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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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Contents

1. Question Answer	02
2. Lesson from the Qur'an: Reformers and Mischief-Makers	07
3. Lesson from Sahih al-Bukhari	09
4. Philanthropy and Zakat	12
5. The Month of the Qur'an	16
6. Uniting the Muslim Village	19
7. The Meaning of Ramadan	22
8. Ramadan Rain	24
9. Seeking Laylatul Qadr	26
10. Being Shaped by Ramadan	28
11. The Chaos	31
12. The Five Despoilers of the Heart	34
13. Seerah: Ramadan Teaching's	37
14. An Anatomy of Murder	40
15. Personality: Amr ibn al-Aas (ra)	43
16. The Remedy for Refraining from Sin	45

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Question

A person intends travelling during the course of the day and at the time of Subah Sadiq (when the fast commences) he is still in his hometown? Is it permissible for him not to fast?

Answer

It is compulsory for a person who is present in his hometown at the time of Subah Sadiq to fast. Since he only intends travelling during the course of the day the concession of not fasting does not apply to him. Hence, if he does not keep the fast he will be sinful.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

What is the status of Sehri in Ramadaan?

Answer

Sehri is a Sunnah practice. Rasulullah Sal-lallaahu Alayhi Wa Sallam is reported to have said, "Partake of Sehri, for verily there is Barakah (blessings) in Sehri." (Bukhari, Muslim) However the fast is valid without Sehri.

Question.

Does the use of an injection break the fast?

Answer

The fast is not nullified. However if the injection is injected directly into the stomach or

brain, the fast would break. (Ahsanul Fatawa, V: 4, P: 432).

NB. Dosages of Insulin injected to the abdomen does not invalidate the fast as it is not injected directly into the stomach.

Question.

Can I have a blood test done whilst fasting?

Answer

Yes, you could do so provided that you do not become so weak that fasting becomes difficult. (AhsanulFatawa, V: 4, P: 435, Sa'eed)

Question.

If one vomits, does it break the fast?

Answer.

The fast is only broken if one had vomited a mouthful involuntarily and swallowed it voluntarily or if one had voluntarily (induced) vomited a mouthful whether swallowed or not. (al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah- V: 1, P: 203/4)

The definition of "mouthful (vomit)" is that which one cannot hold back in one's mouth without difficulty.

Question.

Is it permissible to swim whilst fasting?

Answer.

It is not advisable to swim whilst fasting. If water is swallowed by mistake or enters through the nose and reaches the brain then the fast will break and a Qadha will have to be kept. (Tahtawi Alaa Maraql Falaah, P: 671)

Question.

Is it permissible to apply oil to the head whilst fasting?

Answer.

Yes it is permissible to do so. (al-Fataawa al-Hindiyya- V: 1, P: 203)

Question.

I am writing exams during Ramadaan and find it difficult to concentrate whilst hungry. Can I delay my fast until after Ramadaan?

Answer.

It is not permissible to do so. Keep your fast and pray to Allah Ta'ala to make it easy for you. (Fataawa Raheemiya V: 2. P: 34)

Question.

I am an asthmatic. Does the usage of the pump break my fast?

Answer.

It is advisable that you use your pump at Sehri time and Iftaar time. However, if you do have an acute attack, you could use your pump. This will break your fast however.

Will my fast break if my nose bleeds?

Answer

No, the fast is not broken by mere nosebleed. However if blood flows down the throat, it will break if one tastes the blood in the throat or the blood swallowed is more or equal to the saliva swallowed with it. If the blood is less than the saliva, the fast is still intact. (al-Fataawa al-Hindiyyah- V:1, P: 203)

Question.

Can one take a bath after Sehri, to be cleared from the state of Janaabat (requiring Fardh Ghusal)?

Answer

It is not advisable to unnecessarily delay the Fardh Ghusl. However if one is the position that he wants to partake of Sehri before taking the Ghusl then it is permissible.

Question.

If one is fasting and sprays perfume on oneself and accidentally inhales some of the perfume, will it break the fast? Will Qadha have to be made?

Answer.

One's fast does not break by wearing, feeling or smelling fragrance. As such, it is permitted to apply perfume (itr) whilst in the state of fasting. However, if one was to intentionally inhale something that has a perceptible body, such as smoke (like the smoke of lobaan, the vapour of perfumes, agharbatti, Oudh etc.), then one's fast would become invalid. (Tahtawi ala Maraql Falaah, P:660)

Question.

Does masturbating break the fast?

Answer

One is not allowed to masturbate, whether fasting or not. However if one does this vile act whilst fasting then the fast will break and a Qadha will have to be kept. (Raddul Muhtaar, V: 2, P: 399)

NB: One should make sincere and abundant Taubah for this debase act.

Question.

Is it permissible for a husband and wife to kiss whilst fasting?

Answer.

It is permissible, provided that:

i. One does not swallow the saliva of his/her partner.

ii. One has control over his/her desire and is not driven by desire to sexual intercourse or ejaculation. (Raddul Muhtaar, V: 2, P: 410)

However such an action in the state of fasting is not advisable. If the saliva of the spouse is swallowed then not only is Qadha to be made but also Kaffarah (i.e. fasting consecutively for 60 days).

Question.

I am a diabetic and not in a position to keep fast. How do I compensate for the missed fasts?

Answer.

Allah Ta'ala has granted permission to people like yourself to compensate the fast with contributions for poor Muslims. The Jurists have equated this amount to that of Sadaqatul Fitr (money given on Eid day to the poor). The current (Ramadhaan 1438) price in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa is R20.00 or more for each fast. It could be paid at the beginning of Ramadhan or at the end. (Shaami). This money may not be discharged before Ramadaan.

Jamiatul Ulama (KZN)

Question

To whom does the Ayat of fasting apply?

Answer

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

Question

Does a minor child have to fast?

Answer

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

Question

Does a sick person have to fast?

Answer

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

Question

Can a traveller omit fasting?

Answer

A Shar'i musafir (traveller) who embarked on his journey prior to dawn is permitted to omit the fast of that day. As long as he is a Shar'i musafir, he may omit fasting.

Question

What about travelling during the day?

Answer

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

Question

Whilst fasting, if the gums begin to bleed and the blood flows down the throat will the fast break? If so will both Qadha and Kaffarah be Waajib or only Qadha?

Answer

If the blood which was swallowed with the saliva was more than the saliva or equal to it then the fast will break and only qadha will be waajib. If the blood was less than the saliva then the fast will not break.

Mufti Zakaria

Question

I was wondering, if a person breaks a fast for no reason, he has to fast for 60 consecutive days. But what if this was done in the days of ignorance and now there are too many fasts to catch up and it is quite impossible to do so? Is there a dumm that can be paid? And if so, approximately how much per fast?

Answer.

In the case where multiple Ramadaan fasts where broken in the past, it is not a requirement that 60 fasts be kept for each fast. Rather the keeping of one period of 60 fasts will serve as a Kaffarah (expiation) for all the previously broken fasts. It must be noted that the Kaffarah of 60 fasts is separate from the Qadha of the broken fasts. Hence, in addition to the Kaffarah fasts, one Qadha fast must be kept for each of the missed fasts. For example, if a person broke 20 fasts, they will have to keep 1 X 60 days Kaffarah fasts and 20 Qadha fasts, totalling 80 fasts altogether.

Qadha fasts may be kept together or separately. They are individual fasts and hence a specific order is not necessary.

The 60 days of Kaffarah fasts must be kept consecutively for it to be valid. It should be kept at a time when the dates of the Eids will not come in between, as it is not allowed to fast on the Days of Eid and this would break the continuity of the Kaffarah fasts. Hence, the Kaffarah should be kept at a time when one is in good health, and when one feels relatively certain that they will be able to fulfil it. The winter months would be easier than the summer months. A

female gets some respite during the Kaffarah fasts, unlike a male, as she does not fast during her menses. When her menses begins, she must immediately stop fasting and must immediately resume fasting (from the next Sehri) when her menses ends.

Mufti Moosa

Question.

Is it permissible to use mouthwash whilst fasting?

Answer.

It is Makrooh (disliked) to use mouthwash whilst fasting.

Moreover, if the mouthwash is swallowed, the fast will be nullified and Qadha of that fast will be compulsory.

A Miswaak should be used instead to remove any odors from the mouth.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

There is a man who is owing my husband R50,000, he has debts that exceed his income, can my husband give him Zakaat? If he repays my husband with the same money after he takes ownership, to free himself from his debt, is that within Sharia regarding Zakaat?

Answer.

In principle, if the person's liabilities exceed his assets and income, he qualifies to receive zakat.

If your husband gives his zakat to a debtor without any condition to pay the loan, the zakat will be discharged. The debtor may independently pay his debt to your husband.

However, we advise one should exercise precaution in discharging zakat.

In the enquired situation, it may be difficult to control ones niyyat of independently discharging zakat and not expecting a repayment of the loan with the zakat money.

M. Huzaifah

Question.

There were two Mayyits, a male and a female. Janazaah Salaah was performed for both of them together. Is this correct? Should Janaazah Salaah have been performed for both of them separately?

Answer.

The Janaazah Salaah for a deceased male and female can be done collectively or individually. In doing so, the deceased male's body will be placed first in front of the Imaan. Then the deceased female's body will be placed in front of the Imaan after the deceased males' body.

In both cases, the bodies will be placed in line with the chest of the Imaam. (Al Bahrur-Raa'iq 2/202-Tabyeenul Haqaa'iq 1/242)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

When should one recite the Dua when entering and leaving the toilet? Before or after entering and leaving the toilet?

Answer.

The Dua when entering the toilet is recited before entering toilet and the Dua when leaving the toilet is recited after leaving the toilet. The Duas should not be recited inside the toilet. (Shaami 1/345)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

What Surahs should one recite in the three Rakaats of Witr Salaah?

Answer.

It is Sunnah to recite Surah A'ala in the first Rakaat, Surah Kaafiroon in the second Rakaat and Surah Ikhlaas in the third Rakaat of Witr Salaah.

However, these Surahs should not be fixed on a daily basis for as it may be considered necessary to recite these particular Surahs for every

Witr Salaah. One should recite these Surahs occasionally without fixing its recitation for every Witr Salaah. (Shaami 2/6)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I have over 12 months of qaza fasts due. I don't think I can keep them. Can I pay fidya or kaffarah?

Answer.

Fidyah for fasts is only permitted if one is permanently unable to fast. If a person is still able to fast, Fidyah will not suffice.

If you are permanently unable to fast then you may give Fidyah.

If you are able to fast then you will have to work towards keeping the Qadha of those fasts. Create a schedule for a set amount of days in every month which you will devote to fasting and work from there. Even if it takes a few years, Insha Allah you will be able to keep the Qadha fasts.

Mufti Moosa

Question.

Is it permissible to cut a 5 year old girls hair? As a parent of five small girls, all five and under, it becomes difficult for me to comb and tie all their hair every Morning. Please advise.

Answer.

It is not permissible to cut the hair of a mature female (Baaligah). However, if a female is a minor (5 years old), then it would be permissible to cut such a female minors hair for purposes of convenience and ease.

If cutting a female minors hair is done in order to resemble certain fashion styles and designs, then it will not be permissible to do so. (Fataawa Bayyinaat 4/406)

N.B. Parents should encourage their female minors to lengthen their hair and not cut it unnecessarily from a young age as a form of Tarbiyah (Islamic upbringing).

Mufti Ismaeel

Lesson from
The Qur'an



Reformers and Mischief-Makers

In their hearts there is a malady, so Allah has made them grow in their malady, and for them there lies a grievous punishment, for they have been lying. And when it is said to them, "Do not spread disorder on the earth", they say, 'We are nothing but reformers.' Beware, it is, in fact, they who spread disorder, but they are not aware. (2:10-12)

As these verses report, when the hypocrites were asked not to spread disorder in the land through their prevarication and double dealing, they used to reply emphatically: "We are nothing but reformers." The word *Innama* (nothing but), used in the Arabic text, indicates not merely emphasis but exclusivity. So, their reply would mean that they were nothing but reformers, the servants of order, and that their activities could have nothing to do with disorder. Commenting on their reply, the Holy Qur'an says:

"Beware, it is, in fact, they who spread disorder, but they are not aware."

Now, we learn two things from this comment. Firstly, the activities of the hypocrites did actually produce disorder in the land. Secondly, they did not indulge in these activities with the express intention or design of creating disorder they were not even aware of the possibility that their actions could be the cause of disorder. For, among the things which spread disorder in the world, there are some which are commonly recognized to be mischievous and disorderly activities, and hence every sensible and conscientious man refrains from them e.g., theft, robbery, murder, rape etc.; on the other hand, there are some which in their external aspect do not appear to be mischief or disorder, but, working unseen, they have the necessary consequence of destroying the morals of men which, in its turn, opens the door to all kinds of disorder.

This is exactly what the hypocrites were doing. No doubt, they refrained from theft, robbery etc.; it was on this count that they denied their being mischievous, and emphatically asserted that they were serving the cause of order. But all this while they had been freely giving vent to their malice and envy by conspiring with the enemies of the Muslims. These are things which finally bring man down to the level of beasts. Once he has lost his awareness of ethical

values and human decency, even an average man becomes an agent of social disorder of a disorder much greater than that released by thieves or robbers, or even beasts are capable of producing. For, the mischief of robbers and beasts can be controlled by the physical power of law and government. But laws are made and enforced by men. What happens to laws, when man has ceased to be man, can easily be witnessed all around us in the world of today. Everyone takes it for granted that humanity is on the march and the modern man is so far the ultimate in civilization; the network of educational institutions covers every hamlet on the face of the earth; legislative bodies keep buzzing night and day; organizations for the promulgation of laws spend billions, and circumlocution offices proliferate. And yet crime and disorder keep in step with the march of civilization. The reason is simple.

Law is not an automatic machine; it requires men to make it work. If man ceases to be man, neither laws nor bureaucratic agencies can provide a remedy for the all-pervading disorder. It is for this that the greatest benefactor of mankind, the Holy Prophet, concentrated all his attention on making men real men - in all the plenitude of the term. Once this has been achieved, crime or disorder comes to an end of itself without the help of enormous police forces and extensive system of law-courts. As long as people acted upon his teachings in certain parts of the world, man saw a kind of peace and order prevail the like of which had never been witnessed before nor is likely to be witnessed when these teachings are abandoned or disregarded.

In so far as actual practice is concerned, the essence of the teachings of the Holy Prophet, is fear of Allah and solicitude for the assess-

ment of one's deeds on the Day of Judgment. If these are absent, no constitution or legal code, nor administrative body or university can force or induce man to keep away from crime. Those who run the world in our day invent ever-new administrative measures to prevent crime, but they not only neglect the very soul of administration, the fear of Allah, but even deploy the means of destroying it - all of which has the necessary consequence that the remedy only helps to feed the malady.

To another aspect of the question, it is easy enough to find a cure for thieves and robbers and for all those who create disorder openly. But the miscreants who have been described in these verses always appear in the garb of reformers, brandishing colourful schemes of social amelioration which are only a mask for personal interests, and for raising the slogan, : "We are nothing but reformers." Hence it is that Allah, while asking men not to spread disorder on the earth, has also said in another place:

And Allah knows the one who makes mischief distinct from him who promotes good." (2:220)

This is an indication that Allah alone knows the states of men's hearts and their intentions, and He alone knows the nature and consequences of each human deed as to whether it would help the cause of order or of disorder. So, to serve the cause of order, it is not sufficient merely to possess such an intention; much more essential than that is to orient oneself in thought and deed in harmony with the Shari`ah, for an action may, in spite of the best intentions, sometimes result in mischief and disorder, if it is not guided by the Shari`ah.

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of the Times of Salah

Chapter 14 : Sin of one who misses Asr.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

The Asr prayer has a special status and some distinguishing features over other prayers. It is performed at a time when people are grossly involved in their worldly engagements. So, the one who offers this prayer in time despite his busy schedule is handsomely rewarded for his act, and the one who misses it not only gets deprived from such a reward but also earns sins.

Hadith No. 522

Narrated Ibn Umar

Allah's Apostle said, "Whoever misses the Asr prayer (intentionally) then it is as if he lost his family and property."

Comments

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

Take due care of all the prayers, and the middle prayer, and stand before Allah in total devotion. (2:238)

Majority of the commentators of the Holy Qur'an believe that this - 'Middle Salāh' signifies the Asr salāh.

Musnad Ahmad has quoted a hadith in which Rasulullah (saws) is reported to have said:

"Indeed this (Asr) prayer was made obligatory on the people before you, thereafter they exhibited laziness and left it. So whosoever amongst offers it, his reward will be twofold".

Al-Muhalab and those who follow him say, "Here, missing the prayer means missing the congregation and not delaying it till the paleness of sun, or after the sunset".

It is like ruining of property and family

The reward of Asr prayer is so substantial that missing it has been compared with the loss as significant as losing one's property and family. From this one can imagine how damaging it is to remain careless about this prayer. Since, at the stipulated time of this prayer, people are usually deeply engrossed in their worldly engagements and therefore have to exert considerably in order to stick to it. Further, since it is the time when the angels of day and night assemble, that is why such a serious warning has been mentioned in the hadith.

The particularization of family and property

The particular mention of family and property in the above hadith is because these two are usually the main causes behind one's careless and negligent attitude towards the worship of Allah.

Chapter 15 : (Sin of) One who fails to offer Asr.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

In previous chapter it was said, “Sin of one who misses Asr”, and here it is said, “Sin of one who fails to offer Asr’. The learned scholars say that missing is something that is unintentional whereas leaving is an intentional act. This clears the doubt put up by some who consider say that this chapter a repetition of the previous one.

Hadith No. 523

Narrated Abu Al-Maleeh

We were with Buraida in a battle on a cloudy day and he said, “Offer the Asr prayer early as the Prophet said, “Whoever leaves the Asr prayer, all his (good) deeds will be annulled.”

Comments

According to Abu Al-Mateeh, once, in a battle on a cloudy day, they were with Sayyidna Buraida Aslami who told them to offer Asr prayer immediately as there is apprehension of missing the actual time of Asr because of cloudy weather which makes it difficult to ascertain the passage of time. He further mentioned to them what Rasullullah (saws) had once said, “One who leaves Asr prayer, all his (good) deeds will be annulled.” In earlier hadith it was said that one who misses Asr prayer, it is as if he lost his family and property. Since the missing of salāh is an unintentional act so the loss has been compared with the loss of family and property. In this particular hadith it is said that one who intentionally leaves Asr prayer, all his (good) deeds will be annulled. In the first case since the act is involuntary so the loss is of the related concern, and in the second situation since the act is voluntary so the person himself has to bear the loss. ‘Habt’ - ‘To annul the deeds’ has two meanings, one—the total annulling which takes place when one moves out of the bond of Islam because of the belief like: it is not necessary or it is useless to offer praers; second—the annulling because of missing Asr prayer unintentionally, is

‘a greater loss’ but it does not drive one away from the fold of Islam. The word ‘Habt’ has been used here to impress the severity of the loss.

Chapter 16 : The excellence of the Asr salāh.

Purpose

Ibn Hajr says, “Asr salāh excels over all other prayers except Fajr”.

According to Allāma Ayni, both Fajr and Asr carry excellences but Imām Bukhāri has only used the word ‘Asr’ because Fajr is already understood to be possessing excellences evident by the Qur’anic verse quoted below in the hadith.

Hadith No. 524

Narrated Qais

Jarir said, “We were with the Prophet and he looked at the moon--full-moon--and said, ‘Certainly you will see your Lord as you see this moon and you will have no trouble in seeing Him. So if you can avoid missing (through sleep or business, etc.) a prayer before the sun-rise (Fajr) and a prayer before sunset (Asr), you must do so.’ He then recited Allah’s Statement:

And proclaim His purity, along with your Lord’s praise, before sunrise and before sunset.” (50.39) Isma’il said, “Offer those prayers and do not miss them.”

Hadith No. 525

Narrated Abu Huraira

Allah’s Apostle said, “Angels come to you in succession by night and day and all of them get together at the time of the Fajr and Asr prayers. Those who have passed the night with you (or stayed with you) ascend (to the Heaven) and Allah asks them, though He knows everything about you, well, “In what state did you leave my slaves?” The angels reply: “When we left them they were praying and when we reached them, they were praying.”

Comments

Abdullah bin Jarir says that once, during a full moon night, they were sitting with Rasulullah (saws) and when he looked at the moon said to them, "Certainly you will see your Lord as you see this moon, and you will have no trouble in seeing Him". The learned scholars have given different reasons regarding the metaphor used by Rasulullah (saws):

- Irrespective of crowd or a huge assembly everyone is able to see a moon without any discomfort.
- It means that people will have no confusion or doubt regarding the vision of Allah in the Hereafter.
- It is uncomfortable and almost impossible to look at the sun but it is not so in case of moon. The people will see Allah quite comfortably.

Sight of Allah in the hereafter

This hadith clearly states that people will definitely see Allah in the Hereafter, and it is proved beyond doubt in the Holy Qur'an, the hadiths of Rasulullah (saws) and the consensus of the companions of Rasulullah (saws). It is the unanimous opinion of 'Ahl-i-Sunnah wal Jamaat'. It has been quoted from at least twenty Companions including Abu Bakr, Ali, Muadh and Ibn Mas'ud. Only Khawaarijis and Muatazilites have disagreed on this issue, and they argue with the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

No vision can comprehend Him, and He comprehends all visions, and He is Absolutely Subtle, All-Aware. (6:103)

According to them it is evident from this verse that He cannot be seen. But, the learned scholars of Ahl-i-Sunnah wal Jamaah say that the meaning of this verse is that since Allah is infinite hence no eye can grasp Him in totality.

The second argument put forward by Khawaarijis in this connection is the following verse:

My Lord, show (Yourself) to me that I may look at You." He said: "You shall never see Me. But look at the mount. (7:143)

They argue that the word 'in' is used to negate something forever. The learned scholars refute this concept by putting forward the following verse:

But they will never wish for it (i.e., death) because of what their hands have sent ahead. (2:95)

But it is known that they will wish so when thrown in the Hellfire.

Their third argument is the following verse:

It is not (possible) for a human being that Allah speaks to him, except by way of revelation, or from behind a curtain. (42:51)

According to the learned scholars, this verse is related to revelation and not the vision of Allah in the hereafter.

Verses proving the sight of Allah in the hereafter

Many faces, that day, will be glowing, looking towards their Lord, (75:22,23)

No! Indeed they will be screened off from their Lord on that Day. (83:15)

Fajr and Asr prayer, and the vision of Allah in the hereafter

In the hadith under discussion, after mentioning how the believers will see Allah in the hereafter, Rasulullah (saws) advised his Ummah to remain careful regarding the Fajr and Asr prayers, and recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

And proclaim His purity, along with your Lord's praise, before sunrise and before sunset." (50:39)

The learned scholars, in view of this hadith, have derived the conclusion that to offer

Cont'd on page 30

Philanthropy and Zakat

*Straight
Talk*



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 difference 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 mis-keen 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 arid 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 taxes 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. One such movement is at www.makepovertyhistory.ca.

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 considered 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 Mammon: 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 notice-

able 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.”

Speaking to Allah

In this era of advanced technology, we can easily connect and communicate with the entire world. However, when last did we communicate with the Creator of the world? We speak to people about the different problems and challenges that we go through. Yet, when will we speak to our All-Hearing Allah, the only Being who can resolve our problems?

If we ask people to fulfil some of our basic needs, we are humiliated and are regarded as beggars. However, if we ask Allah for our needs, then we are honoured and we become the beloved of Allah. Our duty is to turn to Allah in du‘aa (supplication) over and over again. Allah, in his divine wisdom, will definitely answer our du‘aas in unique ways. At times our minds are so anchored in wanting to see our du‘aas answered in a certain way, that we completely fail to see and appreciate that our du‘aas have been answered, but in many other ways. Allah knows best when to give us, how to give us and how much to give us. All we need to do is to keep on asking Allah.

The Month of the Qur'an

Dr. 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 scriptures refer 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.

The Prophet was so particular about preserving the Quran in writing that even at the time of his migration from Makkah to Medina, 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 book Kitab ul Fisl that over 100,000 copies of the Quran were present in the entire world at the 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;

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).

Uniting the Muslim Village

Noora Ali

When my Five-year-old came home from school begging me to start helping him on his Hajj Project, for the three best ones were going to get awarded, I knew I was in for a tough week. Excited, tense and just a tad bit weary I started out by listening to what his ideas were. He wanted white disposable spoons for the people, he wanted paper balls for the pebbles at Mina, and he wanted to win. Ever so cautiously, I tried whenever the time seemed right, to remind him that the competition was not the point. It was important that we were having fun, that we were leaning, that we were building something together. Maahin insisted that yes, all that was good, but he wanted to win a prize too.

The day of the projects entry was a day of an overwhelming number of box-sized ka'bah's coming into our school. So many kids had participated, so many had researched, made models, posters, or drawings to represent a day of sacrifice. In my heart I thought, why does everything has to be competitive? I thought of broken hearts, as only three would get prizes, and I thought of a disappointed Maahin.

But he surprised me, for that day he said nothing at all about the project. The next day, he said, "I wish Faiz, Areeb, Harris or Muhammad win the Hajj project prize." I asked him, "How about you"? Maahin replied, "I don't want to win." For a moment I thought that his heart broke, and that his soul gave up a bit too easily, since no results had even been announced yet. Still, I asked why he didn't want to win anymore. He did not take even a moment to respond, since

he had been thinking about this, I suppose, the entire silent, last day. He said, "Because they are my friends, and if they are sad it will make me sad too, and they've never won anything before, and Mama, if I won in first grade, and somebody else won in some other grade, and somebody else won too (counting his top three), what about all the other kids who made the projects. It's not fair. I don't want to win."

I was dumbstruck. I had never expected that my exhaustingly active and excited five-year-old would want to give up winning. But his intellect and soul knew that it's not worth winning, when it's unfair. Community building cannot begin once you are mature, it must start from the cradle, since that is when one's soul is most mature. Well before we harden into the competitive world and selfish promotion.

I remember myself in the stoic setting of a

missionary school as a child. Only the affluent could attend this school, but right behind the main building was a smaller one, dedicated to the education of the needy. We were taught right from the start that being in the Convent meant taking care of the students in the other building. We attended their events, they used our sports fields — and all in all we were never to forget that they had rights over us.

Islam teaches us just that, that all Muslims are called one brotherhood, supportive unto each other like bricks in a singular structure where each one holds the other, since the weakness of one undermines the strength of the whole structure. We are taught to be like a body, where if one organ hurt, the whole system would suffer. My Prophet never spoke empty words. He showed in his own life the miracle of communal responsibility. Part of the success lies in the miracle being of his Companions, who well realized the mammoth role each of them had to play to build the religious community, and ground their feet in tough soil.

Each community member was important and was made to feel that way too, whether it was Salman Al-Farsi, a non-Arab, whose strategy was used for winning the Battle of the Trench, or a nameless woman who swept the floor of the mosque, or a passionate Suhaib Al-Rûmi giving up all wealth to be with the Prophet, or Bilâl proclaiming the adhân, or a blind Companion seeking knowledge, each one was putting in his/her part to build the community's strength.

As our children today are born into this Dîn, it is our call to introduce them to a religion and community life, such as the one that Âishah and Anas were born into. Âishah was not born into a religion where one companion was backstabbing another, where issues were being raised about which mosque to have alliance with and which not. She was a child who saw a father devoted to the One God and his last Prophet. She saw a father confident in giving all his belongings in war for the sake of salvaging community.

Our community is in dire straits not only because it suffers an onslaught from without, but also because we are not strengthened within. A sense of responsibility, even before the first revelation came, engulfed the Prophet as he had taken upon himself to help the widows and orphans of his community. If we involve our children in similar big and small projects of community building, not only does it strengthen the community as a whole, it also builds for a lasting bond within the family when a common goal is shared.

When we as parents, teachers, adults take time out for our children for simple things like going for a walk together, sitting down to lend an ear, we are laying the very foundations of community life. Children will want to participate in society only if they feel a part of it. So, the first step is inculcating a sense of belonging within our children to their surroundings, immediate community and larger humanity. If we as individuals do things for our youth and children, they too will feel a pleasure in being part of this family.

One should not feel it an obligation or tiresome responsibility to be part of a family. Instead, a family is how we define ourselves, give meaning to our identity, even though sometimes it may get a little overbearing. I remember my favorite teacher in all my years was the history teacher in high school. I never took one history class, but that was not the point. Each student owned Mrs. Rehman. She belonged so completely to the school and us that it gave us nothing but a sense of belonging to the school and her when we did things together. Wrinkled, yet enthusiastic about everything from theater, to debates, to history, to field trips, she had us all going in a frenzy of excitement. Out of all my stoic missionary school years when whispering a little loud amounted to chaos, I had emerged with an afraid soul, unconfident that anything could be done. I wanted to be nothing. Mrs. Rehman changed all that in one month of high

school. She nudged me into every activity, and persuaded me that anything was possible.

What we need most in order to build our communities is a 'can-do' attitude. We need to make time, to drive our kids to baseball practice, to clean up the park, to stop the car to pick up a dead squirrel from the road and put it on one side. Children learn by example and when they see a parent concerned for them, and the community, actively participating, and not hostile or weary towards it, they too will learn the power of love. It is important in this to strike a healthy balance. We should not teach children that the mosque is more important than they are, when the kids are left behind to tell their own bedtime stories, put themselves to sleep. Nor should teens dread being alone in their lives while Dad does community service at the mosque, and Mom attends her halaqa. Let not the child think that he is the cost that has to be paid in order to work for community. Our children ought to be with us when we go to our mosques. They need to be at the serving station with us when we have our food supplies distributed among the needy.

When we establish a family that enjoys being and doing things together, we lay a strong foundation for people who will be healthy contributors to society and not uninterested or unmotivated individuals. Moving outside the family, when we show our kids the importance of relations of the womb, as they interact with extended family it creates a bond that is very strong. The Quran itself lays parameters when it lists the order in which we ought to make our charity. Visiting family –not gossiping or backbiting about them– visiting the sick, making an

effort to cook for neighbors in need, or driving a friend who needs a ride instead of bickering about it are all essential. Our children need to see that in a selfish, competitive world we need to stick together if we hope to emerge whole. And yes, winning, or getting there first is not winning, if it is unfair. My father used to say that you're truly successful not when you move along like a pair of scissors on a cloth, for it moves on yet cuts and leaves behind, but like a needle and thread that also moves ahead but sews together, and joins while it does so.

Working together then in our communities, to support our schools, arrange activities in the neighborhood for simple things –like picnics, or gatherings– goes a long way to get people together and to commune with each other. Volunteering our time not just in the Muslim community but for general beneficial purposes –like at an old persons' home, or planting trees– build us as stronger members of society.

Our children will give back, when they see us do the same. Find out about a local shelter, or thrift store, or masjid that takes used belongings. Get your kids to clean out their wardrobes, toy baskets, and the like so we can give of something we love. Encourage them by taking them along as you donate food to a shelter. This Eid, while the kids got excited about presents, I tried to get them excited about sacrifice. We found an organization that supports education for the needy and Maahin decided to give eight dollars from his Eid money to the cause. I made sure that I went on the internet and made that payment, so when the receipt papers come in, he can see that he has made a difference in someone's life.

“The wisest of men are those who remember death more than everybody else. It is such people, indeed, who win distinction in this world and who will be raised to positions of honour in the Aakhirah”.

(Majma‘uz Zawaaid)

The Meaning of Ramadan

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 Travah 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-win-

ner 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.

Ramadan Rain

Yasmin Mogahed

Imagine for a moment that it's raining. It is pouring, in fact. And imagine that you are inside your house, watching as it falls. But imagine that there is something very different about this rain. It is unlike any other you've ever seen. On this day, it is not raining water. It is raining something much more precious to you. Imagine that on this day it is raining hundred dollar bills.

What would you do? What would happen in your neighborhood on that day? What would happen in the world? Would we not run outside, falling all over ourselves, competing to gain as much of the raining money as we can? Would we not stand outside all night to gather as much as possible?

We would do this for money because money is precious. But imagine for a moment that it was raining something priceless. Not thousand dollar bills, not trillions, but the mercy of Allah, a currency that no human currency could even measure.

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, (saws) said,

"Ramadan has come to you. (It is) a month of blessing, in which Allah covers you with blessing, for He sends down Mercy, decreases sins and answers prayers. In it, Allah looks at your competition (in good deeds), and boasts about you to His angels. So show Allah goodness from yourselves, for the unfortunate one is he who is deprived in (this month) of the mercy of Allah, the Mighty, the Exalted." [Narrated

by Tabarani]

In this month, we are shielded from hellfire, protected from the shayateen (satins), and cleansed from our sins. The Prophet said:

"Whoever fasts during Ramadan out of sincere faith, hoping to attain Allah's rewards, then all of his past sins will be forgiven." (Bukhari). In another hadith he said: "When the month of Ramadan starts, the gates of the heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained." [Bukhari]

Within this month, there is a night that is greater than a thousand months (97:1-5).

"There is protection from hellfire, at least 70 times the reward for our deeds, and the chance to have all our sins erased." (hadith)

So, what greater loss can there be than to find ourselves standing in the middle of this massive downfall of blessings without collecting all we can of Allah's mercy?

And while this mercy showers on us throughout the blessed month, the last ten days are like no other. Aisha (ra) reported that:

With the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, the Prophet used to tighten his waist belt (meaning he would work hard) and used to pray all the night, and used to keep his family awake for the prayers [Bukhari].

But how can we fully take advantage of this blessed month, especially in the last ten days?



Here are a few ways:

Reserve a Private Meeting with Allah:

Set a time before or after suhoor to be alone with Allah . Use this time to connect to Him by praying, making du`a, or reading Qur'an. There is no other time like it. The Prophet said:

“When the last one-third of the night remains, our Lord, the Glorious One, descends towards the lower heaven and proclaims: ‘Is there anyone supplicating to Me, so that I grant his supplication? Is there anyone begging of Me for anything so that I grant him his wish? Is there anyone who seeks My forgiveness, so that I forgive him?’” [Bukhari and Muslim].

Set a Time for Reflection:

In the midst of our busy schedule, we seldom find time to stop and relax, let alone reflect on the realities of life. Make time to do this. Take time to step outside of your daily routine and introspect about where you are and where you're going. Reflect on the creation around you and on the reality of this life, death, and our final meeting with our Crea-

tor. Choose a time, such as the last third of the night, when there are no distractions.

Take a Trip to Allah:

We all need to get away sometimes. Use Ramadan as a chance to go away with Allah as your companion. ‘Aisha reported that the Messenger of Allah used to practice I`tikaf (seclusion) in the last ten nights of Ramadan and used to say,

“Look for the Night of Qadr in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan” [Bukhari].

Don't Miss the Night of Power:

There is a night in the last ten nights of Ramadan that is greater than a lifetime (1000 months, 83.3 years). The Prophet said: “Whoever prays during the night of Qadr (power) with faith and hoping for its reward will have all of his previous sins forgiven.” [Bukhari and Muslim]

Aisha said: “I asked the Prophet , ‘O Messenger of Allah, if I know what night is the night of Qadr, what should I say during it?’ He said: ‘Say: O Allah, You are Oft-Pardoning and You love to pardon, so pardon me.” [Ahmad, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi]

Seeking Laylatul Qadr

Abu Muhammad Yusuf

Allah in His infinite Mercy has favoured us in so many ways. Such blessings that we cannot possibly enumerate nor show sufficient gratitude to the Almighty. Amongst the many blessings include a very special GIFT – Laylatul Qadr- The Night of Power.

It is an opportunity to gain closeness to our Creator, forgiveness of our sins and an elevated position in Jannah (Paradise). The Night of Power is better than a 1000 months (83 years, 4 months)! Allah, Most Wise, says:

“The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.” (Quran 97:3)

The Messenger of Allah (saws) is reported to have said:

“Whoever stands in “Ibaadah” (worship) on this night, with sincere faith and with genuine hopes of gaining reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Hadith-Bukhari and Muslim)

WHEN IS IT?

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

“Seek it (laylatul qadr) in Ramadan in the last ten nights. For verily, it is during the odd nights, 21st 23rd, 25th, 27th, 29th or the last night of Ramadan.” (Sahih Hadith Ahmad 5:318)

From traditions we learn that among the

signs of this night is that it is a serene, quiet, shining night, neither hot, nor cold but temperate as if a moon is shining clear, and no meteors are shot at the “Shayateen” on that night; it lasts until the break of the dawn. Another sign is that at morn, the Sun rises without any radiant beams of light, appearing rather like the moon in it’s fullness. On that day, Allah prohibits the “Shayateen” from rising up with the Sun.

WHAT TO DO ON THIS NIGHT?

Worship during this night can take on many forms. Here are a few suggestions to help you through Laylatul Qadr:

- Take a vacation for Allah! If possible, take a vacation for the last 10 days of Ramadan. Plan ahead if you are working.
- Discuss the importance of this night with your friends and family and Islamic Scholars(Ulama). Create an atmosphere for ibadah(worship).
- Perform I’tikaaf (seclusion in a Masjid for worship) –Try to spend full ten days in I’tikaaf. If you cannot spend all 10 days in I’tikaaf, then do as many days as you can – even if it is only one day. At the very least you can intend a nafl (voluntary) i’tikaf even if only for a few moments whenever you enter a masjid! According to the Messenger of Allah (saws) “whosoever performs “I’tikaaf”

for a day thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah will spread three trenches between him and the fire of Hell, the width of each trench being greater than the distance between Heaven and the Earth.”

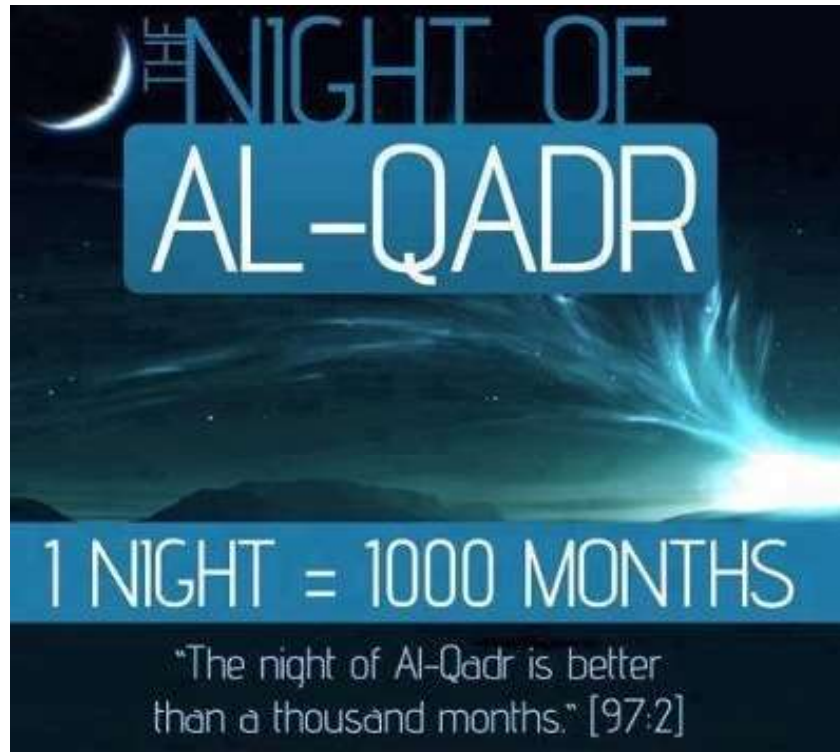
- Increase the recitation of the Qur’an- Try to recite as much Qur’an as possible. There is great virtue in recitation. (reflect on the meaning of the verses, especially the verses used in Salah. This will help you concentrate)
- Increase Salah (prayer). Read as many Nawaafil (optional) Prayers as possible. Eg Tahajjud Salaah, Salatut Tasbih etc
- Make abundant Zikr (i.e remembering Allah, sending salawaat on our beloved Rasulallah (saws) and making Istigfaar (seeking forgiveness from Allah)
- Dua (Asking from Allah)- Spend lots of time begging from Allah to fulfil your needs and the needs of the Ummah both in this world and the hereafter. Ramadaan is replete with moments when duas are accepted. Aai-sha (ra) reports: “I said: ‘O Messenger of Allah (saws), should I find myself the “Laylatul Qadr”, what shall I pray. The Prophet (saws) replied: say:

“Allahumma innaka ‘afuwwun tuhibbul ‘afwa fa’fu ‘Anni”

- O Allah! You are indeed Most Forgiving, so forgive me. (Hadith-Recorded by Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and at-Tirmithi)
- Make list of Things you need from Allah-Ask yourself what you really want from Allah. Make a list of each and everything, no matter how small or how big it is, whether it

deals with this world or the hereafter. Allah loves to hear from us and wants us to beg of Him. Once this list is ready then use it in your prayers.

- Best time for dua- Make sincere and all-embracing Duas. One of the best times to do this is during the last part of the night especially at the time of suhoor (sehri). Abu



Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, related that Rasulallah (saws) said: When the last one-third of the night remains, our Lord, the Glorious One descends towards the heaven of the earth and proclaims: Who is that who supplicates for Me, and I grant his supplication? Who is that who begs Me for anything and I grant it to him? And who is that who seeks My forgiveness, and I forgive him? (Hadith-Bukhari, Muslim).

- Take regular breaks during the night to avoid getting over-exhausted. Try switching between different forms of worship.

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 be-

lief 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' re-sound as in the Masjid al-Haram in Makkah. You would think that the streets are each a mosque and each mosque is Ka'ba. 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.

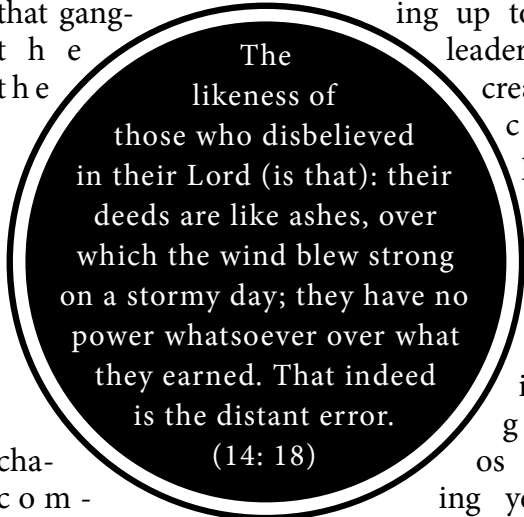
The Chaos

Syed Iqbal Zaheer

Western youth is not as bewitched, as is the Muslim youth bewitched by the material progress of the West, Japan, China and others. And the phenomenon – of disappointment and loss of faith – is growing. On the other hand, Muslim youth, of all regions, having lost their close contact with their Lord, suffer from the same diseases of uncertainty, listlessness, unfocused, and as unconnected with the past, as with their present, in addition to their loss of faith in Islam.

The Western youth – though not all of them, but a good number – knows the failure of its social, political, economic, religious and even scientific leadership. It feels convinced that gang-

the leadership is creator of chaos prevalent now, which clearly promises greater chaos in the coming years. It is believed that its religious leadership is a spent force. It is morally decayed and spiritually drained,



A nun has condemned the Catholic church's hierarchy for its failure to tackle the scourge of clerical sexual abuse, saying leaders must concede that their "mediocrity, hypocrisy

and complacency" has brought the church to a "disgraceful place".

The political leadership is bereft of any values, and lives on rallying cries such as: human rights, gender equality, democracy, anti-racism, justice for all, and so on. But these are no more than rallying cries, and agenda that are for talk-shows.

We don't have any effective leadership. We are saturated in divide & conquer liberal v conservative nonsense. When your country is being systematically attacked, fighting amongst each other is not the way to go. We need to urgently unite against systemic corruption. (<https://AQMkADAwATE0YjYwLWMwZ>)

If ever the slogans are taken seriously, they are tinged, adulterated, and contaminated with hypocrisy, so that the terms give a warped meaning, applicable to a chosen race, of a chosen region. The youth, and now the intellectuals, in increasing numbers, feel that the situation is so serious that third-world war could break out any time. The fear is growing that this century could well be the last century of mankind.

Values have been tossed into gutters, men have become animals, families have been broken, homes have become women's most dangerous places, and violent crimes are rocketing up. In Britain everyday, someone gets knifed or shot. A sixteen-year-old boy pulls a six-year girl out of her bed at knife-point, takes to an abandoned building, tortures, rapes, and kills her. Both are white. Imagine the pain she went through.

Addressing the killer, the judge, Lord Matthews, said he (the offender) had commit-

ted “some of the wickedest, most evil crimes this court has ever heard in its long history of dealing with depravity”. He added: “I have no idea why you did this.”(<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/21/>). Throughout the time during the trial the boy sat motionless, impassioned, evincing no remorse whatsoever. The feat is followed by another young man. His target is a 14-year-old girl. Adults are setting examples. A woman in her late twenties appears for an interview, and saying, “Britain will be as naked after Brexit as I am now,” removes her shirt (she is bra-less) and sits bare-chested throughout the interview. Another has vowed that she will not be outsmarted and so before cameras staring in disbelief she removes all her clothes walking about before the audience stark naked.

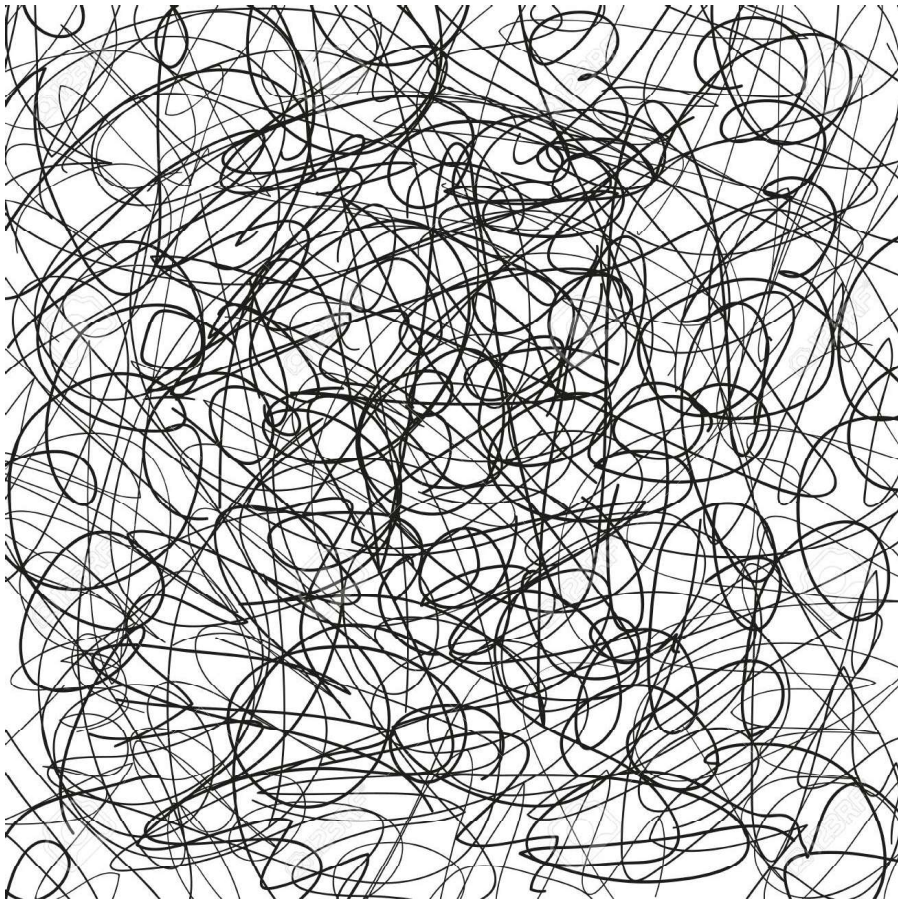
At the social level, incorrigible children as young as 13 are joining white-supremacist

terrorist outfits, which have sprung up all over Europe. Sexual perversion among them is unspeakable. In some areas, gangsterism in the streets scares the older people from passing through them in daylight.

That is at the societal level. At the state and governmental level, leaders in Britain have been quarreling between themselves over Brexit for most of the time during the last year. The fighting is so severe and serious that it erupts between members of the same party: the party splits. In USA, the government is shut down, government employees made jobless, with politicians showing as much remorse as the boy at the trial. The country has been blessed with a President who trusts the Russian leader Putin more than his own Security Agencies. His focussed objective (so that, perhaps, Israel cannot be questioned about its Wall), instead of attending to dire problems, is to build a wall, which his

countrymen think may be funded by the government, as he demands if he promises to stay on the other side of the wall. The following moaning gives an idea of what is happening at the national level. It is from USA: “Improper Payments” Cost U.S. Taxpayers \$144 Billion A Year, according to yet another mind-blowing Government Accountability. Corruption is much worse than people realize, as we can prove in vivid details now. Bottom line, the government is collapsing. And when you report on it in a way that informs and unites the American people, you get censored and hacked.

In other lands, power is in the hands of democratically elected inept people. They



have a fantastic vision of the future. If its description is hazy, it is because the vision is hazy, if not imaginary altogether. It is also hazy because the project of what will be realized ultimately is 200 years away. It is a long term plan. In the short-term, people's welfare comes next. Some evaluators see no hope. But who cares? Some seem do not know the basic functions of a civilized state: peace and security. But that is alright for them, and their brainwashed people, because they belong to the past, maybe several thousand years.

Such is the state globally. Muslim states that have abandoned Islam when it comes to serious matters, fare no better. You see chaos everywhere, yet here you are, Muslim youth seeks to free the Ummah of its subjugation to its Lord, and join up ranks with those who have lost all hopes. One of those who have lost all hopes appreciates a veiled Muslimah, and remarks: "Hold on to your convictions, you are humanity's last hope!"

While the tragedy in the Western world has flattened all hopes, it is now unfolding in the Muslim world, particularly among its youth. The Muslim youth today knows nothing, understands nothing. Their entire learning is through 15-second clips on WhatsApp. Most of it pornographic. Some time back the situation led the late Abul Hasan Ali Nadwito remark: "This is a Fitnah, which has no Abu Bakr to combat it." Now it leaves the Muslim leadership gasping for air. Allah has warned:

"And, whoso associated with Allah is like someone who fell from the heavens so that the birds snatch him up, or the winds sweep him off to a distant place" (22: 32)

And,

"The likeness of those who disbelieved in their Lord (is that): their deeds are like ashes, over which the wind blew strong on a stormy day; they have no power whatsoever over what they earned. That indeed is the distant error."(14: 18)

And,

"And he who desires a religion other than Islam, shall not have it accepted of him. He shall be of the losers in the next world". (3: 85)

Cont'd from page 11

Fajr and Asr prayers in congregation and fulfilling all etiquettes plays an essential role in making a believer eligible for the honour of seeing Allah in the hereafter. It is somewhat arduous upon one's Nafs to offer these two prayers, since for Fajr one has to get up early in the morning when there is a strong desire to keep on sleeping. Also, he has to perform Wudu which is quiet difficult for him especially during harsh winter season, and leave for the mosque in dark. All these pains are borne only by a true believer. This is the time when the angels performing their duties during night finish their duty and are replaced by those decreed for the day. This is the special time when the breeze of Allah's mercy blows with full spiritual fervor which is appreciated only by those pure in heart and sincere in intentions. May Allah bestow us also with such blessings. A very famous Urdu poet of the Indian subcontinent, Allāma Iqbal says:

May it be Rumi or Raazi or Gazaali

Nothing is achieved without praying in the early dawn.

Regarding the Asr prayer, it is a time when people are very busy in their worldly affairs and the market is at its peak. To remember Allah during such a busy hour is highly rewarding. Rasullullah (saws), knowing the essence of the reward of Asr salāh, warned the believers against losing it.

What this hadith tells us is that whosoever wants to get the most important blessing in the hereafter, i.e. 'the vision of Allah', he should remain very careful regarding the Fajr and Asr salāh throughout his life. He should offer them in time, preferably in congregation and This proves that this time is common for both, fulfilling all prerequisites.

The five Despoilers of the Heart

Allaama Ibn al-Qayyim (ra)

The following are five things that can corrupt the heart:

Company of worldly people

Endless wishes

Attachment to other-than-Allah

Excessive Eating

Excessive Sleeping.

These five things extinguish the light of the heart and weaken its will to tread the path of truth and enlightenment—the path of Allah.

The heart has no true pleasure or bliss except in the intimate knowledge of Allah, His love, contentment through His remembrance, delight in His closeness, and eagerness to meet Him. This pleasure of the heart is akin to an early Paradise. Similarly, there is no bliss or happiness in the eternal hereafter except in Allah's company, which is the promised Jannah. There are two gardens, and none enters the second (eternal) one without entering the first (the one in this world.)

I have heard Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah—may Allah honor his soul—say,

There is a Paradise in this world, and the one who does not enter it, will not enter the Paradise in the hereafter.

A knower of Allah once said, “Sometimes

my heart is in a state (of bliss) such that I say to myself, ‘If the people of Paradise were to be in a state like this, they would be happy people.’”

Some among those who love Allah say that the poor people of this world pass through it without ever experiencing its most blissful thing. When asked what that is, they say, “love of Allah.” Anyone with a live heart would testify to the truth of these statements.

The following five things, however, prevent the heart from experiencing this bliss:

1. The Company of Worldly People

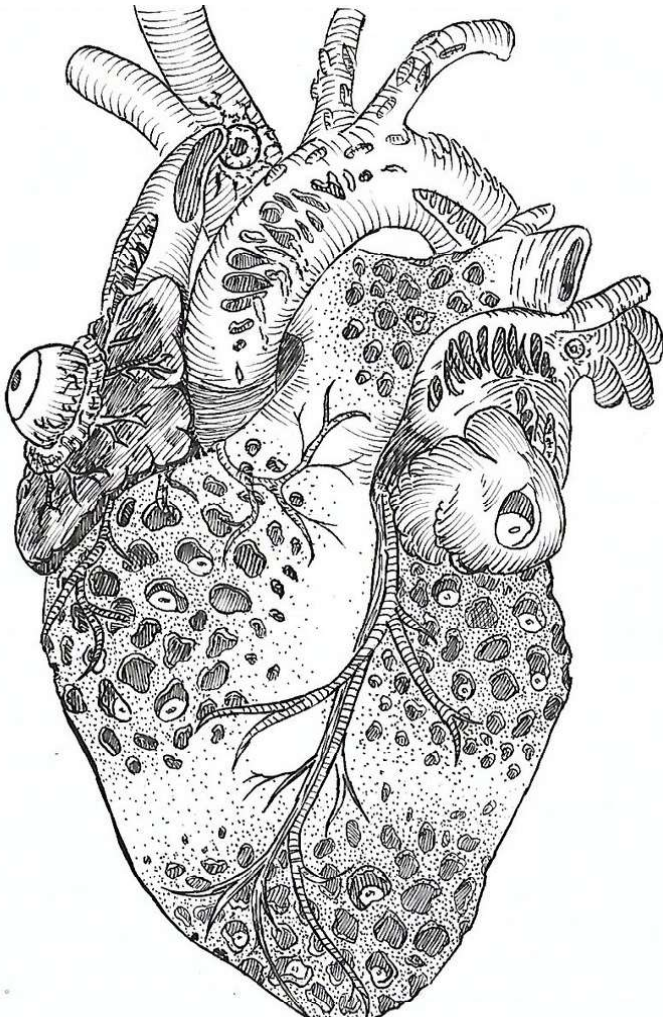
The heart becomes blackened by the company of the [worldly] people of this life. It causes the heart's confusion, bewilderment, worry, grief, and weakness. The heart becomes negligent of its own true interests and bliss, and becomes distracted by the demands and expectations of such people.

The company that one keeps for the sake of this world betrays and abandons him sooner or later—as Allah says,

And that day the wrongdoer will bite his hands in regret, saying “Woe to me, would that I had chosen the path of Allah's Messenger, would that

I had not taken so and so for a friend—alas, he distracted me from the reminder after it had come to me.” [Surat Al-Furqan, 25:27-29]

Allah Almighty also said,
The best friends on that [Judgment] Day will be each other’s enemy—except for the Allah-fearing. [Surat Al-Zukhruf, 43:67]



Allah’s Khalil or Friend, Ibrahim, said to his people:

You have taken idols other than Allah as the basis of love among you in the life of this world— but on the Day of Judgment you will deny each other and curse each other—and your abode will be the Hellfire, and you will find

none to help you. [Surat Al-Furqan, 29:25]

This is the truth of all relationships that are of this world and for this world alone. They last only so long as their interests coincide, and leave behind them nothing but regret, grief and pain.

The rule of thumb is to mix with people only in benevolence and goodness, such as the Friday and daily congregations, the two Eids, the Pilgrimage, and circles of learning and teaching, Jihad, and when giving sincere advice. And to avoid the company of those involved in sinful deeds — and even the company of those participating in too much of permissible deeds when they are not beneficial.

If one finds oneself in the company of people engaged in some vice, one must never approve of it. Rather, one must voice one’s disapproval, and be patient over the discomfort or pain that it may cause. Such people will never leave alone one who dissents from their evil ways and does not have much power; so one must be patient. Even the discomfort or pain [of rejection] that one bears is likely to bring him honor and the love of believers, and most importantly of the Lord. On the other hand, acquiescing in their misdeeds will result in humiliation and rancor, even though at first it appears to be the easy way out— and worse yet, it will bring the wrath of the believers and of the Lord of the creation.

If one finds oneself in the company of people engaged in permissible but fruitless deeds, one should try to change it to a gathering of obedience to Allah and encourage people in that way. At the same time, one must also strengthen one’s heart and not be dissuaded by the trap of Satan through such occasions, when he tries to cast doubts in one’s heart by suggesting that one’s attempt to remind people of Allah is nothing but self-righteousness and ostentation of one’s knowledge. One must anticipate and fight such insinuations, seeking Allah’s help, and not be dissuaded from encour-

aging people, as much as possible, to do good.

If none of this works, and people persist in their heedlessness, and if one is compelled to stay in their company, then one must then remove one's heart from that company—so much so that one sees them but does not look at them, one hears them but does not listen to them—one's body may be in their company, but one's heart and mind is with Allah.

2. Endless Wishes

The wishes of this world are an endless ocean that drowns the heart. On the other hand, [the Allah-fearing heart] will desire the Hereafter and the knowledge, faith and deeds that elevate one towards Allah. In fact, this [attitude] is praised by the Messenger of Allah himself, who said that the one who truly wishes to do good deeds but lacks the capability to do so gets the same reward received by the one who actually does them. (Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Ahmad)

3. Attachment to Other-than Allah

There is no greater destroyer of the heart than this one. The strongest version of this ailment is shirk, or association of partners with Allah in worship.

(Given that the significance of this subject is well-known to all Muslims, the translation of this section is being omitted here.)

4. Excessive Eating

Excess in eating, even of permissible things, leads to laziness towards worship and a myriad of other problems. A gluttonous person is concerned with filling his stomach with favorite foods until he overfills it—and then he suffers from its after-effects, such as stomachache, heaviness, sleepiness, and, most of all, increased lust. Whoever eats much, sleeps much—and thus loses much. A report from the Messenger of Allah says,

A son of Adam fills nothing worse than

his own stomach. It is sufficient for him to eat enough to support his back. And if he must fill it, let a third of it be for food, a third for drink, and a third to breathe with ease. (Ahmad)

5. Excessive Sleep

The fifth corrupter of the heart is excess in sleeping, for it dulls the heart, makes the body enervated and heavy, wastes time, and breeds laziness and heedlessness. Sleep is most useful and efficient when it is needed. Sleep during the first part of the night (after 'Isha') is more commendable and beneficial than during the last part of the night (closer to Fajr), while sleep during the middle part of the night is more beneficial and satisfying than that during the beginning or the end.

Sleeping after Fajr (dawn) until sunrise is also disliked, even for those who have spent the night awake in worship, for this time is an opportunity. The worshippers of Allah particularly value this time, for the first part of the day is its key, in which there is baraka (divine blessing or spiritual grace). One ought to avoid sleeping during this time unless it is unavoidable. Sleeping during the first part of the night (after Maghrib) is also harmful, both for health and for one's din, for it leads to missing of the 'Isha' Salah.

The best time to sleep, then, is the middle of the night (just after 'Isha' until sometime before Fajr), which is a total of eight hours, as recommended by the physicians. Any more or less than this affects one's agility and efficiency during the day.

Finally, just as too much sleep is harmful, so is too little sleep, for it leads to even bigger problems, such as irritability, distractedness, and inability to think and perform efficiently. A healthy existence is based on balance.

And Allah is the one whose help is ever sought.

Translated by Dr. Ovamir Anjum

Ramadan Teaching's



Prof. S. Hameed

It was Muhammad (saws) who made us raise our eyes from the dust beneath to view the glory of the starry heavens above. It was Muhammad who led us from the depths of darkness to the grandeur of the light of God.

The Prophet was the one who led us to break our stone statues and wooden gods. It was Muhammad who lifted us out of the filth of idolatry to relish the serenity of God's transcendence.

On the Night of Power in one Ramadan, the Quran descended on Muhammad, and he received its first verses in the Cave of Hira. (Ibn Abbas)

Thereafter the Prophet taught us how to celebrate Ramadan through days of fasting and nights of prayer: to honor each day of Ramadan as a day of patient endurance through fasting, and each night as a night of gratitude through prayers.

An Unexpected Transformation

It was nothing short of miraculous how the Prophet reformed and refined those unruly tribes of Arabia and transformed them into pious, disciplined, God-fearing ascetics, who stood in prayers in the mosque five times a day seeking the guidance of God.

And imagine: these same people who once

reveled in the pleasures of "wine and women" could now spend the whole month of Ramadan in fasting and prayers.

Into the hearts of his followers, the Prophet instilled the love and fear of God and love for humanity. His example was inspiring and irresistible; and each of them became eager to be his closest follower.

To them he was the sincerest and the most cordial of leaders. And his life was open before them like a book; they could see him practicing most closely in his own life what he was preaching.

Letting the Spirit Reign Supreme

The Prophet demonstrated to his people how this world is less important than the next, and how the body is less important than the soul. In fasting, the Prophet taught them step by step how to ignore the physical demands so that the spirit reigns supreme.

Abandoning food, drink, and sex was only a prelude to the next stage of greater significance: of conquering avidity and cupidity, lust and licentiousness; of liberating one's mind from flights of passion and fits of temper. Indeed the Prophet said:

"The strong person is not the one who can

wrestle someone else down. The strong person is the one who can control himself when he is angry.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

Also about the effect of fasting on one’s behaviour, the Prophet said,

“Fasting is a shield, so the one who fasts should avoid obscene speech and ignorant behaviour. If someone abuses him or starts to fight with him, he should reply by saying: ‘I am fasting. I am fasting.’” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

The core of fasting according to the Prophet was one’s willingness not merely to give up self-indulgence, but to feel the need of one’s brother as one’s own. And no one was more kind-hearted and generous than the Messenger of God; and his generosity reached its peak in Ramadan. (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet stressed on the importance of treating people nicely when he said:

“Make things easy for people and do not make them difficult, and cheer people up and do not drive them away.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

He also said:

“The most beloved of actions to God Almighty, is making another Muslim happy, removing a hardship that has befallen him, paying off a debt of his or ridding him of hunger. It is more beloved to me indeed that I walk with my Muslim brother to see to a need of his than secluding oneself in a mosque for a month...” (Tabarani)

The heart of one who sincerely fasts is open to the contemplation of the magnificence of the countless bounties of God. That is why the Prophet asked his followers to avoid gluttony:

“The food of two people is enough for three, and the food of three people is enough for four.” (Saheeh Al-Bukhari)

Gentleness in Hardship

God is All-Merciful and He has expressed His Mercy to us His creatures through the send-

ing of His final messenger Muhammad as an embodiment of mercy. The Prophet said:

“Have mercy to those on earth so that He Who is in Heaven will have mercy on you.” (Tirmidhi)

“The believer is not the one who eats his fill when the neighbor beside him is hungry.” (Bayhaqi)

So it was not surprising that the Prophet’s Companions loved him dearly, as he was the kindest of men, bestowing his mercy not only upon humans but also on other creatures of the world as well.

No leader could be more considerate and solicitous of his followers than Muhammad: he never allowed any Muslim to bear any burden more than they could bear, as taught by God Himself.

For he was well aware of the infirmities of people; and this is evident from his consideration for his followers in the matter of fasting: He taught Muslims to delay the sahur (the pre-dawn meal before fasting) till a little before Dawn Prayer and not to delay the iftar (the meal to break the fast) after the call to Sunset Prayer so that no unnecessary strain is laid on the fasting person by prolonging the fast time.

During travel in Ramadan, the Prophet would either fast or break his fast; and he allowed his companions to choose between the two, according to their ability.

It is noteworthy that the Prophet did not specify a particular distance in travel as a minimum limit for a person to break the fast. His Companions sometimes broke the fast immediately after leaving home, because this was the example set by the Prophet himself.

Similarly during times of heat or thirst they were permitted to cool themselves by pouring water on the head, and the Prophet himself did so.

His example in the matter of consorting with his wives during Ramadan was not different; he

“The most beloved of actions to God Almighty, is making another Muslim happy, removing a hardship that has befallen him, paying off a debt of his or ridding him of hunger. It is more beloved to me indeed that I walk with my Muslim brother to see to a need of his than secluding oneself in a mosque for a month...”
(Tabarani)

disallowed only such acts that would obviously undermine the fasting.

As for the Tarawih Prayers (the supererogatory night prayers performed in Ramadan), it is recorded that the Prophet began praying them in congregation and then he stopped, fear-

ing that such prayers would become obligatory if he continued to pray them in congregation.

Thus while he demonstrated through his example that the Tarawih Prayers are better offered in congregation, he allowed leniency in the matter out of his mercy.

Seclusion: Refreshing the Soul

Seclusion: Refreshing the Soul

The highest point of Ramadan for Muslims is seeking the Laylat al-Qadr (the Night of Power) during the last ten days. One act of worship the Prophet emphasized particularly during this time is itikaf, which is a spiritual retreat in which one confines oneself to a mosque to spend one's time entirely to the worship and remembrance of God.

In these modern days when people hanker after indulgence in ephemeral pleasures, one needs to return to the seclusion of the house of prayer from time to time; which is essential for one's spiritual rejuvenation and the return to one's Creator.

Thus the beloved Prophet has taught us how to use Ramadan as a month for disciplining our intransigent passions, for renouncing our de-

sires for self gratification and for practicing patient endurance in the face of hardships.

The Prophet exhorted us that during Ramadan most especially it is our duty to support and uplift our less fortunate fellow humans.

Above all, Ramadan is a month of contemplating the Grace and Bounty of God Almighty, of returning to our Guardian Lord in repentance, of sincerely seeking His forgiveness.

“The one who wishes to meet Allah as a Muslim on the Day of Judgement should be punctual in the performance of his Salaah on hearing the Azaan. Allah has prescribed the clear ways of guidance for His Rasul (saws). These Salaah too are among those ways of guidance. If you too will adopt the way of those who perform their Salaah at their homes, you will be abandoning the way of Rasul (saws), hence you would be led astray. The one who performs wudhu and leaves for the Musjid, for every step he takes he gets one reward, one of his sins are forgiven and his stages are elevated in Jannah. In the time of Rasulullah (saws) only an open hypocrite would not join the Jamaat. Even a sick person would be carried by two people and brought to the Musjid to perform his Salaah with Jamaat.” (Muslim)

An Anatomy of Murder

S. Umar

The dignity and honor of man are undisputed. That is because Almighty Allah, the Creator, explicitly affirms that He has honored the children of Adam, and has conferred on them special favors, over a great part of creation (al-Isra', 70).

Everything, especially on earth has been created in order to serve man as Allah's vicegerent, and to facilitate the execution of his noble terrestrial mission and purpose. Similarly, everything that man himself creates, as part of his continuous cultural and civilizational functioning, is to resonate the same meaning and aid the same objective.

In other words, man stands at the center of creation with all other dimensions and aspects of life existing primarily to validate, constantly uplift, and sustain the nobility and excellence of man. The foremost criteria for evaluating a civilization revolves around what type of human beings it produces, and to what extent it is disposed to the preservation of human life, dignity, and the inherent distinction of man.

It is on account of this that the Qur'an warns that whoever killed an innocent soul or a human being, it would be in the sight of Allah as if he killed all mankind. But whoever saved one, it would be as if he saved all mankind (al-Ma'idah, 32).

Moreover, about killing intentionally an inno-

cent believer, the Qur'an categorically states that "his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment" (al-Nisa', 93).

Indeed, there is nothing that can sanction and justify taking an innocent human life. No clause in a legal framework can accommodate such an inhumane act, nor can a sound mind have any capacity to dwell on such a matter, let alone agree to it.

Murder is heartless, merciless, barbaric, and most disgraceful. It is an anomalous act, incompatible with any rationality, morality, and the intended cultural as well as civilizational well-being of people. That is why when a murder occurs, the best form of justice is that a murderer publicly pay with his own life as a form of general deterrence, so as to prevent others who may have identical intentions from committing identical crimes in the future.

And that means protecting and cherishing the true meaning of life: "And there is for you in legal retribution or qisas (saving of) life, O you (people) of understanding, that you may become righteous (restrain yourselves)" (al-Baqarah, 179).

Indeed, being firm and unyielding towards murder and murderers means respecting life and those who want to live it responsibly and nobly.

All human initiatives and rules must reflect that and be totally in support of the truth, justice, righteousness, and peace.

According to Maududi: “It is essential for the preservation of human life that everyone should regard the life of the other as sacred and help to protect it. The one who takes the life of another without right, does not commit injustice to that one alone, but also proves that he has no feeling for the sanctity of human life and of mercy for others. Hence he is most surely the enemy of the whole human race, for if every individual suffered from the same kind of hard-heartedness, the whole human race would come to an end. On the contrary, if one helps to preserve a single human life, he is indeed a helper of all mankind for he possesses those qualities upon which depends the survival of the whole human race.”

Qabil (Cain) versus Habil (Abel)

All these principles have been clearly displayed in the course of the incident of the first murder on earth, when Qabil (Cain) killed Habil (Abel) (al-Ma'idah, 27-31). Both were the sons of Prophet Adam.

Prior to the incident, the two men had presented their sacrifices to Allah. However, the sacrifice of Habil was accepted, while the one of Qabil wasn't.

That alone in no way could be a reason for Qabil to take the life of his younger and blameless brother. But then, he was older and filled with pride, egotism and envy, which eventually blinded him and his cognitive abilities. He was no longer in a position to make sound judgement.

With his rationality impaired, and recognizing no outside source of moral authority, Qabil was left to the mercy of his raging nafs (selfish soul that only urges evil, desire, and passion). Being thus in control of his entire being, the monstrous spiritual, along with emotional state of Qabil's personality, prompted and facilitated him the slaying of his brother.

“And his (selfish) soul permitted to him the murder

of his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers” (al-Ma'idah, 30).

Facing his vicious and hard-hearted brother, Habil tried to bring him to his senses by evoking the supreme authority of the heavenly regulatory moral program – which had been revealed by Allah to their father, Prophet Adam. Habil told Qabil:

“Indeed, Allah only accepts (sacrifices and other meritorious deeds) from the righteous (who fear Him)” (al-Ma'idah, 27).

But Qabil did not listen, as he did not recognize such an authority.

Habil then tried to appeal to common sense and his brother's intelligence, making clear how dire the consequences of the intended evil action would be, saying:

“If you should raise your hand against me to kill me – I shall not raise my hand against you to kill you. Indeed, I fear Allah, Lord of the worlds. Indeed I want you to obtain (thereby) my sin and your sin so you will be among the companions of the Fire. And that is the recompense of wrongdoers” (al-Ma'idah, 28-29).

But again, Qabil did not listen, nor did he heed the warnings. The voices of his selfish and wicked soul were deafening. He could not hear, nor discern, anything else, as a result of which he capitulated to the pressure of his desires and passionate determination.

Thus, Qabil's killing of his brother Habil was not due to his sacrifice having been rejected, but rather due to the intensity and insatiability of his malevolent spiritual and emotional state.

Qabil thus became the father and progenitor of murder as a concept and life's reality. Whoever unjustly kills, follows in his footsteps. Prophet Muhammad (saws) accordingly once said that,

“No human being is killed unjustly but a part of responsibility for the crime is laid on the first son of Adam who invented the tradition of killing

(murdering) on the earth” (Sahih al-Bukhari).

Habil’s “crime”, on the other hand, was that he stirred and agitated his brother’s madness by his righteousness and purity, resisting it afterwards with his sanity, sound judgment and determination. His “crime” furthermore was simply his status which Qabil did not like, that is, being of those who are righteous and pious and so, better than him, as well as his being an obstacle for Qabil’s immoral inner self to freely express itself and thrive.

That means, Habil’s “crime” was his sheer existence, which could significantly get in the way of Qabil’s. Therefore, he had to go.

For Qabil to be, Habil needed to be no more.

Muslims and the legacy of Habil

This can explain the nature of all murders, be they individual, mass, state-sponsored or state murders. They are all the results of what could be called premeditated insanity or - to quote Prof. Michael Huemer - “rational irrationality”.

According to Yusuf Ali, among the the Christians, Cain (Qabil) was the type of the Jew as against Abel (Habil) the Christian. The Jew tried to kill Jesus and exterminate the Christian.

In the same way, as against Prophet Muhammad (saws), the younger brother of the Semitic family, Cain (Qabil) was the type of the Old Testament and New Testament people, who tried to resist and kill Muhammad (saws) and put down his people (Yusuf Ali).

And the narrative goes on. Muslims continue to epitomize the example and legacy of Habil, while their older Jewish and Christian brethren in the family of Abrahamic religions – in particular their extremist segments - continue to epitomize the example and legacy of Qabil.

The bloody pages of history continue to be inscribed at the expense of Muslims and their cultures in Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya and several other post-Soviet states, just as they were inscribed during the Crusades, the fall of Andalus (Islamic Spain) and Western colonization.

The same trend, unfortunately, continues unabated today in the era of globalization. It is becoming yet more serious and more disastrous. It generated the notions and phenomena of Islamophobia, Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, making them some of the most widespread and most feared, as well as distorted and abused, concepts. Consequently, Muslims suffer today more than ever before, both in their own lands and beyond.

Many followers of other leading non-Abrahamic religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, became also emboldened and took a leaf out of the Jews’ (specifically Zionists’) and Christians’ book. Some of the greatest recent genocide drives against Muslims have been committed and orchestrated by the followers of those two religions and their offshoots.

In all cases, Muslims’ “crime” is that they are Muslims and practice Islam, that they belong to “them” or “others” and not “us”, and that they are turning somewhat into a hindrance for governments to achieve and implement extreme nationalism, certain nativist ideologies and authoritarian tendencies.

To be exact, Muslims’ “crime” is that they are there and live freely. They should be either completely neutralized or dispensed with altogether. Often, Muslims are seen as a necessary evil.

Following the pattern set by Qabil, rational thinking and just legal frameworks are the last to be consulted in the process. That makes those recent genocide drives against Muslims very difficult to control and handle internationally. No negotiations or international interventions could yield any significant and sustainable improvements on the ground.

One doubts they ever will, for the rule of sound reason, incontrovertible logic and just laws have long disappeared from the international scene saturated with mistrust, deceit, and double standards. The world is ruled by the wrong people. There is so much power in the wrong hands, that is, in the hands of Qabil’s associates.

AMR IBN AL-AAS (RA)

Amr ibn al-Aas (ra) was an Arab military commander who is most noted for leading the Muslim conquest of Egypt in 640. A contemporary of Muhammad (Saws), and one of the Sahaba (“Companions”), who rose quickly through the Muslim hierarchy following his conversion to Islam in the year 8AH (629 CE). He founded the Egyptian capital of Fustat, and built the Mosque of Amr ibn al-As at its center — the first mosque on the continent of Africa.

Early Life: He belonged to the Banu Sahm clan of the Quraysh. Assuming he was over ninety years old when he died, he was born before 573.

He was the son of Layla bint Harmalah aka “Al-Nabighah”. Before his military career, Amr was a trader, who had accompanied caravans along the commercial trading routes through Asia and the Middle East, including Egypt. Amr ibn ul Aas was born in Makka, Arabia and died in Egypt. He was a sharp, highly intelligent man who belonged to the nobility of the Quraysh. He fought with the Quraysh against Islam in several battles. He went to fight the Muslims when he saw them praying with the prophet (Saws), he got highly interested and tried to find out more about Islam. He was determinedly hostile to Islam. In fact he was Quraysh’s envoy to the Negus, the ruler of Abyssinia. Once he converted to Islam with Khalid ibn al-Walid, he became a great commander fighting for the Islamic cause. Amr ibn

ul aas mosque, the first mosque in Africa, was built under the patronage of Amr ibn ul aas. He came to Egypt as the commander in chief of the Arab troops in 640 AD.

Like the other Quraysh chiefs, he opposed Islam in the early days. ‘Amr headed the delegation that the Quraysh sent to Abyssinia to prevail upon the ruler, Ashaama ibn Abjar (possibly Armah), to turn away the Muslims from his country. The mission failed and the ruler of Abyssinia refused to oblige the Quraysh. After the migration of Muhammad (Saws) to Medina ‘Amr took part in all the battles that the Quraysh fought against the Muslims.

Battle of Uhud: He commanded a Quraish contingent at the battle of Uhud.

Treaty of Hudaibiyyah: Amr ibn al-Aas was married to Umm Kulthum bint Uqba, but he divorced her when she embraced Islam. She then re-married Umar RA (Umar ibn al-Khattab).

Conquest of Makka: In the company of Khalid ibn al-Walid, he rode from Mecca to Medina where both of them converted to Islam. He was seeking the right path to Medina and he became Muslim.

Dhat as-Salasil: Abu Bakr RA, Umar RA and Abu Ubaidah ibn al Jarrah RA served under Amr ibn al-Aas RA in the campaign of Dhat as-Salasil and had offered their prayers behind him for many weeks. At that time, Amr ibn al-Aas RA was their chief not only in the army but also as a leader in religious services.

Amr RA was dispatched by Muhammad (Saws) to Oman and played a key role in the conversion of the leaders of that nation, Jayfar and 'Abbād ibn Julanda. He was then made governor of the region until shortly after Muhammad's (Saws) death.

There are some hadith regarding him and his fathers will.

Abu Bakr's era: Amr RA was sent by the Caliph Abu Bakr RA with the Arab armies into Palestine following Muhammad's (Saws) death. It is believed that he played an important role in the Arab conquest of that region, and he is known to have been at the battles of Ajnadayn and Yarmouk as well as the siege of Damascus.

Umar's RA era: The Mosque of Amr ibn al-As in modern-day Cairo - Following the success over the Byzantines in Syria, Amr RA suggested to Umar RA that he march on Egypt, to which Umar RA agreed.

The actual invasion began towards the end of 640, as Amr RA crossed the Sinai Peninsula with 3,500-4,000 men. After taking the small fortified towns of Pelusium (Arabic: Al-Farama) and beating back a Byzantine surprise attack near Bilbeis, Amr RA headed towards the Babylon Fortress (in the region of modern-day Coptic Cairo). After some skirmishes south of the area, Amr RA marched north towards Heliopolis, with reinforcements reaching him from Syria, against the Byzantine forces in Egypt, under Theodore Trithyrius. The resulting Arab victory at the Battle of Heliopolis brought about the fall of much of the country. The Heliopolis battle resolved fairly quickly, though the Babylon Fortress withstood a siege of several months, and the Byzantine capital of Alexandria, which had been the capital of Egypt for a thousand years, surrendered a few months after that. A treaty of peace was signed in late 641, in the ruins of a palace in Memphis. Despite a brief re-conquest by Byzantine forces in 645 which was beaten at the Battle of

Nikiou, the country was firmly in Arab hands.

Needing a new capital, Amr RA suggested that they set up an administration in the large and well-equipped city of Alexandria, at the western edge of the Nile Delta. However, Caliph Omar refused, saying that he did not want the capital to be separated from him by a body of water. So in 641 Amr founded a new city on the eastern side of the Nile, centered on his own tent which was near the Babylon Fortress. Amr also founded a mosque at the center of his new city—it was the first mosque in Egypt, which also made it the first mosque on the continent of Africa. The Mosque of Amr (Mosque of Amr ibn al-As) still exists today in Old Cairo, though it has been extensively rebuilt over the centuries, and nothing remains of the original structure.

After founding Fustat, Amr RA was then recalled to the capital (which had, by then, moved from Mecca to Damascus) where he became Muawiyah's RA close advisor.

Muhammad (Saws) had told Amr RA “that when you conquer Egypt be kind to its people because they are your protege kith and kin”.

Muhammad's (Saws) wife, Maria al-Qibtiyya (the Copt) was an Egyptian, and Hagar the maidservant of Abraham (Ibrāhīm) and mother of Ishmael had come from Egypt. After Amr Ibn Al Aas conquered Egypt, he informed Mikakaus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, who retorted that “Only a Prophet, could invoke such a relationship!”

Later life: After his military conquests, Amr RA was an important player in internal conflicts within Islam. He died during Muawiyah's RA reign.

Following the murder of Uthman ibn Affan RA and the dispute between the supporters of Ali RA and the supporters of Muawiyah RA as successors, Amr RA represented Muawiyah RA in the arbitration as opposed to Abu Musa Ashaari RA who represented Ali RA.

Source: alHaadi

The Remedy for Refraining from Sin

A person once came to Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) and said, “O Abu Ishaq! I am a great transgressor and sinner. Please give me some advice that will serve as a deterrent from sin and will save my heart.”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) replied, “If you accept five things from me and you are able to hold fast to them, you will neither be harmed by falling into sin nor will you be destroyed through falling prey to your carnal desires.” The man replied, “Mention them, O Abu Ishaq.”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) commenced enumerating the five things as follows:

The first thing is that when you wish to disobey Allah, then do not eat from His sustenance.” The man replied, “Where will I get food from when all the food on earth is the sustenance granted by Allah?” Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah’s sustenance whilst disobeying Him?” The man submitted, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then said, “What is the second thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) said, “When you wish to disobey Allah, then do not stay on His land.” The man replied, “This is even more difficult than the first! When the East and the West and all the lands in-between belong to Allah, then where will I live?” Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah’s sustenance, and reside on His land, whilst disobeying Him?” The man admitted, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then asked, “What is the third thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) said, “When you wish to disobey Allah, and you are eating from His sustenance and residing on His land, then at least find a place where He will not see you defying Him openly.” The man exclaimed, “O Ebrahim (ra)! How is this possible when Allah even sees those things which are hidden?” Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) responded, “Does it behove you to eat from Allah’s sustenance, and reside on His land, and disobey Him while He is watching you and can see how you are defying Him?” The man acknowledged, “No, it does not behove one to do so.” The man then asked, “What is the fourth thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) said, “When the angel of death approaches you to extract your soul then say to him, ‘Give me some time so that I may engage in sincere repentance from my sins and carry out righteous actions to please Allah.’” The man responded, “The angel of death will never accept this request from me!” Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) remarked, “When you do not have the ability to repel death when it comes to you, so that you will have the opportunity to repent, and you are well aware that when death comes, there will be no delay or procrastination, then how do you hope to gain salvation?” The man then asked, “What is the fifth thing?”

Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) said, “On the Day of Qiyaamah, when the angels of punishment come to seize you and drag you to the fire of Jahannum, then do not go with them.” The man replied, “Neither will the angels leave me, nor will they listen to my plea!” Ebrahim bin Adham

(ra) asked, “In that case, how can you hope for salvation?”

The man exclaimed, “O Ebrahim (ra)! That is enough for me! I beg Allah to forgive my sins and I turn to Him in repentance!”

The man then chose to remain in the company of Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) where he remained engaged in ‘ibaadah until his death.

(Kitaabut Tawwaabeen - Ibnu Qudaamah pg. 211)

Lessons:

1. The nature of this world is that with its wealth, pleasures and entertainment, it distracts us from our goal – the Akhirah. We become so immersed in making the most of life that we become unmindful of Jannah and Jahannam. The remedy for this is for us to ponder over the reality of life, to ponder over how every person, as powerful and wealthy as he may have been, eventually left this world. Hence, our turn will also come one day. Then, we should think about the invaluable favours of Allah that we enjoy. Does it behove us to repay Him by flagrantly flouting His laws and commands? Through utilizing our intelligence and pondering in this

manner, we will, insha-Allah, create some feeling of remorse in our hearts and the inclination to repent and make amends.

2. When a person has a serious illness, he cannot treat it on his own. He will have to refer to an expert doctor for attention and treatment. Similarly, the person in this incident had the illness of repeatedly falling into sin. He thus referred to the illustrious saint and ‘Aalim of the time – Ebrahim bin Adham (ra) – for guidance and advice. Through the blessing of referring to this ‘Aalim, Allah guided him and inspired him to change his life.

3. After repenting, the man did not continue on his way. Rather, he realised that if he wished to continue benefiting and progressing, and if he wanted to prevent a relapse, he would need to remain attached to Ebrahim bin Adham (ra). Hence, he remained with him until death. If we wish to progress and benefit, and want to put our lives in order, we will have to attach ourselves to some pious person, who is committed to the sunnah. In this way, Allah will bless us via this pious person and we will remain committed to Deen.

Musk Seller

Rasulullah (saws) emphasized upon us to always maintain good company. He is reported to have said, “A person follows the way of his friend, therefore beware of who you befriend!” (Abi Dawood)

In another hadeeth, a good friend has been likened to one who sells musk. One will either receive some musk from him as a gift, or buy it from him or at least one will enjoy the fragrance of musk by merely being in his company. In other words one can only benefit from him. The bad friend has been compared to a blacksmith. He will either burn your clothes due to the sparks and embers flying out of his furnace, or at the least one will breathe the toxic fumes. (Bukhaari)

Thus one will not be able to escape the harm of being in his company. Merely being in the company of the bad friend will leave its negative effects on one.

Appeal

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