muslims or the descendants of 'Abbas, Harith, Ja'far and Aqeel Radhiallahu anhum.

One cannot give Zakaat to one's parents, grandparents, children or spouse.

It is permissible to give Zakaat to one's needy brother or sister.

(Jamiat-ul-Ulema KZN)



And when the Satan beautified their deeds for them and said, "None of the people is to overpower you today, and I am a protector for you." But, when the two groups saw each other, he turned back on his heels and said, "I have nothing to do with you. I am seeing what you do not see. I am scared of Allah, and Allah is severe in punishment." (8:48)

Satanic Deception & Success

Elements of guidance we receive from what has been mentioned in this verse:

(1) That the 'Shaitan is man's enemy who employs all sorts of tricks, guises and stratagems to bring loss to him. There are occasions when he would simply inject a scruple in the heart and harass his victim and there are times when he would deceive man by appearing before him.

(2) That Allah has given him the ability to appear before man in various guises. Therefore, authorities among mystic scholars who are recognized as masters in illumination (kashf) and eye-witness (shuhud) have warned people that it is dangerous to start following a person simply by seeing him or hearing him say something without taking the trouble of finding out his antecedents and circumstantial conditions. There could be couched Satanic inputs even in what is known as illumination (kashf) and inspiration (ilham). So, the ideal method of remaining safe against satanic deceptions is to follow Divine Revelation faithfully.

(3) That the most frequent reason why people get involved in disbelief, polytheism or other impermissible doings is no other but that the Satan, by making their evil deeds appear handsome, desirable and beneficial, turns their hearts away from truth, as it is, and its consequences, as they would be. Once so brain-washed, they would start taking their false as the epitome of truth and their loss as the ultimate gain, so much so that, very much like the votaries of truth, they would be all set to lay down even their lives for the sake of their false notions. It was for this reason that the army and the chiefs of Quraysh, when they were departing from the Baytullah, had already supplicated before it by saying:

(O Allah, help the better-guided group between the two of us)

Such was the level of their unawareness that they simply walked into the snare of the Satan and started taking themselves to be the

ones better-guided and truth-oriented and, unbelievably enough, they would go to the outer limits of sacrificing their lives and possessions in support of their false stand - and that too with all 'sincerity' at their command!

From here we find out that bland sincerity is never sufficient unless the direction of deeds is correct.

In the verse which follows (49), there is mentioned a common saying of the hypocrites of Madinah and the polytheists of Makkah. It was almost in a strain of combined sympathy and contempt that it was said about Muslims:

(The belief of these people has deluded them).

It means that those handful of Muslims had come all the way to the battlefield of Badr to challenge an army so powerful and well-equipped as if those poor people have been deluded by their faith which seems to have thrown them into the jaws of death. Responding to them, Allah said:

(And whoever places his trust in Allah, then, Allah is Mighty, Wise).

The sense of the statement is that one who places his total trust in Allah never runs into disgrace because Allah is all-dominating and when it comes to wisdom, there is no plan or intelligence or insight into the future which can hold before it. In other words, those who know no more than what is material would only place their trust in nothing but the material. How would they know the secret power which lies in the treasures of the One who has created everything material. This power accompanies those who believe in Allah and place their total trust in Him.

Even in our day, there are those religiously-observing and innocent-looking Muslims who would become ready targets for those who claim to have advanced rationally and intellectually and who would benignly dismiss them as old-timers who might as well be

left alone. But, should such people be armed with perfect faith and trust in Allah, no harm can touch them - even if intended and tried.

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

Cont'd from page 40

are thrown away a year - only 3 billion are recycled.

- Every human being on the planet will use 136 kilos of single-use plastic a year

If these figures aren't frightening enough, it is expected that by 2050 plastic production will treble.

So what can we do?

To start, we can stop using disposable plastic products such as plates, cups and cutlery. We can find wood, metal or glass alternatives to items we use in the home. In Johnson's guide, she provides countless of examples on how she replaced items in her kitchen, bathroom and other aspects of her life with sustainable products.

We must remember that Allah appointed us as stewards upon the Earth.

"And it is He (God) who has made you successors (khala'ifa) upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty: but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful." [6:165]

Every Muslim is a steward upon the Earth, and Islam is a religion of Justice. We must strive to live in harmony with the environment by supporting organic farmers, fair-trade brands and make eco-friendly choices with our consumer power. It is a great shame that many other communities lead in these movements although it is in our own tradition to respect Allah's creation which includes animals and the Earth.

Also remember, change does not come overnight but take time, however, it will InshaAllah bring us closer to Allah.

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Salah

Chapter 84 : Circles and sitting in the mosque.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Since mosque is a place primarily for congregational prayers and for which people arrange themselves in straight rows. Here in this chapter, according to Sheikh-ul-Hadith Maulana Zakariya, Imam Bukhari wants to convey that it is also permissible for people to sit in circles in a mosque with the purpose to listen to religious speeches or sermons, however, the arrangement should not cause any inconvenience to a musalli.

Hadith No. 459

Narrated Nafi'

Ibn Umar said, "While the Prophet was on the pulpit, a man asked him how to offer the night prayers. He replied, 'Pray two Rak'ats at a time and then two and then two and so on, and if you are afraid of the dawn (the approach of the time of the Fajr prayer) pray one Rak'a and that will be the witr for all the Rak'ats which you have offered.'" Ibn Umar said, "The last Rak'at of the night prayer should be odd for the Prophet ordered it to be so.

Hadith No. 460

Narrated Ibn Umar

A man came to the Prophet while he was delivering the sermon and asked him how to offer the night prayers. The Prophet replied, 'Pray two Rak'ats at a time and then two and then two and so on and if you are afraid of dawn (the approach of the time of the Fajr prayer) pray one Rak'a and that will be the witr for all the Rak'ats which you have prayed.'" Narrated Ubaidullah bin Abdullah bin Umar: A man called the Prophet while he was in the mosque.

Hadith No. 461

Narrated Abu Waaqid al-Laithi

While Allah's Apostle was sitting in the mosque (with some people) three men came, two of them came in front of Allah's Apostle and the third one went away, and then one of them found a place in the circle and sat there while the second man sat behind the gathering, and the third one went away. When Allah's Apostle finished his preaching, he said, "Shall I tell you about these three persons? One of them betook himself to Allah and so Allah accepted him and accommodated him; the second felt shy before Allah so Allah did the same for him and sheltered him in His Mercy (and did not punish him), while the third turned his face from Allah, and went away, so Allah turned His face from him likewise.

Comments

The first two hadiths quoted from Ibn Umar carry almost the same content narrating that once Rasulullah (saws) was delivering a sermon while on the pulpit and the Companions were sitting around. A man came and asked Rasulullah (saws) about the night prayers i.e. 'Tahajjud'. Rasulullah (saws) advised him to pray rak'ats in pairs i.e., two each, and when the dawn is near he should add one rak'at in the end and make it whole as 'witr'. 'Witr' literally means an odd number, but in terms of prayers the last odd rak'ats of Isha prayers are called 'witr'. There is difference of opinion amongst the jurists about the number of 'witr' rak'ats and the way one rak'at is added in the end.

Optional (nuffl) prayers as a combination of two or four rak'ats

The Jurists have debated over the issue whether it is preferable to offer optional prayers as a combination of twos or fours rak'ats. Imam Malik, Imam Shaafa'ee and Imam Ahmad bin Hambal are of the opinion that it is preferable to offer optional prayers as twos whereas Imam Abu Haneefa recommends fours with a single salutation. As per Imam Abu Yousuf and Imam Muhammad, it is preferable to offer such prayers as a combination of four Rak'ats during the day and as two during the night (Umdatul Qaari).

The hadith quoted above in this chapter goes in favour of Imam Malik, Imam Shaafa'ee and Imam Ahmad. Imam Abu Haneefa supports his argument with the hadith quoted in Bukhari on the authority of Sayyida Aisha, saying:

"He (Rasulullah (saws)) used to offer four rak'ats, and you need not to ask their beauty and length; and then again he used to offer four, and you need not to ask about their beauty and length; and then he used to offer three rak'ats."

On the authority of Sayyida Aisha, Abu Dawood quotes:

"When asked about the night prayers of Rasulullah (saws), She (Aisha) said that he used to

offer Isha prayers with congregation and then return home where he would offer four rak'ats and then go to bed" (Umdatul Qaari from Abu Dawood)

Total number of witr rak'ats

This has also been a controversial issue amongst the jurists. Imam Malik, after mentioning a hadith from Motaa Imam Malik, prescribing single witr prayers, says:

"We do not act upon it, and the least number of rak'ats in witr is three" (Motaa)

As per Imam Shaafa'ee, witr can be one, three or five rak'ats, while Imam Abu Haneefa holds that it is exactly of three rak'ats. Both the juristic scholars of Hanafite and Shafaite school present one and the same above mentioned hadith in their support. According to the first and second hadith, Rasulullah (saws) told the enquirer to offer the night prayers as a combination of twos and in the end add one rak'at more to make the number odd as witr. Imam Shaafa'ee infers from this hadith that the last one rak'at should be offered separately. Hanafite school disagrees with this view and they conclude by these hadiths that one should combine another rak'at to the last two in such a way that after making 'tashshaud' after the two rak'ats he should get up without offering salutations and combine third rak'at with it.

Imam Bukhari has quoted a narration mentioning three rak'at witr prayer in the 'Kitab-ul-Witr' (book of the witr prayers). Also, three rak'at witr prayer has been quoted from number of Companions.

Third hadith

According to Abu-al-Waaqid-al-Laithe, three men came to Rasulullah (saws) at the time when people were sitting in a circle around him. One of them found a place in the circle and sat there, the other one felt shy to find a place and sat behind the gathering, and the third one turned away. This hadith shows that the people were sitting in a circle in the mosque thus prov-

ing Imam Bukhari's point regarding the permissibility of sitting in a circle in the mosque.

This hadith also shows that Allah rewards the bondsmen as per their intentions and the amount of effort they put in. The first man struggled to find a place nearby, the other one did not put any effort but sat behind the gathering, and third one turned back. All the three were rewarded according to their effort and intention as stated by Rasulullah (saws).

Chapter 85 : Lying down in the mosque with the legs stretched out.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Mosques are basically meant for the purpose of worship and not any kind of boarding or recreational space. There are some traditions which mention the undesirability of lying down in a mosque particularly in a supine position keeping one leg on the other. It is quoted in Muslim and Abu Dawood:

"No one of you should lie down supine keeping one leg over the other". (Muslim)

By establishing this chapter and quoting this hadith here, Imam Bukhari wants to convey the permissibility to do so at the times of need, e.g., if one is tired or feeling sick.

Hadith No. 462

Narrated Abbad bin Tamim

that his uncle said, "I saw Allah's Apostle lying flat (on his back) in the mosque with one leg on the other." Narrated Sa'eed bin Al-Musaiyab that Umar and Uthmaan used to do the same.

Comments

Abdullah bin Zaid says that he saw Rasulullah (saws) lying down supine in the mosque with one leg on the other. As already mentioned there are certain traditions which prohibit this act. Allaama Ayni has quoted Khataabbi saying that this hadith under discussion abrogates the hadiths prohibiting it. Allaama Ayni further

mentions that if one apprehends that the position could lead to the exposure of his private parts then it is not permissible, else there is no problem. Imam Bukhari has further supported his argument by mentioning that Sayyiduna Umar and Sayyiduna Uthmaan also used to do so.

Dissemination of Knowledge

Ibn Mas`ud (RA) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying, "May Allah freshen the affairs of a person who hears something from us and communicates it to others exactly as he has heard it (i.e., both the meaning and the words). Many a recipient of knowledge understands it better than the one who has heard it."

[At-Tirmidhi].

Commentary: Besides mentioning the eminence of knowledge, this Hadith contains inducement for preaching and inviting people towards the path of Allah. It also urges us to communicate knowledge exactly as we have heard it, without changing anything in the least.

The Fall and Fall

Straight Talk



Today, the West's leading nation is a full-blown projection of a picture that was precisely drawn in the past – a century and a quarter earlier – by its own outspoken leaders fighting for justice within their own borders, writes Syed Iqbal Zaheer.

A close survey and critical examination of the Western history, its social and economic philosophy, military endeavors, civilizational achievements, and other parameters of judgment, especially in the past hundred years, has led us – long in the past – to the hopeless situation of having arrived at opinions about it that are hard to change, hard to challenge.

True, we are influenced by Islam, but we do not judge others by Islamic values. We do not even judge them by religious values. After all, Western peoples are, by any order of preference, declaring not religious. So what's the point in dragging them into the courtyard of the Noble House? And what's the point in trying to judge them by values profound? For the great majority of them, there is no distinction between profane and profound.

Quite a few decades ago, we ended up as critics of the West, judging not by Islamic values, but by its own standards; by what the bearers of the burden were and what they are; by what they promised and what they delivered; by what they

say and what they do; by the hope they stirred and the dreams they shattered: dreams not only of the misconstruing millions and billions, victims of the “Western Dream,” but also of their own Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Mill, Goethe, the founding fathers, and, in fact, even Marx and Engels. They swear by democracy, but as China has observed about the recent election of a certain country as: “The ... election was ‘full of lies’ and a farce that exposed the ‘hypocritical nature’ of its democracy.” In the words of another commentator, “The world’s great beacon and agent of democracy, human rights, justice, and freedom ... American Reality has never matched the doctrine...”

Contrary to all expectations, now they seem to be bubbling with ideas that, if allowed a free reign of execution, they could fulfill the dreams of, and outclass Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, and many Hulagu Khans, the Mongols, and many others who slaughtered humanity in the past. At present, they are engaged in what Noam Chomsky (to whom and his class, the West is deaf),

has described as “the most extreme terrorist campaign of modern times,” and the sickening part is that they do it in the name of wiping out terrorists, whom they themselves created through crafty policies, executed by their proxies and, define it as you will, they themselves are paramount terrorists.

They promised virtue but delivered free sex; they promised women’s liberation but ended chaining them to the economic wheel that crushes them as it rolls; they promised art and craft, but ended up the most warped of body and soul; they promised purity of thoughts and intentions, but produced examples of disgusting porn and obscenity in art, literature and music. They promised freedom to the oppressed, to the humble, to the weak; but granted it to the vulgar, to the filthy, to the depraved, to their lie-manufacturing leaders.

They promised fraternity, freedom, and growth unparalleled, to the peoples of the world, but gave them violence, bullets and bombs dropped on the heads of innocent: peasants, shopkeepers, women and children, wiping out hundreds of thousands of families on the pretext of an evil, that has no existence but in their own stony hearts.

They have systematically turned everything profound into profane. They loot Museums and cry over ruins when fell. They cry over stones but have no tear for the millions they slaughter. Their eyes are dry, but their mouths are wet, and tongues

lolling, waiting to pounce on the weak to tear their flesh and bones apart, to take away their mineral resources.

They promised honest brokering but stole lands from the trusting and unsuspecting to give those who promise to build an exclusive Holy Empire, for a Holy people, upon a Holy Land. The Holy Empire is built on lies, deceit and cunning, as the foundation stones, for a Holy People of rotten souls, who do fund-raising by selling fake ashes of their forefathers to white-wash their sepulchers.

Today, West’s leading nation is a full-blown projection of a picture that was precisely drawn in the past – a century and a quarter earlier – by its own outspoken leaders fighting for justice within their own borders:

“... the great Kansas populist orator Mary Ellen Lease put things to an angry crowd in 1890 (in following words):

*They
promised virtue
but delivered free sex; they
promised women’s liberation but ended
chaining them to the economic wheel
that crushes them as it rolls; they promised art
and craft, but ended up the most warped of body
and soul; they promised purity of thoughts and in-
tentions, but produced examples of disgusting porn
and obscenity in art, literature and music. They
promised freedom to the oppressed, to the
humble, to the weak; but granted it to the
vulgar, to the filthy, to the depraved,
to their lie-manufacturing
leaders.*

“Wall Street owns the country. It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street.... Our laws are the output of a system which clothes rascals in robes and honesty in rags.... There are thirty men in the United States whose aggregate wealth is over one and one-half billion dollars. And there are half a million looking for work....

The people are at bay, let the bloodhounds of money who have dogged us thus far beware.”

(Listen to) “Another sterling populist speaker of the time ... (who spoke in similar vein); Ignatius Donnelly ... at the People’s Party national convention on July 4th, 1892, in terms that seem hauntingly familiar in our current New Gilded Age:

“We meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political, and material ruin. Corruption dominates the ballot-box, the Legislatures, the Congress, and touches even the ermine of the bench. The people are demoralized... The newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled, public opinion silenced, business prostrated, homes covered with mortgages, labor impoverished, and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists....The urban workmen are denied the right to organize for self-protection, imported pauperized labor beats down their wages, a hireling standing army, unrecognized by our laws, is established to shoot them down....The fruits of the toil of millions are badly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn, despise the Republic and endanger liberty... We have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the suffering people. We charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them.... They propose to sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires....” (A Nation Brought to the Verge of Ruin, Paul Street, Counterpunch, Oct. 2013)

Hopelessly chained to the love of the dollar, they behave as if they have no will of their own, acting upon orders, whensoever pressured by the will of the wealthiest of global presence: those who promise endless wars, until the slavery of Goyim is fully realized – on the rotting

carcasses of millions and billions.

They promised to be agents of freedom, democracy, and justice, but embrace every tyrannical dictator outside their own realm, and coax him to fire his guns from their shoulders to mass-murder his own citizens.

They raided, slaughtered, and annihilated countries in the name of democracy but within themselves, practice oligarchy run from behind the scene by fat-bellied Shylocks.

In sum, the West stood up, but only for a few moments, then it chose to fall – into the dark pits whose space quality is to be measured by the exhuming stench that now engulfs the globe from all sides.

They fall and fall.

Source: YMD (Apr-17)



Cont’d from page 43

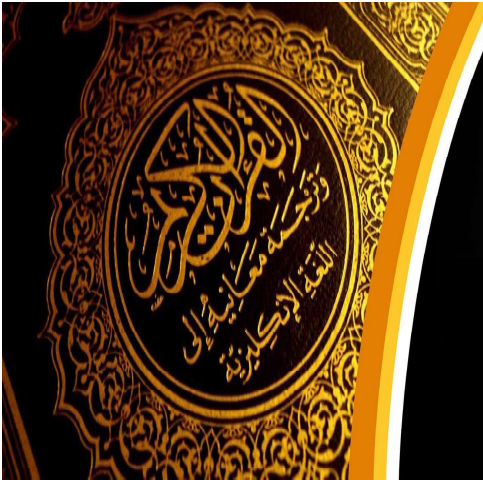
are met. For all we know, the person didn’t know that what they were doing is wrong or were just plain ignorant that they even committed that wrong.

- We DON’T become accusatory and take the ‘holier than thou’ route because then that would be of no help other than just putting the person into defensive mode. And then all your well intended *nasîha* would fall on deaf ears. Humility needs to be learnt and with it the *adab* of giving *nasîha*, or even how to differ over something might be what is called for.

The speech most hateful to Allah is when one man says to another man, ‘Fear Allah!’ and he replies, ‘Worry about your own self!’ (Shu’ab al-Iman 601- Al-Albani: sahih)

Allah says,

So admonish/remind them that maybe the reminder will be of benefit. And as for him who fears Allah, he will be reminded; but as for the wretched one, he will turn away. [Surah Al-A’la, 87:9-11]



The Month of the Qur'an

Aslam Abdullah

Before it came to be known as the month of Fasting, the companions of the Prophet knew Ramadan as a month of the Quran, the last and ever lasting divine guidance to humanity. "The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the Criterion (between right and wrong). So, whoever of you sights the month, he/she must observe fasts that month and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (of days which one did not observe fasts must be made up) from other days. Allah intends for you ease, and he does not want to make things difficult for you. He wants that you must complete the same number of days and that you must glorify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him." (2:184).

The revelation began in the month of Ramadan. The night in which the Quran began to be revealed is referred in the Quran as the blessed night: We sent it (the Quran) down on a blessed night, (44:2) or the night of Decree, Verily, we have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadr. (97:1). It was the strength, clarity, simplicity, and universality of the message that the night was described as an extraordinary night.

With its 6332 ayas (sentences) spread in 114 suras (chapters) divided in seven stages and 30

parts, the Quran was finalized and compiled in the life time of the Prophet who alone among human beings knew what it was. Only the Prophet could testify, verify and approve what the Quran consisted of as no other human being in his time shared that experience. He put his seal of approval on the finality of the divine message and gave his instructions on its arrangement. The Prophet ensured that every verse revealed to him was recorded and written at the time of its revelation.

In one of the several ahadiths (statements attributed to the Prophet) mentioned in Sahih Bukhari, one of the companions, Bara'a narrates that when the verse:

"Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home) except those who are disabled (by injury or are blind or lame), and those who strive hard and fight in the Cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives, Allah has preferred in grades those who strive hard and fight with their wealth and their lives above those who sit (at home) to each Allah has promised good, but has preferred those who strive hard and fight, above those who sit (at home by a huge reward." (4:95)

was revealed, the prophet immediately called one of the scribes of the Quran to bring in the

ink, pen, and the tablet so that it could be written down.

It is also mentioned in Masnad Ahmed, Sunan Abi Dawood, Sunan Nasai, Jami Tirmidhi, Ibn Habban, and Musdark Hakim that Usman bin Affan, the third Caliph, narrated that whenever a verse was revealed, the Prophet used to call scribes immediately and gave them specific instructions to write it in the sura (chapter) where it was meant to be.

Zaid bin Thabit is reported as mentioned in Sahih Bukhari, that in the life time of the Prophet there were at least four from Ansar of Medina, Abi bin Kaab, Maadh ibn Jabal, Zaid, and Abu Zaid who had the entire Quran written with them. It is also reported that in Medina Abdullah bin Saeed bin al-As, who was a calligrapher was specially instructed to teach the art of writing the Quran to the citizens of Medina.

Besides other materials, the paper was also used to write the Quran. The scripture refers to the word paper twice: But even if we had sent down unto thee [O Prophet] a writing on paper, and they had touched it with their own hands - those who are bent on denying the truth would indeed have said, "This is clearly nothing but a deception!" (6:7), "For, no true understanding of God have they when they say, "Never has God revealed anything unto man." Say: "Who has bestowed from on high the divine writ which Moses brought unto men as a light and a guidance, [and] which you treat as [mere] leaves of paper, making a show of them the while you conceal [so] much - although you have been taught [by it] what neither you nor your forefathers had ever known?" Say:

"God [has revealed that divine writ]!" - and then leave them to play at their vain talk. (6:92)

The Quran also uses the word Riq,

"In a Scroll unfolded; (52:3),

a kind of paper made from the skins of animals.

In the books of Ahadith, we come across the names of at least 45 more companions who knew

how to read and write the Quran. They are (in alphabetical order):

Aban
Abdur Rehman
Abdu Rehman bin Hur bin Umr bin Zaid
Abdulla Saeed bin al As
Abdullah bin Arqam Zahri
Abdullah bin Rawah
Abdullah bin Saad bin Ab Sarh
Abdullah bin Zaid
Abdullah bin Abdullah bin Abi Salool
Abu Abas
Abu Bakr
Abu Yunis Maula Ayesha
Ala bin Hadhrami
Ali ibn Talib
Aseed bin hadheer
Aus bin Khauli
Ayesha bint Abi bakr
Fatima bin Muhammad
Hafsa bint Umar
Handhala bin Rabi
Hundhala al-Asadi
Jaheem bin al Salt
Khalid bin Saeed bin al-As
Khalid bin Walid
Muaqaib bin Fatima
Muawiya bin Abi Safiyan
Mughaira bin Shaaba
Muhammad bin Salma
Munzir bin Umr
Nafe bin Tareeb bin Umr bin Naufal Tafawi
Rafe bin Malik
Sad bin al Rabee
Sad bin al-As
Sad bin Ibadah
Shahar bin Saad
Sharjeel bin Hasna
Ubi ibn Kaab
Umar bin al-Khattab
Umme Habiba bint Abi Safiyan
Umr bin Al-As
Umr bin Rafe
Usman bin Affan

Zaid bin Thabit
Zubair bin Awwam

The Prophet was so particular about preserving the Quran in writing that even at the time of his migration from Makkah to Median, he had a scribe with him with ink and pen.

The Quran describes itself as a book (kitab), a word that appears 230 times in various contexts.

Even though there are narrations in many books that suggest that the Quran in the form that we have it today was compiled during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr at the insistence of Second Caliph Umar bin al-Khattab and later finalized at the time of third Caliph, Usman bin Affan, the verdict of the Quran about its finalization, preservation, authenticity and compilation is overriding.

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption).” (15:17) “And (moreover) We have guarded them from every evil spirit accursed.” (15:17).

Or

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. (5:3).

It is obvious that the efforts of the Caliphs were to make copies of the Quran from the original for wider distribution in the Muslim world. It is evident from the writings of Ibn Hazm in his Kitab ul Fisl that over 100,000 copies of the Quran were present in the entire world at the

“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the Criterion (between right and wrong). So, whoever of you sights the month, he/she must observe fasts that month”. (2:184)

time of Umar bin Al-Khattab.

The Quran describes itself as a book that proves the commonality

of the divine messages previously revealed to earlier prophets that were not preserved in the original form by their followers.

It also asserts that the divine message has essentially been the same revolving around three main principles;

“And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition? (54:17)

1) monotheism in the sense that the source of all divine messages is Allah, the initiator and the creator of the universe,

2) the guidance from a higher and neutral source is needed by human beings to lead a simple and disciplined life. It is only through following the divine guidance human beings can discipline their lives the same way as every thing else in the universe runs in a perfect order.

3) the life is in constant evolution and the death would not end the life but move in a difference stage of existence where individuals and groups would be held accountable for every thing that they do and say in their limited life in this world.

The greatest miracle of the Quran is the consistency of this message evident in all its suras (chapters) and ayas (sentences). The linguistic beauty and style are apparent to only those who understand the language but the clarity and consistency of the message is for everyone regardless of their linguistic skills and they relevant for all times. In other words every sura of the Quran is connected with its overall message with variations in emphasis and every aya is related with a particular aspect of the message within the context of the total guidance.

Thus the month of Ramadan offers the believers a unique opportunity to refresh their understanding of the guidance and live it for an entire

month so that the life in coming months could be disciplined around that. Thus, the first task for every believer is to get connected with the divine guidance in a disciplined, consistent, and regular basis.

The fasting enables a person to live the principle of self control and self discipline, which is essential to realize the strength and relevance of the divine message.

Seemingly, a large number of Muslims do not know the Arabic language and hence find it hard to understand when the Quran is recited to them. Moreover, we have the traditions informing us that the reading of the Quran gives us the reward of reading one letter to the equivalent to the 30 letter reward. The mercy and the divine measurement for good deeds are limitless and this narration should be read in that context.

Besides earning reward for reading the Quran without understanding, we can also make efforts in the month of Ramadan to read it with understanding. This may even double or triple the reward. It is no harm to read the Quran with translation. Non-Arabic speaking believers can recite the Quran in Arabic and listen to its pronunciation during the taraweeh prayers, besides reading the translation in their own languages to understand the essence of the divine message. This understanding will enable us to get closer to the guidance of Allah.

Often it is argued that it is difficult to understand the Quran in any other language. The Quran, on the other hand repeats the following verse four times:

“And We have indeed made the Qur’an easy to understand and remember: then is there any that will receive admonition? (54:17)

Besides, the Quran also says:

“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know.” (30:22)

The reading of the Quran with meaning would give us an opportunity to understand the divine message as is and inspire us to appreciate its relevance for us in our times. Thus in addition to reading the Quran, we can also make efforts to live it.

We spend much of our efforts in correcting our pronunciation of the Quran. This is good and the proper sound of every letter and word must be perfected authentically. However, the main purpose of perfecting the pronunciation must never be ignored: i.e. to understand so that we could live the Quran, the way our Prophet lived it.

During the month of Ramadan we arrange lavish functions for the breaking of fast, a good practice to bring people together. However, if in these functions, we make it a habit to focus on understanding one of the passages of the Quran, probably we can make better use of these gatherings. It would not take us more than 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on the message of the Quran in these functions, but it would help us understand the divine guidance, the main reason for decreeing fasting in this month.

“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the Criterion (between right and wrong). So, whoever of you sights the month, he/she must observe fasts that month and whoever is ill or on a journey, the same number (of days which one did not observe fasts must be made up) from other days. Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. He wants that you must complete the same number of days and that you must glorify Allah for having to guided you so that you may be grateful to Him. (2:184).

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Philanthropy and Zakat

Habib Ali

Oliver Goldsmith, the Irish poet, once said: “Where wealth accumulates, men decay.” Philanthropy is more than just a monetary gift-love of mankind shown by practical kindness and helpfulness to humanity is its dictionary meaning.

Zakat is the third pillar of Islam; it is hard to translate the word or find its closest meaning in English. In Arabic, the word is derived from the root, “z-k-a.” The verb, zakka, “to purify,” also means, “to make something grow and develop.” Zakat is commonly known as “almsgiving.” This translation is not accurate if we consider the philosophy behind that pillar. There is a dif-

ference between almsgiving-Sadaqa-and Zakat. Sadaqa is a voluntary service of any kind that is given from one person to another.

The Blessed Prophet (saws) encourages everyone to give sadaqa, also known as khairat. A smile, words of sympathy, even giving half a date can be sadaqa. Whatever the words-differentiated for juristic reasons-the spirit is to alleviate humanity’s sufferings. Such was the example of Caliph ‘Umar, who sat watching children play after he had personally brought food to their poor family.

Yet how blessed and reminiscent is the Western Social Security system that there is a sense of monetary security, however lacking, for people akin to zakat recipients: the sickly, unemployed, invalid, divorcee, the disaster struck victim, etc. Aren’t they a breakdown of the Qur’anic miskeen and fuqara-the destitute and needy?

Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to administer the (funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer: (thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom. (9:60)



Everyone must receive from this spring

Have you thought how intertwined charity is in our life? E-mails begging for orphans of a disaster; money needed for a new councilor's campaign; help wanted in building a new mosque or school; the fundraising walk for the homeless; chocolate sales for support of a school; remembering a poor relative back home and wanting our fitra and zakat counted in the Ramadan drive for the homeless locally. It goes like the swirling waterway of a deep brook. It touches different soils of need and embellishes various roots of humanity as it meanders into the wide ocean of Allah's mercy harvested in the Hereafter.

The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it grows seven ears and each ear hath 100 grains. Allah gives manifold increase to whom He pleased: And Allah cares for all and He knows all things. (2:261)

Zakat is the right of the needy. By selfishly leaving it sitting in your account to grow, you would only cause self-ruin and malaise.

And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy), him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking). (51:19)

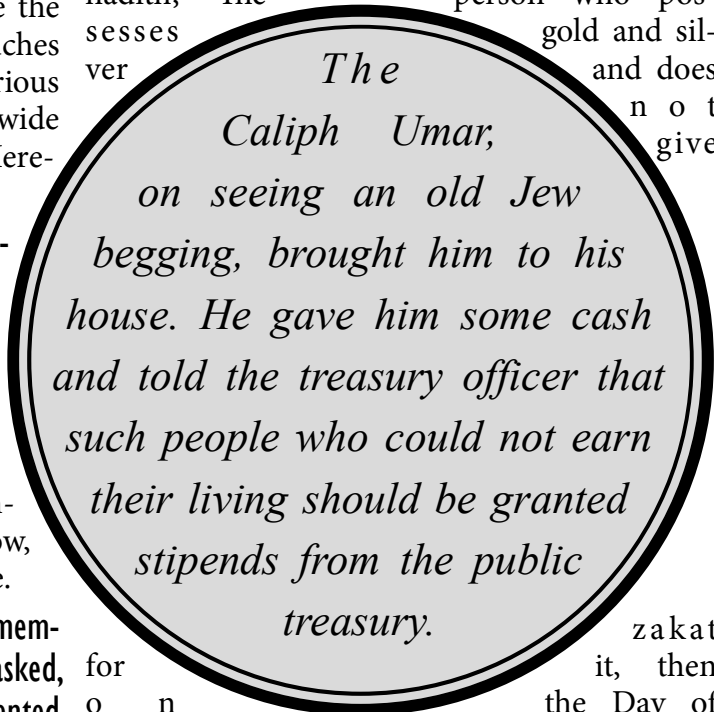
Purifying our souls from greed and checking our humanity is what giving zakat every year does-calculated best by spending some of it throughout the year on appropriate projects. The tax deductibles are just a returned gift and do not rob us of our rewards. If you wish to give that away too, such uninhibited generosity will smack of true Companion-style giving. They gave until it hurt. Yet they were unhurt.

Let the man of means spend according to his means: and the man whose resources are restricted, let him spend according to what Allah

has given him. Allah puts no burden on any person beyond what He has given him. After a difficulty, Allah will soon grant relief. (65:7)

Consequence for not-paying zakat

The person who has some wealth and still does not take zakat from it is regarded as a great sinner in the sight of Allah and will be severely punished on the Day of Judgment. According to hadith, "The person who possesses gold and silver



and does not give zakat for it, then on the Day of Judgment, slabs of fire will be made for him. These slabs will be heated in the fire of Hell and his sides, forehead and back will be branded with them. When these slabs become cool, they will be re-heated and the entire process will be repeated." Also, "The person who has been given wealth by Allah and despite this does not give zakat for it, then on the Day of Judgment, this wealth of his will be turned into a huge poisonous snake that will encircle his neck. It will then tear the sides of his mouth apart and tell him: 'I am your wealth and I am your treasures.' We seek refuge in Allah. Let us not fear man and ensure that our debts and tax-

es are never missed, nor do we ever forget God for His small kindnesses to His creatures!

Answer to the global economic injustice-zakat invested

I have seen foundations making zakat disbursement work for qualified organizations that are doing needed and successful community work. We have to not only give handouts but also ensure that there is a viable system to enhance our economics. The movements to end poverty may be overly ambitious, but their efforts are surely worth emulation.

The philosophy behind this has many dimensions. Islam considers rich people's properties not absolutely theirs. Unless they pay the rights of the poor, zakat, they are considered transgressors. Zakat is also a yearly reminder that what we earn and what we have is not really ours. It is a gift from God.

The reward is such that an entire economic system rests on it-balancing the haves and have-nots with modest cognizance of one another's rights and natures-not like the monsters that consume everything in the name of globalization or the selfish who relegate us to food stamps in the name of anti-capitalism.

Allah has blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful. (2:276)

Sadaqa is for everyone. During Ramadan, for example, Muslims may send Ramadan hampers to local food banks. Hunger has no religion.

Zakat was originally a tax on possessions with the proceeds going mostly to aid the poor (though the money might also be spent for other purposes, such as ransoming captives of war). The word, however, now more commonly refers to almsgiving. Are we aware of our own local needs before we trolley off huge sums to favorite faraway spots?

According to the 2000 Canadian Census, there are 320,000 registered Muslims in Ontario, 100,000 of whom live under conditions con-

sidered to be below the poverty line. Assuming that 60,000 Muslims are in a position to pay zakat, there remain a marked number of needy individuals within the community who would qualify to receive zakat.

If zakat and its charitable obligation are unique to Islam, then we have to make it equally unique to today's world.

United Way is, like many sister organizations, the apple of the eye when it comes to emptying our pockets on images of desperate faces-whether by corporate fundraising or media hype. The organization is indeed truly blessed in helping a variety of needs faced by this rich world. Then how come our collections are still struggling with paper clutter and moving red boxes? Think professional but be sincere, and Allah will make it happen.

Charity is best when given voluntarily

Although in the past Islamic States would have organized their collection and disbursement, today, in the absence of such ideal situations (and allowing that some spurious organizations send their administrative overheads sky high, forgetting the real needy), we should revamp our efforts to see that zakat carries with it the true emblem of voluntary philanthropy.

Say: "My Lord hath commanded justice; and that ye set your whole selves (to Him) at every time and place of prayer, and call upon Him, making your devotion sincere as in His sight: such as He created you in the beginning, so shall ye return." (7:29)

It is nearly impossible for every individual, from the filthy rich to the common man, to pay zakat in the prescribed way and for it to reach the deserving people. Meanwhile, an increasing number of Muslims would be falling below the poverty line every day.

Economics professor Timur Kuran takes full advantage of our flip-flop approach toward Islam. He writes in his book *Islam and Mam-*

mon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism (2004): The system has 1 million beneficiaries, which represent about 10 percent of the Pakistanis situated below the country's poverty line. An official report notes in this connection that in its eight years of operation, Pakistan's state-administered zakat system has had little visible impact on inequality. There has been no noticeable decline, it says, in the number of beggars and no discernible alleviation of poverty. Under the circumstances, people are losing faith not only in the system, but also in the belief that Islam offers a better economic order.

Philanthropy of the pious is never discriminatory

The Caliph 'Umar, on seeing an old Jew begging, brought him to his house. He gave him some cash and told the treasury officer that such people who could not earn their living should

be granted stipends from the public treasury. Once, seeing some non-Muslim lepers on his way back from a journey, he issued orders that they should be provided maintenance from state funds.

In a letter addressed to Adi ibn Artah, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al- 'Aziz wrote: "Be kind toward dhimmis (free non-Muslim subject of the Islamic State). If you find some of them old or helpless, give maintenance to them."

So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey; and spend in charity, that is better for yourselves. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, and then they are the successful ones. (64:16)

Make both sides of your coin work for you and share this piece with someone. Author Julia Alvarez said, "The point is not to pay back kindness but to pass it on."

Respect for Ramadhaan

There was once a fire worshipper who saw his son eating in the presence of Muslims during the month of Ramadhaan. As soon as he saw his son eating before the Muslims, he hit him and reprimanded him saying, "Why do you not show regard for the sanctity and respect of the Muslims during the month of Ramadhaan?"

It so happened that the fire worshipper passed away that very week. Soon after he passed away, the 'Aalim of that locality had a dream in which he saw the fire worshipper in Jannah! In the dream, he asked him, "Were you not a fire worshipper?" The man replied, "I was a fire worshipper. However, shortly before I passed away, Allah Ta'ala honoured me, by inspiring me to accept Islam, due to the respect that I had shown for the month of Ramadhaan." (Nuzhatul Majaalis)

BEING SHAPED BY RAMADAN

Khalid Mahmood

At this time when we experience occasions, of much sorrow and some contentment, we sense the promise in the advent of Ramadan, the month of mercy and forgiveness. In the climate of this month of light, we feel both spring and autumn at the same time in our inner worlds, seasons of lovely expectations and longing.

With their profound, spiritual breezes, every sound and breath of air in Ramadan announces in a most exalted and exhilarating style all the pleasures we would like to taste in life and the hopes of good we deeply cherish.

Coming like successive rays of light, the smiling days of Ramadan envelop us with the expectations, hopes and joys they carry from the worlds beyond, and present to us samples from Paradise.

When Ramadan begins, our inner life, its thoughts and feelings, is renewed and strengthened. Breezes of mercy, coming in different wavelengths, unite with our hopes and expectations, and penetrate our hearts. In the enchanting days and illumined nights of Ramadan, we feel as if all the obstacles blocking our way to God are removed and the hills on that way are leveled.

Like rain pouring on the earth, Ramadan comes with streams of meanings and emotions

that water dried and thirsty hearts, making the inner worlds of people propitious for new meanings and conceptions. By means of the light of the days, hours and minutes of this blessed month, hearts attain such spiritual depth and become so purified that they never desire to leave its climate of peace.

As Ramadan approaches, we live the delight of anticipation and preparation for it. The food and drink that come into our kitchens in the days before it comes, put us in mind of it with a thrill of expectation. And then it comes at last, laden with mercy and forgiveness. As soon as it honors us, each of us finds himself in a spiral of light rising toward the heavens and advances toward the Unknown Existent One in a new spiritual mood in the night-time and in another, different spiritual mood in daytime. We open our eyes to each of its days with a different solemnity and self-possession and reach every evening in an enchanting, delightful serenity.

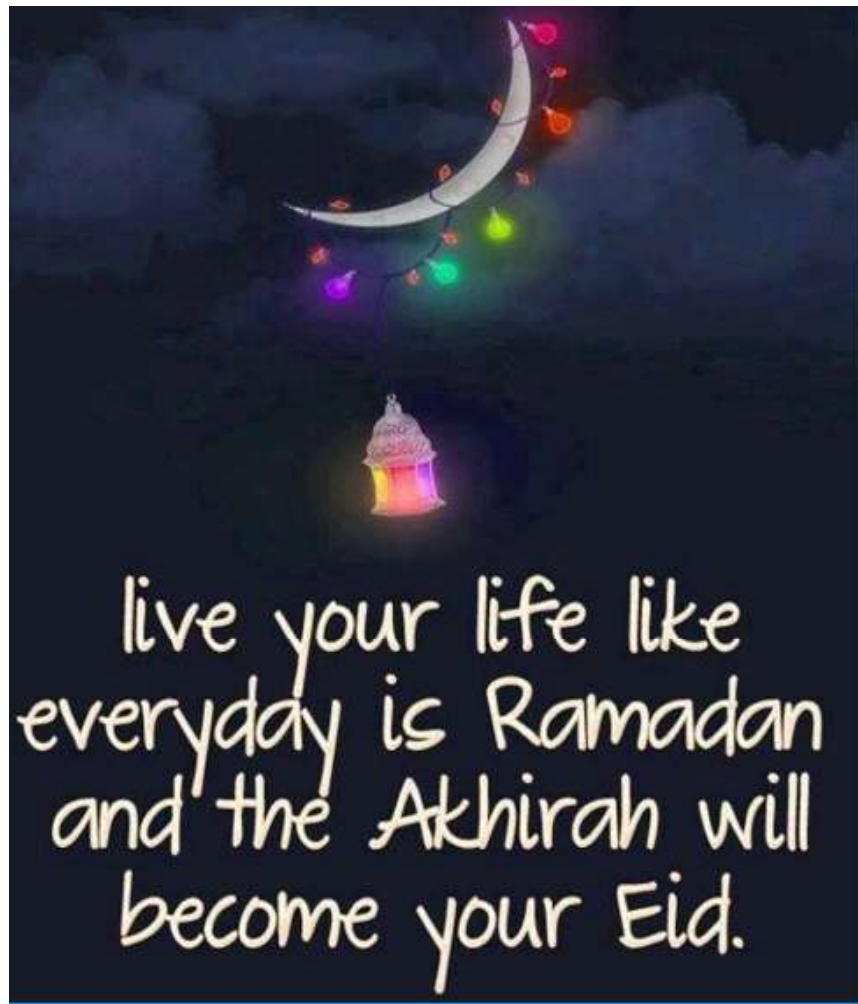
The pleasant nights of Ramadan receive warmest welcome from all souls. Eyes look more deeply in them and people feel deeper love for each other. Everyone desires to do good to everyone and passions and ill-feeling are subjugated to a certain extent. In Ramadan everyone feels so much more attached to God and is so careful

in his relations with others that it is impossible not to see this.

Believing souls taste the contentment of belief more deeply and experience the blessing of the good morals prescribed by Islam and the spiritual ease of doing good to others. Moreover, they try to expand, to share, this contentment, blessing and ease with others. Since these souls at rest are convinced that one day will come when this life will end in an eternal happiness and whatever they suffer and sacrifice here for God's sake will be returned with very great reward, they struggle against their animal appetites in a mood of doing an act of worship. The meals they take at sunset to break the fast give them the pleasure of worship and are followed by early night prayer with the addition of the supererogatory service of worship particular to Ramadan. The meals they take before dawn to start fasting are united with supererogatory night prayer (tahajjud) and become a dimension of their nearness to God. Streets are filled with the people going to and returning from mosques, in which declarations of 'God is the Greatest' resound as in the Masjid al-Haram in Makkah. You would think that the streets are each a mosque and each mosque is Ka'bba. The people shaped by Ramadan in this way, though mortal in nature, gain a sort of eternity and each of their acts done in the consciousness of deliberate worship becomes a ceremony pertaining to the Hereafter.

Nights are experienced more deeply and in consideration of the afterlife, and days are spent as portions of time dominated by resolution and

strong will-power. Those fasting for God's sake feel a thrill of joy, and spend every and each day in the excitement of a new re-union. They reach every morning in an indescribable feeling as if they were called to a new testing. You can discern on their faces a sign of humility mixed with solemnity, a feeling of nothingness before God together with serenity and seriousness and melancholy combined with a feeling of security. Their every act reflects spiritual peace and exhilaration coming from adherence to God's will and confidence in Him, and sincerity and kindness acquired by being cleansed in the cascades of the Qur'an. As if created from light and consisting in only their shadows, they are very careful to give no one any harm or trouble. Respect and courtesy are so much a part of their



nature that, even after a day of thirst and hunger and resisting their carnal desires, they remain gentle and pure-hearted. They display a mood shaped by fear and reverence, discipline and contentment, solemnity and politeness. They are respectful and reverent toward the Almighty and well-mannered and sincere toward one another.

Their faces and eyes reflect different degrees and dimensions of depth of spiritual realms and are radiant with the lights of the unseen world. Though each individual may have been shaped by a different climate and different ideas, -all of them, including the intelligent and pure-hearted, those used to a disciplined, careful life and those a bit untidy and careless, the nervous and the calm, those very sensitive to problems of the age and those a little unfeeling, the rich and the poor, the happy and sorrowful, the healthy and the ill, the white and black-share almost the same feelings in Ramadan. They reach the night and morning together, listen to the call to prayers and perform the prayers together, take the meals before dawn and break their fasts together. They feel together one of the two instances of rejoicing promised for those who fast [The Prophet said: There are two instances of rejoicing for one who fasts: one when he breaks his fast, the other when he will receive the reward of fasting in the Hereafter.]

All Muslims, whatever their nationality or country of origin or temperament or social status or physical state, come together and breathe the same 'air' in the climate of Ramadan. In it, their souls are shaped in a way particular to that climate, and they share a sort of deeply-felt happiness which can be experienced only by spirit beings. Ramadan has a fascinating effect on Muslims that leaves its positive imprints on even the souls of the poorest and most oppressed people.

Ramadan envelops us with many beauties: the pleasure in the supererogatory prayers performed after the prescribed night service; consciousness of the blessings of Ramadan; the light

that pours on us both from the heaven and from the lights that decorate the mosques; the nearness of the Creative Power and Its message of compassion and forgiveness whispered in our hearts. As if planned and commanded in order to kindle such feelings and thoughts in us, each element of the public rites in Ramadan causes the 'strings' of our hearts to resonate: the calls made from minarets and the blessings called on the Prophet, upon him be peace and blessings, and the pronouncements of Divine Unity, Grandeur and Glory which resound in our ears, all prepare our souls for worship. They awake us to spiritual and celestial truths and enable even the crudest soul to perform its duties of worship in the way those duties are meant to be performed.

The voices rising from minarets meet with the voices of the inhabitants of the heavens and resound throughout the heavens and the earth. They penetrate our souls and take us through a climate of purest meanings and poetry, a realm of sweet imagination. In this pleasant atmosphere, we feel as if it is Ramadan which pours from the heavens, which is discerned on the faces of people and scents the air and is written in the lights of the mosques.

Enchanted by this calm and peaceful atmosphere, we achieve a sort of infinitude and feel as if comprehending the whole of existence. Ramadan captivates particularly those open to eternity to such an extent that they experience nothing else than it.

I remember well that during my childhood when there was as yet no electricity in cities, people walked to mosques with kerosene lamps in the darkness of night. We imagined that Ramadan was walking around in the alleys in the lights of those lamps. Under the influence of poetry, meaning and deep spirituality which Ramadan poured into our souls, we desired that it should never come to an end. Nevertheless, despite our heartfelt desire, it flew away and the festive day followed it with all its pomp.

The Meaning of Ramadan

By Khalid Baig

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

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

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

During Ramadan the believers get busy seeking Allah’s mercy, forgiveness, and protection from Hellfire. This is the month for renewing our commitment and re-establishing our relationship with our Creator. It is the spring

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

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

Along with the possibility of a great reward, there is the risk of a terrible loss. If we let any other month pass by carelessly, we just lost a month. If we do the same during Ramadan, we have lost everything. The person who misses just one day’s fast without a legitimate reason, cannot really make up for it even if he were to fast everyday for the rest of his life. And of the three persons that Prophet, (saws) cursed, one is

the unfortunate Muslim who finds Ramadan in good health but does not use the opportunity to seek Allah's mercy.

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

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

This emphasis on these acts of worship may sound strange — even misplaced — to some. It requires some explanation. We know that the term Ibada (worship and obedience) in Islam applies not only to the formal acts of worship and devotion like Salat, Tilawa, and Dhikr, but it also applies to worldly acts when performed in obedience to Shariah and with the intention of pleasing Allah. Thus a believer going to work is performing Ibada when he seeks Halal income to discharge his responsibility as a bread-winner for the family. However a distinction must be

made between the two. The first category consists of direct Ibada, acts that are required for their own sake. The second category consists of indirect Ibada — worldly acts that become Ibada through proper intention and observation of Shariah. While the second category is important for it extends the idea of Ibada to our entire life, there is also a danger because by their very nature these acts can camouflage other motives. (Is my going to work really Ibada or am I actually in the rat race?). Here the direct Ibada comes to the rescue. Through them we can purify our motives, and re-establish our relationship with Allah.

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

This spirit is captured in I'tikaf, a unique Ibada associated with Ramadan, in which a person gives up all his normal activities and enters a mosque for a specific period. There is great merit in it and every Muslim community is encouraged to provide at least one person who will perform I'tikaf for the last ten days of Ramadan. But even those who cannot spare ten days are encouraged to spend as much time in the mosque as possible.

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

Source: Al Balagh

A Golden Opportunity to become a Muttiqi

Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat

Events and occasions give us an opportunity to track the passing of time; otherwise days, months and years would pass by without us realising. Whenever we look towards the future, it seems very distant; however, upon reflection over the past we realise how quickly time has elapsed. To understand the longevity of our future we have to evaluate it on our experience of the past.

As usual, the current Ramadān will also feel very long and the end will seem a long way away, but the reality of these days can be understood by the many Ramadāns we have experienced in the past; how short they were and how quickly they passed, and how after each Ramadān we felt that if only there were a few more days so that some beneficial action could be carried out. In order to save ourselves from such regret once again, it is of the utmost importance that we realise the great opportunity Ramadān is offering us and make the most of it.

The Objective of Ramadān

First and foremost we need to understand that Allah has granted us this great gift of Ramadān so that we may become muttaqīn - the people of taqwā. Allah states:

O you who believe, the fasts have been enjoined

upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may become people of taqwā. [2:183]

My late Ustadh Hadrat Hājī Fārūq sahib taught me the following supplication: O Allāh! You have given us this month so that we become people of taqwā; so make us from the people of taqwā.

What is Taqwā?

Now, the question arises what is taqwā? Once ‘Umar (ra) asked Ka‘b Al-Ahbār (ra) the meaning of taqwā. In reply, Ka‘b (ra), asked ‘Umar (ra) if he had ever walked on a thorny path and if yes how he had passed through it. ‘Umar (ra) explained that he gathered his clothes and ensured that his clothes didn’t get caught by the thorns. Ka‘b (ra) said, “That is taqwā.” The explanation of Ka‘b’s statement is that we too should pass through this world very carefully, ensuring we do not fall prey to nafs and Shaytān and commit a sin; be it minor or major.

Taqwā is a nūr (light) which enlightens and spiritually strengthens the heart to such an extent that the person finds a natural dislike for sinful activities. This becomes a barrier between him and the disobedience to Allah. This nūr of taqwā is acquired by forcing oneself to carry

out the commands of Allah and stay away from His disobedience no matter what sacrifice one has to give. This sacrifice is called mujāhadah, and every time this is carried out a special nūr is created in the heart. The more the obedience the stronger the nūr, until eventually the heart is enlightened to such an extent that it will not tolerate the filth of any sin.

The similitude of this can be likened to a person who abhors dirt. If he needs to walk through a dirty path way, he will have a natural aversion for the dirt and will instinctively gather his clothes to ensure his clothes don't get soiled. Similarly, once the heart has become filled with the nūr of taqwā, it will abhor sinful activities and places of evil and will develop an aversion to them, leading one to automatically safeguard himself.

On the other hand when a person disobeys Allah, the nūr of taqwā in the heart diminishes. The more sins a person commits, the more darkness engulfs the heart until a point comes when the heart becomes inclined towards disbelief. This very fact has been narrated in a hadīth of Rasūlullāh (saws).

Virtues of Taqwā

We can understand from the above that taqwā is one of the greatest favours Allah has granted us as it guarantees us success of both worlds. Allah states:

Whoever fears the disobedience to Allah, Allah will create for him a way out (from difficulties), and provide him (with whatever he needs) from where he does not even imagine. [65:3]

And whoever fears the disobedience to Allah, Allah will bring about ease for him in his affair. [65:6]

Race with one another towards Forgiveness from your Lord and towards a Paradise the width of which spans the heavens and the earth. It has

been prepared for the Muttaqun. [3:133]

Rasūlullāh (saws) has stated:

Verily the closest to me from the people are the Muttaqīn; wherever they may be and whoever they may be. (Ahmad)

Allah through His mercy, love and kindness has granted us this month of Ramadān which is full of blessings making it easy for us to carry out the commands of Allāh plus other spiritual deeds.

Ramadān and Taqwā

From the ahādīth and verses of the Qur'an we can list some of the special blessings and virtues of Ramadān.

1. This is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed.

2. This is the month in which the doors of Jannah are opened and the doors of Jahannam are closed.

3. The shayātīn are chained.

4. There is a night in this month which is better than a thousand months.

5. Allah calls out: 'O desirer of good hasten forward and O the searcher of evil, stop.'

6. Allāh emancipates people from Jahannam in thousands.

7. The first ten days of this month are of mercy, the middle ten days are of forgiveness and the last ten days are for emancipating servants from Jahannam.

8. Allah readily accepts du'ā in this month.

Allāh through His kindness has granted us these great blessings which boosts our efforts towards the path of taqwā. Let us therefore value this blessed month and resolve to carry out the following:

1. Taqwā and tawbah: Carry out all the commands of Allāh and abstain from all disobedience. Sincerely repent and seek forgiveness for all past negligence with a firm resolution never to return to it again.

2. Tilāwah: The month of Ramadān has a

strong connection with the Qur'an. Allah states:

The month of Ramadan is the one in which the Qur'an was revealed as guidance for mankind, and as clear signs that show the right way and distinguish between right and wrong... [2:185]

Rasūlullāh (saws) would revise the Qur'an with Jibrā'il (as) during this month. The pious people gave much importance to reciting the Qur'an in this month. The following few examples will suffice to make us realise how much effort we should exert.

- Imām Abū Hanīfah (ra) would recite one Qur'an in the day and one Qur'an in the night daily.

- Imām Shāfi'ī (ra) would recite one Qur'an in the day and one at night daily in salāh.

- Imām Bukhārī (ra) would recite forty one Qur'āns during the month of Ramadān.

- Hadrat Shaykh, Mawlānā Muhammad Zakariyyā (ra) would recite one Qur'an daily.

3. Abundance of Kalimah Tayyibah and Istighfār: In one hadith, Rasūlullāh (saws) has directed us towards four things we should do in abundance during the blessed month: recitation of Kalimah Tayyibah, asking for forgiveness, asking for Jannah and seeking refuge from Jahannam. My late father taught me a du'ā to be read in Ramadān when I was a child:

Lā ilāha illallāh, astaghfirullāh, as'alukal jannah, wa a'ūdhubika minannār.

There is no diety except Allāh, I seek forgiveness from Allāh, I ask from You (O Allāh) Jannah, and I seek Your refuge from the fire.

It was only when I grew up and became a student of Dīn that I realised that this simple formula of du'ā was actually a way of practicing upon the instruction of Rasūlullāh (saws).

4. Du'ā: There is much significance of making du'ā in the month of Ramadān. Allah has discussed du'ā in between discussing the rulings related to fasting in the month of Ramadān.

When My servants ask you about Me, then (tell them that) I am near. I respond to the call of

one when he prays to Me. [2:186]

In the hadith of Rasūlullāh (saws) we find that du'ā at the time of iftār is readily accepted. Similarly, at the time of suhūr du'ās are readily accepted. We find in the hadith of Rasūlullāh (saws) that Allah descends in the last portion of the night and calls out to His servants saying,

'Is there anyone who will make du'ā to Me so that I may accept it? Is there anyone who will ask of Me so that I may fulfil his request? Is there anyone who will ask My forgiveness so that I may forgive him. (Al-Bukhārī)

5. Spending in the Path of Allah: The month of Ramadān is also a month of charity. It is narrated that the generosity of Rasūlullāh (saws) would increase in this month. Spending in the path of Allah holds much virtue; just giving someone a sip of water or a mere date grants a person the reward of the fasting person. Therefore, one should make an effort to spend as much as possible. Zakāt is to be given on its appointed time whether in Ramadān or outside of Ramadān. The important matter is that one should try and endeavour to spend in charitable causes as much as possible. It should also be noted that when spending in the Path of Allah, a person should endeavour to find the most fruitful places for his Hereafter. A person should not give away his charity to the first person who knocks at his door; rather one should make an effort to spend in the most opportune of places. It should be remembered that spending is our need and not the need of the recipient; it is we who are in need of the reward of charity and therefore it should be our effort to find places to spend.

6. I'tikāf: A special significance is given to i'tikāf in the month of Ramadān. The fuqahā have stipulated that i'tikāf of the last ten days in the month of Ramadān is Sunnah muakadah 'alal-kifāyah. Hence, if the people of a locality leave this sunnah then the whole locality will be liable. Rasūlullāh (saws) carried out

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Keeping up the Spirituality

Do you remember the days when after finishing a long year at school we finally got a couple of months of vacation? There was so much anticipation for it and the first thing we wanted to do was NOTHING! We knew that although we had homework or projects or we just needed to brush up in some subjects we all just wanted to curl up in bed without having to worry about waking up early the next day. However if we kept doing this for all our vacation we realized that when we went back to class we had become rusty. We've neglected on stimulating our brain, now that we needed to get back to our studies we found it more difficult than ever.

Sometimes something similar happens when we get our period. We've been doing all our Salahs on time, our fasting and our Qu'ran reading but as soon as we get our period we fall into this "vacation" mode that makes us fall into this false idea that we cannot do anything during these days so might as well just "chill". But here we err; this could be the best time for a Muslimah to increase her good deeds and her learning of the Deen.

Rasullullah (saws) said:

"Do good deeds properly, sincerely and moderately and know that your deeds will not make you enter Paradise, and that the most beloved deed to Allah's is the most regular and constant even though it were little" (Sahih Bukhari)

The hadith indicates that our Lord has great love for deeds that are constant and regular; this means that there is really no "off-time" for men or women from doing that which is right. Even while we cannot move or speak just thinking about the attributes of Allah can count as Ibadah.

Now it is important for us women to understand that our menstruation is not a problem or a barrier that stops us from reaching a higher state. Often we are plagued with misconceptions, sometimes cultural baggage or societal representations that show this monthly cycle as more of a burden than a blessing. Yet as Muslimahs we know that everything sent from above is good and Allah does not burden a soul, instead He has sent us this deen to ease our burden. If we think about it, this monthly gift (as we sometimes sarcastically refer to) it is indeed



a gift. If it weren't for it we wouldn't have the joy of becoming mothers or of being healthy women. So in order to better deal with this we have to restructure our way of thinking towards menstruation, this way we can pass this positive influence to other women in our life.

So now that we have accepted this as a blessing and not an impediment, how can we make the best of these couple of days? Well below are

"Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire." (3:191)

some of the many things we can do to maximize our Ibadah during our period:

Seeking forgiveness (Istighfar): we're all committing sins all the time, consciously or not. Your heart needs a regular repentance to clear itself from all the dirt caused by sins, just like your home needs a regular cleaning. It is mentioned in a Hadith:

"When a slave (a person) commits a sin (an evil deed) a black dot is dotted on his heart. Then if that person gives up that evil deed (sin), begs Allah to forgive him, and repents, then his heart is cleared (from that heart covering dot);

but if he repeats the evil deed (sin), then that covering is increased till his heart is completely covered with it. (At-Tirmidhi)

And this is Ar-Ran that Allah mentioned (in the Quran),

"Nay! but on their hearts is the Ar-Ran (covering

of evil deeds and sins) which they used to earn" (83:14)"

During the month of Ramadhan wherein Allah promises forgiveness for those who sincerely repent is the perfect time to seek forgiveness to Allah for all those wrong actions we may have involved ourselves and to all those we wronged in the process. A favourite Istighfar Dua is :

'O Allah, You are my Lord, no one has the right to be worshipped except You, You created me and I am your servant and I abide to your covenant and promise as best as I can, I take refuge in you from the evil of which I committed. I acknowledge your favor upon me and I acknowledge my sin, so forgive me, for verily no one can forgive sin except you.'

Listening to the Qu'ran and reading the Tafseer: Listening to the recitation of the Quran is the perfume of the souls, the calmer of hearts, and the food of the spirit. Read the tafseer and meanings of the Qur'an. To reflect upon the verses of Allah is a form of worship; it is something that will draw one close to Allah.

We should try to understand the Qur'an. This will ensure that you are constantly reminded of the commands of Allah.

Ibn Kathir says regarding tafsir of [Soorah al-A'raf (7): 179]: The similitude of the one, who memorizes the Qur'an but does not act in accordance to it, is like a donkey, which carries a load of books, but does not understand!

We should read and study the deeper meanings of the Qur'an and act upon everything we read as this is what the Sahaba did. Some of the Sahaba took a very long time finishing the Qur'an because they wanted to implement everything they read before moving on to the rest of the Qur'an. A woman in menses can read the Tafseer of the Qur'an as long as she does not touch the actual verses of the Qur'an.

Listen to a lecture: You can listen to lectures of renowned scholars. These are freely available on the internet.

Dawah: With the extra time in our hands,

during these days we are not praying, we can use it wisely to start a new project. Ever wanted to start a new charity? Maybe your own halal business? Maybe a writing project. The sky is the limit!

Dhikr: Often when we have our period we feel like we are missing out on our ibadah since we cannot perform Salah. So a good option would be to keep track of the Salah times and use them to instead perform some dhikr. Our connection with our Lord does not have to suffer any throwbacks but can instead be strengthened during this time. We must remember that the remembrance of Allah can be done at any instance. Allah says in the Quran:

“Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (With the thought): “Our Lord! not for naught Hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the Fire.” (Surah al Imran 3:191).

Charity: You could volunteer to become a member of your local Islamic aid organization. You can involve yourself in charity work in the locality and work for various projects to raise money and awareness for good causes.

A woman in her menses during Ramadhan can feed a fasting person and gain the reward of their fast:

Rasulullah (saws) said:

“Whoever feeds a fasting person will have a reward like that of his reward (the fasting person)”, (Ahmad and Al-Nasai)

Dua: Ramadhaan is the month of blessings, mercy and forgiveness. It is the time wherein Allahs mercy is showering upon us. He is the Giver and we are in desperate need of His mercy. So go ahead and make dua, lots and lots of it; for dua is one of the best acts of Ibaadah.

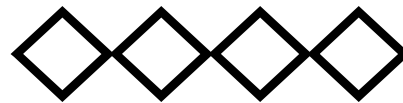
Rasulullah (saws) said:

“Dua is ‘Ibaadah (worship).” (Tirmidhi)

Make Dua for your dunya. Make Dua for your journey to the Akhirah. Make Dua for yourself and for your family. And for the Ummah.

Spread out your hands in humble submission to the One who gives all and sustains all from His limitless treasures and bounties. Ask and He will give you.

Dear sister there is absolutely nothing preventing you from worshipping your Rabb and gaining tremendous rewards during the month of Ramadhaan during your menses or even at other times. Your menses is NOT a hindrance in your path to attaining hasanat (good deeds and rewards). All that is needed is your effort, the right good intentions and sincerity on your part.



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i'tikāf in the last ten days of Ramadān throughout his life to the extent that he performed i'tikāf of twenty days in the Ramadān before his demise. This was to compensate the i'tikāf missed the previous year due to a reason and also to increase his devotion before departing from this world. I'tikāf will go a long way in establishing taqwā and connecting one to Allah.

7. Remembering Allah and doing good: Spend time in doing good as much as possible. Whilst standing, sitting and lying down - in every circumstance, keep the tongue moist with the remembrance of Allah.

My dear readers! Occupy yourself in doing good and value every moment of this blessed month. Life is very short and this golden opportunity of Ramadān will very quickly slip away. If we pay heed then Inshā'allāh this Ramadān will become a golden Ramadān for us in which we will become people of taqwā, thus acquiring success in both worlds. May Allah grant us the tawfiq. Āmīn.

Source: Riyādul Jannah

SPENDING THE DAY



Muhammad Ahmad

As Ramadan approached, I studied in depth how RasulAllah (saws) spent a typical day during this blessed month. If one were to imagine what it would be like to walk in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad (saws) in the month of Ramadan, one might think it would be impossible.

But is it?

Let us start from the beginning when the good news of the sighting of moon of Ramadan came to our Beloved Prophet.

Our beloved Prophet (saws) used to gather his companions and give them the glad tidings of the beginning of Ramadan to draw their attention and to give them a signal that the starting month is a month full of barakah (blessings) as reported by Abu Hurairah (ra):

“The Messenger of Allah said: ‘There has come to you Ramadan, a blessed month, which Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, has enjoined you to fast. In it the gates of heavens are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and every devil is chained up. In it Allah has a night which is better than a thousand months; whoever is deprived of its goodness is indeed deprived.’ (Nasa’i)

Our beloved Prophet started his day with praying Fajr with congregation as it was his norm in the other months. And He taught us the im-

portance of Fajr prayer, Jundub bin Sufyan (ra) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (saws) said, “He who offers the dawn (Fajr) prayers will come under the Protection of Allah. O son of Adam! Beware, lest Allah should call you to account in any respect from (for withdrawing) His Protection.”(Muslim)

He would sit after Fajr prayer supplicating and remembering Allah until sunrise and then supplicate the morning supplication as reported by Abdullah bin Masud (ra) and collected in Sahih Muslim.

And when it was forenoon, RasulAllah would perform Salatul Duhaa (the forenoon prayer) as reported by Aishah (ra):

‘The Messenger of Allah (saws) used to perform four Rak’ah of Duha prayer (at the forenoon) and would add to them whatever Allah wished. (Muslim)

The Messenger of Allah used to remember Allah a lot during his day and he informed us that it is the most beloved act to Allah as reported by Abud-Darda (ra):

‘The Messenger of Allah (saws) said, “Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions which are the purest to your Rubb, which exalt you to the high ranks, which are more efficacious than

spending gold and silver (in charity), and better for you than you should encounter your enemies whom you will smite their necks and they will smite your necks?" They said, "Certainly." He (saws) said, "Remembrance of Allah the Exalted." (Tirmidhi)

Also we can learn from the generosity of our Beloved Prophet in Ramadan. He gave a lot of Sadaqah and urge his companions to do so as well. The month of Ramadan is a month of blessing, a month which we remember the poor and the situation they live in. So giving a lot of Sadaqah was the Sunnah of our Beloved. As narrated by Ibn Abbas (ra):

'The Prophet (saws) was the most generous of all the people, and he used to become more generous in Ramadan when Gabriel met him. Gabriel used to meet him every night during Ramadan to revise the Qur'an with him. Allah's Messenger (saws) then used to be more generous than the fast wind.' (Bukhari)

As we all know, our Beloved used to read Quran in abundance in Ramadan and it is the only month which he would finish the Quran in one night. As reported by Aisha (ra):

"I do not know that the Messenger of Allah recited the whole Quran in one night, or prayed Qiyam until morning, or ever fasted an entire month except Ramadan." (Nasai)

In the evening, as it was his norm the Messenger of Allah used to hasten the breaking of his fast as reported by Sahl Bin Sa'ad (ra):

"The people will remain on the right path as long as they hasten the breaking of the fast." (Bukhari)

When He broke his fast he taught us to supplicate before breaking our fast as reported by Abu Hurairah (ra):

'There are three whose supplications are not turned back: A just ruler, and a fasting person until he breaks his fast. And, the supplication of one who has been wronged is raised by Al-

lah up to the clouds on the Day of Resurrection, and the gates of heaven are opened for it, and Allah says, 'By My Might I will help you (against the wrongdoer) even if it is after a while.'" (Ibn Majah)

And as reported by Anas bin Malik (ra) and collected by Imam An-Nawawi in his famous work Riyadh Saliheen:

"The Messenger of Allah would break the fast with fresh dates before performing Salat. If there were no fresh dates then (he would break the fast) with dried dates, and if there were no dried dates then he would take a few sips of water." (Tirmidhi)

In the last ten days the Messenger of Allah would stay awake at night and pray the whole night not alone but together with his family members.

Aishah (ra) reported:

When the last ten nights (of Ramadan) would begin, the Messenger of Allah (ra) would keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awaken his family and prepare himself to be more diligent in worship. (Bukhari, Muslim)

To complete the 24 hour cycle, our Beloved Prophet used to eat suhur and he urged his Ummah to do so because of its immense blessings. As collected in Sahih Bukhari Anas bin Malik (ra) narrates that,

The Prophet said: "Take Suhur as there is a blessing in it." (Bukhari)

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And the ultimate important lesson of Yusuf's AS story is summed up in Yaakub's AS words, repeated twice over,

"Patience is most befitting" (Qur'an 12:18, 83)

in relation to the working of the divine Will.

Acknowledgement: Most of the information for this work has been obtained from:

"A History of the Prophets of Islam", Volume I, by Suzanne Haneef
"Stories of the Prophets", by Ibn Kathir (Translation by Rashad Ahmad Azami)

Prophet Yusuf (AS)

THE BROTHERS' SECOND RETURN TO YAAKUB AS

Nine brothers now home with their loads of grain – and with heavy troubled hearts.

When they put the whole matter in front of their father, the aged, weakened prophet did not collapse or die in front of their eyes, as they had feared. Instead, he responded to their news with the same words he had spoken when they had brought him the false tale of Yusuf's AS death.

“Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. Perhaps Allah will bring them to me all together. Indeed it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise.” (Qur'an 12:83)

Yaakub AS had firm faith that Allah's will was working in some strange, mysterious fashion and that it was toward some good end.

Nonetheless, the pain of separation and the strangeness of the situation worked upon the bereaved father's heart. He was overcome with grief and wept uncontrollably. This time he had lost not one son, but two more. He remembered Yusuf AS, and wept until he became ill and lost his sight. (Qur'an 12:84) The brothers were concerned about his pain and sorrow and questioned his constant grief.

Despite the fact that it was they who had brought this trouble upon their old father, the nine sons were anything but sympathetic as they listened to his broken-hearted murmuring.

They reproached him,

“By Allah, you will not cease remembering Yusuf

until you become fatally ill or become of those who perish.” (Qur'an 12:85)

He said,

“I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know. (Qur'an 12:86)

He addressed his sons and asked them to go and seek information about Yusuf AS and Binyamin. Overlooking their lack of sympathy and support, he tried, despite his own grief to give them comfort in their uneasy and troubled state.

“O my sons, go and find out about Yusuf and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people.” (Qur'an 12:87)

THE THIRD JOURNEY TO EGYPT

The nine brothers now returned once more to Egypt. They stood before the Al-Aziz, Yusuf AS. This time their pride broken, their dignity stripped away.

They begged him to release their brother Binyamin, who stood by Yusuf's AS side. When the brothers appealed to Yusuf AS and described the sufferings of their family, he began to weep. The command came to him now to make himself known to them, actualising what had been revealed to him years earlier when they had abandoned him in the well:

“You will surely inform them [someday] about

this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity].” (Qur’an 12:15)

The brothers fell back in astonishment at hearing Yusuf AS mentioned by the virtual ruler of Egypt. Then, it is reported, they saw on his forehead, now that he had removed his coronet, a mark which they recognized as belonging to Yusuf AS. Even then, they could hardly believe the evidence of their eyes.

“Are you indeed Yusuf?” (Qur’an 12:90),
they asked in utter amazement.

He said,

“I am Yusuf, and this is my brother. Allah has certainly favoured us. Indeed, he who fears Allah and is patient, then indeed, Allah does not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good.” (Qur’an 12:90)

Imagine the deep shame and humiliation the brothers must have felt at that moment. When Allah had tested them, they had listened to Shaytan, allowing envy and enmity to dominate their lives. While they had tried to destroy Yusuf AS when he was vulnerable and weak, even to the point of contemplating murder, he had repaid their evil by generosity and kindness. While they had hated and envied him, he had showed them utter nobility of heart.

They said,

“By Allah, certainly has Allah preferred you over us, and indeed, we have been sinners.” (Qur’an 12:91)

Gentle and forbearing, Yusuf AS had no desire to take revenge on his brothers by even so much as a hint of reproach.

He said,

“No blame will there be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful.”(Qur’an 12:92)

Yusuf AS immediately made plans to reunite his family. He requested the brothers return to

their father and cast an old shirt of his over their father’s face. This, he said, would cause him to become clear sighted. He added,

“And bring me your family, all together.” (Qur’an 12:93)

And so the brothers set out again for home.

THE REUNION OF YAAKUB AS AND YUSUF AS

When the caravan departed Egypt, Yaakub’s AS premonitions and intimations from Allah became very strong and he began to feel the scent of Yusuf AS. His family members showed him no pity or sympathy and dismissed the aged prophet as being deranged.

The brothers arrived home and they cast the shirt over Yaakub’s AS face and he became clear sighted. He cried out,

“Did I not tell you that I know from Allah that which you do not know?” (Qur’an 12:96)

The brothers expressed their remorse and sorry for what they had done.

The noble prophet assured his sons that he would ask for forgiveness for them from Allah. Life Yusuf AS, he uttered no reproach, vented no anger and held no grudge in his heart against his ten sons for all the suffering they had caused him and their two younger brothers. More than that, he comforted and assured them of Allah’s unfailing forgiveness, saying,

“Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (Qur’an 12:98)

The patriarch then departed with numerous family members from Palestine towards Egypt. It is reported that when Yaakub’s AS family neared Egypt, Yusuf AS went out to receive his parents with honour, accompanied by many people, possibly including the king and the royal retinue.

And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they bowed to him in prostration. (Qur’an 12:100)

Then Yusuf AS said,

“O my father, this is the explanation of my vision of before. My Lord has made it reality. And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you [here] from bedouin life after Satan had induced [estrangement] between me and my brothers. Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise. (Qur’an 12:100)

Then Yusuf AS recited one of the most beautiful prayers recorded in the Qur’an, saying,

“My Lord, You have given me [something] of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous.” (Qur’an 12:101)

At this point the best of stories comes to an end. The heart of the story of Yusuf AS is patience in the face of adversity and sorrow. Yusuf AS faced every trial with patience and complete trust in Allah. His father Yaakub AS bore his grief and misery with patience and submission.

We may assume from another verse in the Qur’an, (2:132-33) that perhaps after repentance, Yusuf’s AS brothers became better men, sincere in faith, and that continued in Allah’s worship and carried the message of His Oneness to the idol-worshipping Egyptians.

It is reported that when death approached Yaakub AS, he made Yusuf AS his heir, having him promise that he would take his body back to Palestine for burial, which Yusuf AS dutifully fulfilled, burying his father with Ibrahim AS and Ishaq AS in the cave that Ibrahim AS had bought for the purpose in Hebron.

Yusuf AS is said to have been the father of two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and that he lived for 120 years.

Yusuf’s AS high rank with Allah is made clear by the fact that Prophet Muhammad SAW

met him in the third heaven during this Ascension to the heavens. (Bukhari)

May Allah’s boundless peace and blessings be upon Yusuf AS, and upon his honoured and distinguished forefathers, Ibrahim, Ishaq and Yaakub for all eternity.

TIME OUT FOR REFLECTION

Yusuf’s AS story is loaded with powerful, unmistakable symbolism. The ten brothers are unwilling to admit the Allah-given superiority of their half-brother’s nature over their own. Out of envy and readiness to follow Shaytan’s promptings, they conspire to reduce him to the lowest of the low. But Allah who has granted Yusuf AS a noble nature and chosen him as a prophet, too him out of the depth of degradation and raised him to the height of honour, power, authority and usefulness. And in the end, the brothers had no choice but to admit his superiority and their own sinfulness.

Yusuf’s AS story is a striking lesson in forgiveness and generosity. His kind behaviour towards his brother without a word of reproach makes him the model of forgiveness, forbearance and generosity of all times.

From the Zulaikha affair, we learn that prohibited deeds and sins can be resisted if there is sufficient fear of Allah and strong will. And from Zulaikha, we learn the lesson of taking honest responsibility and facing the consequences of one’s mistakes without lying or making excuses.

And the central message of the story, in the words of Yusuf AS himself,

“Indeed my Lord is subtle in what He wills” (Qur’an 12:100),

that is in the unfathomable and often mysterious workings of the divine Will.

Allah’s wisdom and knowledge are so all-embracing and yet subtle that only He knows the interconnection of events and people within His divine plan.

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ZERO-WASTE AN ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

Refusing, Reducing, Re-using, Recycling, and Rotting, are not novel notions to our faith, guest writer Nafisah Kara argues.

Almost every follower of the zero waste movement seems to have started their journey reading Bea Johnson's *Zero Waste Home*. After reading this from book cover to cover (and making countless handy notes), I have come to the conclusion that the principles of zero waste coincide completely with our religion – Islam.

To achieve a zero waste life Johnson swears by a five-rule mantra to apply when considering one's consumption or disposal of waste. Refuse, Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Rot.

As Muslims, with everything new we learn, we must always consider what Allah and our Prophet Muhammad (saws) have to say on the matter through the Quran and Hadith.

On reading Johnson's guide many quotes and sayings came to mind which resonate with the Islamic teachings – parts of the religion I had never truly implemented. This book was very useful in how to implement these teachings in today's world.

REFUSE

Refusing what you don't need seems self-explanatory, but our inability to refuse freebies that we don't need is remarkable. How many leaflets, pens, key rings, and business cards do we collect and leave lying around the house or simply throw into the trash? Refusing these items will lessen demand for marketing compa-



nies to produce so much and encourage them to adopt better creative and sustainable ways to promote their businesses. These 'freebies' are using up unnecessary resources which are often non-recyclable.

REDUCE

There are plenty of Ayahs from the Quran which speak against being excessive in material possessions and diet.

“(Woe unto him) who amasses wealth and counts it a safeguard” [104:2]

“O Children of Adam, take your adornment at every place of prayer, eat and drink, but be not excessive – Indeed Allah likes not those who commit excess” [7:31]

Regarding food consumption:

“The first calamity for this nation after the Prophet’s (saws) death is fullness of their stomachs; when their stomachs became full, they became obese and their hearts weakened and their desires became wild” [Bukhari]

The Quran is clear in warning us of the tests that come with attaining material possessions or being excessive in our consumption. The more you possess, the more distracted you are from focusing on Allah. Taking care of all of our ‘stuff’ is time consuming – it requires constant maintenance, organizing and causes us stress which we don’t need. The more we consume, the greedier we become.

RE-USE

The Prophet Muhammad (saws) would mend his cloths and repair his own shoes in times of poverty, but also in times of ease. The idea of not being wasteful is not a new phenomenon but something which was practised by many prophets of the past.

Prophet Muhammad (saws) also taught:

“He who sleeps while their neighbor is hungry is not one of us.” [Muslim]

This is the motivation behind many charities led by Muslim organizations running soup kitchens and food banks around the country. Food banks are run on donated food items, as well as warm clothing to keep warm in winter. These items are critical for those who are sleeping rough or families living in poverty around the UK (or anywhere else in the world). Finding a second life for many of our possessions does not require much effort and reduces how much we waste. There are thousands living in poverty in our, countries in desperate need of items we would usually chuck away.

RECYCLE

Islam is a religion that provides guidance on every aspect of our daily lives. Disposing waste appropriately is also mentioned.

“Abu Barza once asked Muhammad (saws): ‘Teach me something so that I may derive benefit from it.’ He said, ‘Remove the troublesome thing from the paths of the Muslims.’” [Muslim]

ROT

Rotting our waste is a great way to reduce what we throw into landfill. Food waste such as vegetable peelings, egg shells and old left overs can be thrown into the food waste to produce nutritious compost for your garden. Paper, ash and wood items can also be thrown into compost bins in your back garden to feed the mini ecosystem, feeding thousands of tiny insects.

Our Plastic Problem

So now that we know that Islam supports a zero waste lifestyle, how else can we motivate ourselves to adopt this lifestyle? After all it requires more work, extra planning and can be time consuming. To become passionate about living zero waste, we must become aware of our current relationship with plastic.

Putting it simply, plastics are great for durability. It is this durability however which means that once a plastic product is made, it will remain on this earth FOREVER . Every single piece of plastic ever thrown away is harming our habitats, environments and oceans.

Here are some worrying statistics which should motivate every Muslim to make changes:

- Over 8.3 billion metric tons of plastic has been thrown away in the last 68 years
- 80% of this plastic has leaked into the ocean killing marine life and seaming into our food chain – That is the weight of 8 billion elephants or 55 million jumbo jets.
- In the UK alone, 13 billion plastic water bottles

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Only Allah Can Judge Me

Mohammad Zahid

“Only Allah Can Judge Me!” This phrase is thrown around quite often, mostly by those wanting to find a loophole to justify their questionable actions. In a time where there is an explosion of knowledge on the Internet and many people are starting to learn and practice their Dîn, there are many still entangled in the web of desires. Many Muslims today are using statements like “Don’t judge me” or “Only God can judge me” to run away from advice.

The Sahaba, when advised to fear Allah, would thank the person who had just reminded them —with tears in their eyes. Today if someone questions our behavior, we feel we are being accused —or worse insulted! Instead, we start to retort by finding fault with the person advising us and saying, “Hey! You aren’t perfect, you can’t tell me what to do.” Well, if that were the case, no one on the face of the Earth across the stretch of time, could advise anyone else save the Prophet of Allah (saws) himself. By the standards of Prophet Muhammad (saws), these are feeble excuses fit to be given only by the immature.

The companions of the Prophet (saws) sinned, so who are we in comparison? We need to embrace the concept that we could have done something wrong; we should actually be thank-

ful that we have someone as a friend or family who has taken the time out to come and advise us. If not for love and care towards us, why would someone else care what we do? Think about it.

When we utter these words, do we even pause to think of the implication? Allah—the One from whom nothing is hidden, the All Seeing, the All Hearing— is being called upon to judge us when we utter these words! This is where the hitch comes in, where we think: ‘Oh, Allah is Al-Rahman and Al-Rahim, He’ll forgive me.’ Yes, He might, but not if we show arrogance whilst sinning. We also need to remember that Allah is Shadid al-Iqab.

Why should we bother as to what others do?

Firstly, because Allah tells us to,

Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma’roof (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful. [3:104]

Secondly, because if my fellow Muslim sins, then yes it does have an impact on ME. If one

part of the body is infected, it weakens the whole body. We have the story of how the People of Musa were denied rain just because of the actions of one man. Allah tells us,

Corruption has appeared on land and in the sea for what men's hands have earned, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, that they may return. [30:41]

If the Ummah fails to do its duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, or wrong, or corrupt, then it will spread throughout the Ummah, and it will deserve the curse of Allah. For Allah cursed those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved because they failed in this important duty.

Allah tells us,

Those among the Children of Israel who disbelieved were cursed by the tongue of Dawood (David) and Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary). That was because they disobeyed (Allah and the Messengers) and were ever transgressing beyond bounds. They used not to forbid one another from Al-Munkar (wrong, evil-doing, sins, polytheism, disbelief) which they committed. Vile indeed was what they used to do. [5:78]

Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq narrates,

I heard Allah's Messenger (saws) say, "When people see something objectionable and do not change it, Allah will soon include them all in His punishment. (Al-Tirmidhi)

Prophet Muhammad (saws) said

If you see a munkar (un-islamic act), you change it with your hand; and if you cannot do that, then change it with your mouth (speak out against it); and if you cannot do [even] that, then forbid it in your heart — and that is the least of belief. (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (saws) in a Hadith Qudsi tells us,

Let not any one of you belittle himself. They said: O Messenger of Allah, how can any one of

us belittle himself? He said: He finds a matter concerning Allah about which he should say something, and he does not say [it], so Allah (mighty and sublime be He) says to him on the Day of Resurrection: What prevented you from saying something about such-and-such and such-and-such? He says: [It was] out of fear of people. Then He says: Rather it is I whom you should more properly fear. (Sunan Ibn Majah, weak isnâd)

Can WE judge?

We have numerous examples throughout our history of giving *nasîha* and judging people based on their actions. Many of the collectors of Hadith like Imam Bukhari used to judge the reliability of the person narrating the hadith by their outward actions and not by "What's in the heart, Allah knows."

'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab said,

Verily, in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saws) the people would be judged by revelation, but the revelation has ended. Now we judge you according to your outward deeds. Whoever shows us good, we will trust him and favor him and it is not for us to judge his inner secrets, for Allah will hold him accountable for those. Whoever shows us evil, then we will not trust him or believe in him even if he claims his intention is good. [Sahîh al-Bukhari]

Abdullah Ibn 'Umar said,

When we noticed that a man was not present at Fajr and 'Ishâ' prayer, we would think badly of him. (graded sahîh) (Bukhari and Muslim)

How to Judge?

Allah tells us in the Quran,

But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, [O Muhammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and sub-

mit in [full, willing] submission. [Surah Al-Nisa', 4:42]

Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth so you may judge between the people by that which Allah has shown you. And do not be for the deceitful an advocate. [Surah Al-Nisa', 4:79]

And judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their inclinations and beware of them, lest they tempt you away from some of what Allah has revealed to you. And if they turn away — then know that Allah only intends to afflict them with some of their [own] sins. And indeed, many among the people are defiantly disobedient. [Surah Al-Mâ'idah, 5:49]

All this goes to show that the criterion by which we are supposed to judge among ourselves is what Allah has revealed and the teachings of His Prophet (saws). We don't let personal bias or hidden grudges take precedence over our advice and actions in enjoining good and forbidding evil. Yes there are also those who just question and judge unnecessarily without any intention of helping, but rather just to show themselves as superior, or its like. Positive criticism, you people! Care for the one you are advising —just as if they were your own brother or sister.

Some say that they have good intentions, yet their actions are quite contrary to what they say. Don't accept that the ends justify the means. No, good intentions —when joined with reprehensible actions— are deficient, insufficient. It doesn't work —simply saying something— we have to walk the talk.

True, proper intentions are the first requisite for pleasing Allah, and we know that He will judge our deeds starting from our intentions. But among our brethren we judge by deeds while allowing them the possibility that we have misread them . However, their improper deeds warrant our *nisîha*, our gentle counsel to them.

Here's what we MUST DO:

- Make as many excuses as possible for the sake of your brother/sister by giving them the benefit of the doubt. Understand the scenario of the action and the situation of the doer whilst he was committing that action.
- Practice extreme patience.

As my grandmother says, "People who start practicing the Dîn anew are generally very strict and go to extremes. They forget that they themselves were once sinners and at the edge of the cliff. Had not Allah saved them, where would they be? How would they feel if they themselves were so harshly reprimanded?"

- Keep a calm tone, that doesn't sound accusatory —and with a smile on the face. Take them aside and make it clear that you do this only out of love and care for the person.
- Speak to their parents or someone close to them whom they trust or whom they at least respect enough to take advice from.
- Advise privately first but if the person keeps committing the sin and inviting people to it in public, then such people deserve to be spoken to more openly and warned against. Exhaust yourself in advising privately and having *husn al-dzhan* (good thoughts and excuses) first before even thinking of going to the next step.

Here's what we MUST NOT DO:

- We DON'T tell them, "YOU are going to HELL!"
Hey, did Allah tell you His judgement?
We don't single out people marking them for Hell or Heaven. THAT is solely up to Allah. What we say in advice is that these actions, or continuing them without repentance, set them up for Hell.
- We DON'T shame or call people out in public for their sins unless a host of criteria

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Seekers of the Truth and Islam

Daud Batchelor

Anselm Turmeda, a prominent 14th Century Franciscan scholar in Europe trained for the priesthood. Once when his ill teacher was absent fellow seminarians discussed meaning of the mysterious ‘Paraclete’ whom Jesus in John’s Gospel (14:25-28) explained: “your [Paraclete] whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all I gave you.” The similar Greek word ‘Periklutos’ means ‘Ahmed’ in Arabic.

Turmeda went to the house of his teacher who asked, “What did you study today?”

Turmeda informed on the disagreement about the Paraclete’s identity. He advised the name is known only by extraordinary scholars.

Turmeda requested the gift of knowing to which the priest replied after receiving assurances of secrecy that it is a name of “our Prophet Muhammad (saws).”

He elaborated “My son, if Christians persisted in the original religion of Jesus, they would indeed belong to the religion of God, for the religion of Jesus and all Prophets is that of God.”

He then advised Turmeda to enter Islam.

He explained why he himself hadn’t converted: “God only revealed to me the truth ... of the superiority of Islam in my old age and after decrepitude of my body.” He feared losing his high status.

He encouraged Turmeda to rush to embrace Islam “thereby gaining for yourself this world and the next.” Turmeda did so in Tunisia and the ‘straight path’ he lost while remaining a Catholic was regained in the path that was at once truly Christian and Islamic.

The terrible Spanish Inquisition was wrought to arrest such spreading Islamic truths.

During Prophet’s (saws) lifetime, Heraclius, Christian Byzantine Emperor, also respected Islam.

He once questioned Abu Sufyan about Muhammad (saws). Abu Sufyan, then a disbeliever, answered Heraclius’ questions, which confirmed that Muhammad (saws) was indeed the prophet Heraclius was expecting from scriptural research.

Heraclius also had strange dreams. He sought enlightenment from a scholarly friend who agreed that Muhammad (saws) was the ex-



pected prophet.

Heraclius then invited all Byzantium heads to his Homs palace and ordered all doors be closed. He spoke “O Byzantines! If success is your desire and you seek correct guidance, and wish for your empire to remain, pledge allegiance to this Prophet.”

On hearing this people ran towards the gates like wild beasts but found the doors closed.

Heraclius realising their hatred for Islam said “What I said was only to test the strength of your conviction about your religion.” People were then delighted as is reported by Imam Muslim and At-Tirmidhi.

Byzantines shortly after lost much territory to the Muslims.

Respected Muslim scholar, Sheikh Nuh Keller, once attended a Catholic university.

One textbook by James Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, highlighted that “the thought of Jesus’ deity seems to be a

relatively later arrival on the first century stage. Paul does not yet understand the risen Christ as the object of worship: he is ... the one for whom praise is given ... the one through whom the pray-er prays to God but not the object of worship.”

The idea of Jesus being God was clearly not part of original Christianity but added later as seen in John’s Gospel.

Sheikh Nuh left Christianity on the understanding that the two natures, divine and human, must be mutually exclusive.

These exceptional cases, ancient and modern, witness the perennial struggle between truth and falsehood.

Some western commentators refer to the current age as a ‘Post-truth society.’ The Prize however, is won by those who seek the Truth (al-Haqq), leading to God Himself.

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Introduction to God

by God Himself

Collection of verses from the Holy Qur'an

Compiled by Dr. Abid Ahmad

Aal-i-Imran (The Family of Imran) - 3

God. There is no god but He, - the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal. 2

It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). 3

God is Exalted in Might, Lord of Retribution. 4

From God, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens. 5

He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He, the Exalted in Might, the Wise. 6

God doth support with His aid whom He pleaseth. 13

For in God's sight are (all) His servants. 15

There is no god but He, the Exalted in Power, the Wise. 18

But if any deny the Signs of God, God is swift in calling to account. 19

The final goal is to God. 28

Whether ye hide what is in your hearts or reveal it, God knows it all: He knows what

is in the heavens, and what is on earth. And God has power over all things. 29

And God is full of kindness to those that serve Him. 30

God loveth not those who reject Faith. 32

God heareth and knoweth all things. 34

God provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure. 37

Doth God accomplish what He willeth. 40

God createth what He willeth: When He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, 'Be,' and it is! 47

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