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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

The Spirit of Ramadhan

Of all the months in a year, the most blessed one for Muslims is Ramadhan. Both, the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions are witness to its excellences and venerability. Think for a moment how much profit you extract from its blessings? Do you, along with your family, keep fast? And if, due to some valid reasons as per Shariah, fasts have been left, then, are you ready to square them later or feed the poor (as atonement)? What is the ratio of fasting and non-fasting people of the Muslim locality you live in? Do we remain engaged in honouring and approaching Ramadhan in the same way the customs of Shabb-i-Baraat and Muharram are celebrated by Muslims in vast magnitude, or the festivity material collected in every home on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-uz-Zuha?

Honouring and approaching this blessed month does not mean spending major portion of the day in sleep or peevishness and that of night in hospitality of the stomach; and justify every kind of lavish spending and careless attitude at the time of Iftar. Fast is to teach us the lesson of austerity, and to accustom our disposition to patience and endurance. Our brethren, who normally eat one or two things at night but consider it necessary to consume five to seven at Iftar, should ponder deeply to what extent they accomplish the spirit of Ramadhan. Fast is to control the demands of the self and not to increase or extend them manifold. There have been men who totally abandoned the

consumption of meat and other delicacies during this month. They understood the spirit and purpose of fast better than we who consider the immoderations of Iftar the very branch of Ramadan.

Fast is the natural reformer of both body and soul, and the guarantor of physical and moral health. We have, because of our own wretchedness and misfortune, wasted and ruined the good of both. Firstly, a huge community don't keep fast at all and those who maintain it consider every kind of peevishness and sullenness, on the pretext of fast, permissible for them; and further, from the time of Suhr to Iftar, justify their overindulgence in food preparations. Fast is not the name of such an affair. The dignity of a fasting person should be to remain unsullied from backbiting, jealousy, anger, avarice, and every kind of moral turpitude. Even at the time of anger or provocation he should be patient and disciplined. He should adopt gentleness and humility against lose or harsh words. This is the fast of Ruh (spirit). The fast of body is to remain away from the extravagance of food at the time of Iftar and afterwards. During Ramadhan the health conditions of many among us, instead of turning better, worsen. The stomach problems complained about by majority of people during this period is only the result of these dietary contraventions and extravagances.

May Allah bestow us the understanding of the true spirit of Ramadan. Aamin.

It was the month of Ramadhan in which the Qur'an was [first] bestowed from on high as a guidance unto man and a self-evident proof of that guidance, and as the standard by which to discern the true from the false. (2:185)

Question Answer

Question:

Are we accountable for the things which we do not know, for example if there is a fault in our prayer or an fiqh issue? Will we be accountable for these things?

Answer:

It is necessary for every Muslim to acquire the knowledge of the essentials of his faith. For instance, it is necessary for a person to know the rulings for his everyday issues like purity, salah, etc. Thereafter, if a person earns sufficient wealth that makes him eligible to pay zakah or make the pilgrimage, then he is also required to learn the laws of zakah and Hajj. He needs to also learn the spiritual aspects of his din like how to make his actions exclusively for the sake of Allah. Besides this, it is also necessary for him to learn social conduct, i.e. how to interact properly with the creation of Allah. In other words, it is legally binding (fard) on all Muslims to possess sufficient knowledge to discharge their everyday duties, which means a thorough knowledge of the basics of prayer, wudhu, ghusl, what one can eat and what one cannot, etc. ('Allama Ibn 'Abidin's super commentary on al-Durr al-Mukhtar 1:29)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasalam) said, "Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every believing person." (Sunan Ibn Maja, Bayhaqi)

This has been explained as the obligation of acquiring the knowledge of the essentials of ones faith. Beyond the basic essentials, it would only be necessary to learn the details of other related issues if they arise. However, it is a communal obligation to have access to experts in jurisprudence (a mufti or faqih) who can answer these questions when

they arise.

If a person has not acquired the basic essentials of his faith and is making mistakes in that regard, he is surely considered to be blameworthy. If a person, on the hand, tried to the best of his ability to learn the basic essentials of his din, then missed out on something, he may be excused by Allah. In any case, once a person discovers a mistake in what they were doing he may be able to correct it (in some cases) by redoing the action (qada) otherwise only repentance would be necessary.

Even after learning the essentials of ones din (for instance at a din intensive or by a local teacher) a person must continue to refresh his knowledge by practicing upon it and studying further. Otherwise it is sometimes very easy to lose this knowledge.

Question:

Kindly let me know how to do Istikhara.

Answer:

If you are ambivalent or unsure about a decision you have to make, there is a specific prayer for guidance (Salat-I-Istikhara) that you can do to ask for Allah's help in making your decision. Should you marry this certain person? Should you attend this graduate school? Should you take this job offer or that one? Allah knows what is best for you, and if you are not sure about a choice that you have, seek His guidance.

The Prophet Muhammad said, "If one of you is concerned about some practical undertaking, or about making plans for a journey, he should perform two cycles (rak'atain) of voluntary prayer." Then he/she

should say the following du'a:

Translation:

Oh Allah! I seek Your guidance by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek ability by virtue of Your power, and I ask You of Your great bounty. You have power; I have none. And You know; I know not. You are the Knower of hidden things.

Oh Allah! If in Your knowledge, (this matter) is good for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs, immediate and in the future, then ordain it for me, make it easy for me, and bless it for me. And if in Your knowledge, (this matter*) is bad for my religion, my livelihood and my affairs, immediate and in the future, then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it. And ordain for me the good wherever it may be, and make me content with it.*

* When making the du'a, the actual matter or decision should be mentioned instead of the words "haazal-amra" ("this matter").

* After doing salat-I-istikhara, you may feel more inclined toward a decision one way or the other.

Question:

- 1) Who martyred Hadrat Ali (RA) and why and when was he martyred?
- 2) What was the date when Hadrat Ali (RA) was martyred?
- 3) Where is the grave of Hazrat Ali (RA)?

Answer:

- 1.) Amir-ul-Mu'minin Ali (RA) was martyred

by Abdur-Rahman ibn Muljam a member of the khawārij sect who was the most wretched person of the later times.

In an authentic hadīth, Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked Ali (RA): "Who is the most wretched of the earlier times?" Ali (RA) replied, "The one who hamstringed the she-camel." He (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) asked, "Who is the most wretched of the later times?" Ali (RA) replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better," upon which the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wa sallam) replied, "Your killer."

Abdur Rahman ibn Muljam's reason for killing Ali was that he wanted to take revenge on Ali (RA) for putting down the khawārij rebellion at Al-Nahrawān.

Another reason also mentioned is that the woman that Abdur-Rahman ibn Muljam had proposed to, had stipulated her mahr as the assassination of Ali (RA), Muawiyah (RA) and Amr' ibn Al-Aas (RA). Ali (RA) was struck in the top portion of his head, stayed alive for one day but then succumbed to his wounds.

Muawiyah (RA) survived the attempt on his life and recovered but could not have children as a result of the after-effects of the medicine he received. Amr' ibn Al-Aas (RA) did not pray Fajr Salāh in the masjid that morning because he had severe abdominal pain. Instead, his deputy Kharijah went and in a case of mistaken identity was killed by the assassin instead.

2.) Ali (RA) was martyred on Friday morning, the 17th of Ramadan in the 40th year of Hijra as he went to pray the Fajr Salāh in the masjid.

3.) The janāzah (funeral prayers) was led by his son Al-Hasan (RA), after which he was buried at the official government residence in Kufa. His grave was hidden and concealed lest the khawārij try to exhume his body.

Lesson From The Qur'an

Commentary: Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Sura Baqarah—Verse 246-253

قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُنِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ الْآ
تَقَاتِلُوا ۗ قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ
أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا ۗ فَلَمَّا كُنِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

۲۴۶

He said: "Is it (not) likely, if fighting is enjoined upon you, that you would not fight." They said: "What is wrong with us that we would not fight while we have been driven away from our homes and our sons?" But, when fighting was enjoined upon them, they turned away, except a few of them, and Allah is Aware of the unjust. [2:246]

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۗ
قَالُوا أَلَيْسَ لِكُلِّ سُلُطَانٍ عَلَيْهَا سُلْطَانٌ مُّطَاعٌ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ
بِالنَّهْرِ ۗ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ
فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ
بِنَهَرٍ ۗ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ

مَلِكُهُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۗ ۲۴۷

Their prophet said to them: "Allah has appointed Tālūt as a king for you." They said: "How could he have kingship over us when we are more entitled to the kingship than him? He has not been given affluence in wealth." He said: "Allah has chosen him over you and has increased his stature in knowledge and physique, and Allah gives His kingship to whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." (2:248)

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ
سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ
هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ۗ ۲۴۸

Their prophet said to them: "The sign of his kingship is that the Ark¹³⁹ shall come to you, carried by the angels, having therein tranquility from your Lord, and the remains of what the House of Mūsā and the House of Hārūn (Aaron) had left. Surely, in it there is a sign for you, if you are believers." (2:248)

139. It was a wooden chest, named in the Bible as Ark of the Covenant, containing the Tablets of Torah and some souvenirs of the Prophets (AS). This Ark was taken away from them by their enemies. It was declared by Allah that it would be a sign of the appointment of Talut as king that the Ark would come back to them carried by angels. So when Allah decided that the chest should be returned to the Israelites, it so happened that wherever the chest was placed by the Amalekites, the inhabitants of that place were struck by epidemic or other calamities. Puzzled with this situation, they loaded the chest on two bullocks and drove it away from them. The angels then carried it to the doorsteps of Talut, and the Israelites were convinced that he is appointed by Allah as their king.

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ
بِنَهَرٍ ۗ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي ۗ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ

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فَإِنَّهُ مَتَّى إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَهُ بِيَدِهِ ۚ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا
 قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
 قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۗ قَالَ الَّذِينَ
 يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْقُوا لِلَّهِ ۗ كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً
 كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۚ

So, when Tālūt set out along with the troops, he said: "Allah is going to test you by a river, so, whoever drinks from it is not my man, and whoever does not taste it is surely a man of mine, except the one who scoops a little with his hand."¹⁴⁰ Then they drank from it, except a few of them. So, when it (the river) was crossed by him and by those who believed with him, they said: "There is no strength with us today against Jālūt and his troops." Said those who believed in their having to meet Allah: "How many small groups have overcome large groups by the will of Allah. Allah is with those who remain patient." (2:249)

140. Perhaps it was a test of and training for the endurance and patience required during the battle.

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا
 صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أقدامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ
 ۚ

And when they faced Jālūt and his troops, they said: "Our Lord, pour out endurance on us, make firm our feet and help us against the disbelieving people." (2:250)

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ
 الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ
 النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو
 فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ

So, they defeated them by the will of Allah, and Dāwūd (David) killed Jālūt¹⁴¹, and Allah

gave him the kingdom and the wisdom and taught him what He willed. Had Allah not been pushing back some people by means of others, the earth would have been spoiled. But Allah is All-Gracious to all the worlds. (2:251)

141. Jalut (named in the Bible as Golaith) was a very strong person in the army of the opponents of the Israelites. He challenged them to send a person to fight him. Dawud (AS) (David – according to Bible) was very young at that time, and he reached the battlefield by chance, and accepted the challenge of Jalut and killed him. The details of this encounter are reported in historical narrations and in the Bible (1-Samuel, chapter 16-17)

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
 الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۚ

These are the verses of Allah that We recite to you (O Prophet), with all veracity, and certainly you are among the Messengers. (2:252)

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ
 اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
 الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا
 اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
 وَلَٰكِنْ اِخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ۚ

Those are the messengers some of whom We have given excellence over some others. Among them there are ones to whom Allah spoke (directly) and He raised some of them steps higher (in other respects), and We gave clear signs to 'Isā (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary) and supported him with the Holy Spirit¹⁴². If Allah so willed, those succeeding him would have not fought against each other after clear signs had come to

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Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Knowledge

Chapter 18 : Prohibition to clean the private parts with the right hand.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Since Imam Bukhari (RA) is discussing Istinja in these chapters, so he has in between got the chapter that it is prohibited to use right hand to clean ones private parts i.e., to do Istinja with ones right hand.

Hadith No. 151

- -

Narrated Abu Qatada (RA)

Allah's Apostle said, "Whenever anyone of you drinks water, he should not breathe in the drinking utensil, and whenever anyone of you goes to a lavatory, he should neither touch his penis nor clean his private parts with his right hand."

Comments

Islam is the religion of nature; it has the distinction of assigning everything its job which befits its nature. Similarly, Allah likes the usage of right hand for honourable jobs and not for things like Istinja etc as is mentioned in this Hadith. However the learned

scholars are of the opinion that this prohibition of using right hand for Istinja is not obligatory but it is among etiquettes. Imam Bukhari (RA) also does not think that this prohibition is obligatory.

How to drink water?

The other etiquette taught in this Hadith is about the method of drinking water. It is not proper to breath into the pot containing water. The reason is obvious because breathing into the pot will contaminate it. It is also not proper to drink whole glass of water in one go. It is Sunnah to drink in three breaths.

Chapter 19 : One should not hold his penis with his right hand while micturating.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Ibn Hajr (RA) says that in previous chapter it was mentioned that it is prohibited to touch ones penis and in this chapter Imam Bukhari says that this prohibition is restricted only during the act of micturition and not always.

Hadith No. 152

Narrated Abu Qatada (RA)

The Prophet said, "Whenever anyone of you passes urine he should not hold his penis or clean his private parts with his right hand. (And while drinking) one should not breathe in the drinking utensil."

Comments

This Hadith mentions the same things as in previous Hadith except that the prohibition to touch ones penis has been restricted to the act of maturation only.

Chapter 20 : To clean the private parts with stones.**Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab**

Here Imam Bukhari (RA) wants to prove that doing Istinja with stones or clay pieces is permissible because some people believed that it was not permissible to use these for Istinja.

Hadith No. 153**Narrated Abu Huraira (RA)**

"I followed the Prophet while he was going out to answer the call of nature. He was not used to look this way or that. So, when I approached near him he said to me, "Fetch for me some stones for 'cleaning the privates parts (or said something similar), and do not

bring a bone or a piece of dung." So I brought the stones in the corner of my garment and placed them by his side and I then went away from him. When he finished (from answering the call of nature) he used, them".

Comments

Hadhrat Abu Huraira (RA) says that one day Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came out to attend the call of nature and I followed him quietly with the intention to render him some service. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) did not see here or there and went straight ahead, Abu Huraira (RA) came nearer and revealed his intention of rendering any service. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) asked him to get some stones or clay pieces for him so that he could use them for Istinja. This proves that using of these things for Istinja is permissible. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) at the same time asked him not to bring bones or dung for the purpose. This proves that it is not permissible to use bones or dung for Istinja. It is quoted in some narrations that fresh bones and dung is the food of Jinns. Abu Nayeem has quoted on the authority of Ibn Masood (RA) that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said that the Jinns from Naseebayn came to him and requested him that they should be given food, Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) gave them bones and dung. It is said that when Jinns pass by a fresh bone, it gets its flesh back which is then consumed by Jinns. For this purpose it has been forbidden in the Hadith to use bones or dung for Istinja. Ulema say that this prohibition is only with regard to fresh bones and not old ones as it is quoted that Hadhrat Umar (RA) had used old camel bone for Istinja. Similarly, it has been inferred that it is not permissible to use any food stuff for Istinja or any other thing which is respectable or useful like paper etc.

The Virtues of Fasting

Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (RA)

1. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, the smell that emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk. In other words, on the day of judgement, the smell that emanates from the mouth of a fasting person will be replaced with a fragrance even better than musk. This fragrance will emanate from the mouth of the fasting person and it will be most beloved in the sight of Allah. This foul smell that emanates from a fasting person in this world will actually be a source of attaining that fragrance in the hereafter.

2. It is mentioned in a Hadith that fasting is a shield and a strong fortress in order to save oneself from hell. In other words, just as a person seeks refuge in a strong fortress or by means of a shield from an enemy, in the same way, one gets salvation from hell by fasting. By fasting, a person's power of committing sins gets weak, and his power to do good gets stronger. When a person fasts in the proper manner and implements all the etiquette of fasting, he will free himself of sins and gain salvation from hell.

3. It is mentioned in a Hadith that fasting is a shield as long as it is not destroyed by lies and backbiting. In other words, fasting works as a shield as explained above. But this is on the condition that the person abstains from sinning. If a person fasts and still speaks lies, backbites, and commits other sins, then although he will be absolved of the fard of fasting, he will be committing a major sin. Furthermore, he will be deprived of the barakah of fasting.

4. It is mentioned in a Hadith that

fasting is a shield. The person who awakens in the morning in a state of fasting should not commit any act of ignorance. If a person approaches him in an ignorant way, he should not reply him in the same ignorant manner nor should he address him disrespectfully. Instead, he should inform him that he is fasting. By him in whose control is the life of Muhammad, the smell that emanates from the mouth of a fasting person is more beloved in the sight of Allah than the fragrance of musk. In other words, on the day of judgement, the smell that emanates from the mouth of a fasting person will be replaced with a fragrance even better than musk. This fragrance will emanate from the mouth of the fasting person and it will be most beloved in the sight of Allah. This foul smell that emanates from a fasting person in this world will actually be a source of attaining that fragrance in the hereafter.

5. It is mentioned in a Hadith that at the time of opening the fast, the person is permitted to make a dua whose acceptance is promised.

6. It is mentioned in a Hadith that Rasulullah addressed two persons saying: "You should fast because fasting is a shield in order to save oneself from hell and in order to save oneself from the difficulties of time." In other words, one will be saved from hell and also from the difficulties and calamities of this world.

7. It is mentioned in a Hadith that on the day of judgement, three persons will not have to give an account of the food that they ate, immaterial of what they ate as long as it is *halal*. They are: the fasting person, the per-

son who makes sehri, and the person who is stationed on the borders of the Islamic state safeguarding it from being invaded by the kuffaar. This is a great concession for these three persons that they have been absolved from giving an account of their eating. It should be borne in mind that despite this concession, one should not spend a lot of money and time in preparing very exquisite meals. Spending a lot of time in preparing delicacies turns one away from the remembrance of Allah and gives impetus to one's power of committing sins. This should always be borne in mind. One should value the bounties that Allah has blessed one with. The best way of showing gratitude to Allah is that one should obey all His commands and orders.

8. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the person who feeds a fasting person at the time of opening fast will receive the same reward as that of the fasting person without there being any decrease in the reward of the fasting person. In other words, through the mercy and generosity of Allah, both of them will receive the same reward. This will apply even if the person feeds him with a very simple or insignificant meal. Even if he merely gives him some water to drink.

9. It is mentioned in a Hadith that Allah multiplies the rewards of His pious servants by ten times up to 700 times except for the reward of fasting. In other words, there is no limit for the reward of fasting. As regards fasting, Allah says: "It is for Me alone and I will give the reward for it." From this we can gauge how great the reward of fasting is that there is no limit to the rewards. In addition to this, Allah will give the reward for fasting Himself and will not delegate this task to the angels. Glory be to Allah for attaching such importance to this little effort on our part. However, it should be borne in mind that all these virtues and benefits of fasting will only come into effect when we fulfil this duty as it

ought to be fulfilled, and only when we abstain from speaking lies, backbiting, and all other sins. In the month of Ramadaan, some people leave out their Salats completely while others miss out the fajr Salat. In doing so, they are depriving themselves of the numerous blessings and rewards of fasting. Furthermore, by reading this Hadith, one should not have this misconception that fasting is more virtuous than Salat because Salat is the most virtuous of all the different acts of ibaadah. The meaning of this Hadith is that there is a very great reward for fasting and it does not mean that fasting is the most virtuous act of ibaadah. The above-mentioned Hadith continues that there are two times of extreme happiness for the fasting person. The first time of happiness is when he opens his fast and the second time is on the day of judgement. That is, when he meets Allah, as mentioned in other Ahaadith.

10. It is mentioned in a Hadith that on the first night of Ramadaan the doors of heaven are opened. These doors remain open right till the end of Ramadaan. There is no Muslim who offers Salat in any of the nights of this month except that he receives 2500 rewards for every rakaat that he offers. In addition to this, Allah will construct a palace of rubies. This palace will have sixty doors. Each of these doors will have a golden chamber which will be decorated with rubies.

When the person keeps the first fast of Ramadaan, all the minor sins that he had committed during the past year since the first fast of the last Ramadaan will be forgiven. In addition to this, 70 000 angels will make dua for his forgiveness daily from morning till sunset. For every rakaat of Salat that he offers in Ramadaan, whether it be during the day or at night, he will be rewarded with a tree in paradise. The shade of this tree will be such that a traveller will

be able to travel beneath it for a journey of 500 years.

11. It is mentioned in a Hadith that jannah is decorated from the beginning of the year till the end of the year especially for Ramadaan. In addition to this, the large-eyed Hoors of jannah decorate and beautify themselves from the beginning of the year till the end of the year especially for the fasting persons. When Ramadaan commences, jannah says to Allah: "O Allah! Enter your pious servants into me in this month." As for the large-eyed Hoors, they say: "O Allah! Appoint husbands for us from among your pious servants."

The person who did not slander anyone in this month and did not consume any intoxicants shall have all his sins wiped out. As for the one who slanders someone or consumes any intoxicant, all his good deeds for the past year will be wiped out. In other words, he will be committing a major sin. It should be borne in mind that just as rewards are multiplied in a holy month, punishment is also increased if a sin is committed in a holy month. One should ponder over the warning in this Hadith.

Fear the month of Ramadaan because it is the month of Allah. In this month, Allah has ordered His servants to emulate His practice by abstaining from food and drink. Since Allah is pure from food and drink all the time, this month of Ramadaan has been specially attached to Him. As for the other months, they all belong to Him as well. Allah has given you eleven months in which you can eat, drink, and indulge in other *halal* pleasures. He has set aside just one month for Himself in which He has ordered you to abstain from food, drink, and other *halal* pleasures. Therefore, fear the month of Ramadaan, for most certainly, it belongs to Allah.

Obey Allah in this month and abstain from sins. Although obedience to Allah is nec-

essary all the time, it's importance is stressed in particular places such as Makkah al-Mukarramah and Madinah al-Munawwarah; and at particular times such as in the month of Ramadaan. Special attention should be paid to abstaining from sins at such places and at such times because just as rewards are multiplied at these times and places, so too is punishment.

12. It is mentioned in a Hadith that when food is presented to you at the time of iftaar, then prior to opening your fast you should recite the following dua:

Translation: "In the name of Allah. All praise is due to Allah. O Allah! I have fasted for Your pleasure, it is with Your sustenance that I am opening my fast, and I have placed complete trust in You. Glory be to You and praise be to You. Accept this fast from me for most surely You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

13. It is mentioned in a Hadith that when you open your fast, it is preferable to open it with dry dates because there is a lot of blessing in this. If you do not have dates, open your fast with water because water is a great purifier. In certain Ahadith it is also mentioned that the fast should be opened with milk.

14. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the person who keeps fast for 40 days solely for the pleasure of Allah shall have whatever dua he makes to Allah accepted. In other words, this person will become so beloved in the sight of Allah that whatever dua he makes will be accepted by Allah if He feels that it will be to the benefit of that person. The respected sufis, may Allah be pleased with them, have laid down a system of cutting off all relations with this world for forty days and engaging in the ibaadah of Allah in a masjid. In addition to this, the person must fast for these forty days while he is in the masjid. By doing this, the person will benefit

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Things that Nullify Fast

Things that break one's fast are of two kinds. Some make only Qaza necessary, whilst others make both Qaza and Kaffarah compulsory.

QAZA: To keep one fast in place of the one that breaks, or is broken intentionally.

KAFFARAH: To keep one fast after another for sixty days continuously.

However, if a person is unable to keep these 60 Rozas, for some valid reason, e.g. continuous sickness, then one has the option of choosing from one of the following four:

- Feed sixty poor people to their fill for two meals, or
- Feed one poor person two meals a day, for sixty days; or
- Give 60 poor persons 3 1/2 lbs (approx. 1.6kg) of wheat or its value in cash or food grains; or
- Give to one poor person not less than 3 1/2 lbs. of wheat, rice or food grains, etc. to its value of cash for sixty days.

Things That Break One's Fast But Make Only Qaza Wajib:

- Anything put by force into the mouth of fasting person.
- Water goes down the throat whilst gargling, conscious of one's fasting.
- To Vomit mouthful intentionally or to return vomit down the throat.
- Swallowing intentionally a pebble, piece of paper or any item that is not used as food or medicine.
- Swallowing something edible, equal to

or bigger than a grain of gram which was stuck between the teeth. However if it is first taken out of the mouth and swallowed it will break the fast whether it is smaller or bigger than that size of a gram.

- Putting oil into the ear.
- Inhaling snuff into the nostrils.
- Swallowing the blood from the gums if the color of the blood is more that the fast is broken, to eat and drink again.
- To eat and drink forgetting that one is fasting and thereafter thinking that the fast is broken, to eat and drink again.
- To eat and drink after Subha Sadiq or to break the fast before sunset due to a cloudy sky or a faulty watch, etc., and then realizing one's fault.

N.B: Any fast other than a Ramadan one, whether broken intentionally or with a good and valid reason, makes only Qaza Wajib. There is no Kaffarah for breaking any fast besides that of Ramadan.

Things That Make Both Qaza & Kaffarah Wajib

- *Eating, drinking or breaking the fast in any other manner, e.g., smoking etc., without a valid reason, will make both Qaza and Kaffarah necessary.
- *Applying Surma into eye or rubbing oil on the head and then, thinking that the fast is broken, to eat and drink intentionally.
- *To drink any kind of medicine intentionally. (Note: Injection is permitted)

Things That Do Not Break The Fast

- *To eat or drink something uninten-

- tionally
- A mosquito, fly or any other object going down the throat unintentionally.
 - Water entering the ears.
 - Dust or dirt going down the throat.
 - Swallowing one's own saliva.
 - Taking an injection.
 - Applying of Surma (kohl) into the eyes.
 - Taking a bath to keep cool.
 - Rubbing oil onto the body or hair.
 - To vomit unintentionally.
 - Applying itr or perfume. It is not permitted to inhale to smoke of Lobaan or Agar Batti whilst fasting. It is also not permitted to smoke cigarettes or inhale its smoke.
 - Brushing the teeth without tooth paste or powder. e.g., using a Miswaak, etc.
 - A dream which makes Ghushl Waajib (necessary) does not break the Rozah.

People Exempted From Fasting in RAMADAN

- Sick people when their health is likely to be badly affected by fasting. They should make up the loss, a day for a day, when they recover after Ramadan.
- A musafir, (one who is undertaking a journey of more than 77 kms and does not intend staying more than 14 days at his destination). However, it is better for him to fast in Ramadan than keep Qaza later, provided the journey is not a tiresome one.
- If it is feared that hunger or thirst will lead to death, it is permitted to break one's fast.
- It is Wajib to keep Qaza of a Nafil fast that was broken before completing it.

Fidya for Fast (Compensation):

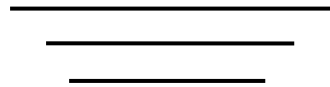
- A mosquito, fly or any other object going down the throat unintentionally
- A very old person who does not have the strength to fast or a very sickly or

diseased person who has no hope of recovering after Ramadan, should give Fidya for each fast missed in Ramadan.

- The Fidya for a fast is similar to that of a missed Farz or Wajib Salaat, i.e:
 - To give 3 1/2 lbs = approx. 1.6 kg of wheat OR .. 7 lbs = approx. 3.2kg of barley
 - OR... the equivalent of the above in cash.

If, however an old or sick person gains strength or recovers after Ramadan, he must keep the missed number of fasts and whatever was given as Fidya will be a reward for him from Allah Ta'ala.

No one is allowed to fast for another (sick or fit) person.



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tremendously and will also develop the strength to do good deeds. Through the barakah of this, he will receive special knowledge from Allah and he will also be blessed with a deep understanding of things.

15. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the person who fasts on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays of every sacred month, he will receive the reward of making ibaadah for 700 years. There are four months which are sacred. They are: Rajab, Zul Qa'dah, the first ten days of Zul Hijjah, and Muharram. However, it should be borne in mind that it is *haram* to fast on the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th of Zul Hijjah.

16. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the person who keeps three fasts in the sacred months, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, he will receive the reward of making ibaadah for two years. That is, on the Day of Judgement it will be written in his book of deeds that he had made ibaadah for two years in return for these three days of fasting.

A Clean Heart Draws Divine Assistance

Shaikh Abur Rabee' (rahimahullah) relates:

I had often heard of a very pious lady named Fiddhah who lived in a village. I do not visit ladies, but when I heard many miraculous stories about her, I thought of going to her village and paying her a visit. People told me that she had a she goat that yielded both milk and honey. I was amazed to hear this, so I bought myself a new bowl and went to her house. I said to her: "I heard about your she goat that gives both milk and honey and I wish to have a share of its benefits.

" She gave the she goat over to me and I milked it. I saw milk and honey coming out of its teats. We drank the milk and consumed the honey. When I asked her how she had come to possess that she goat, she narrated to me an amazing story. She said: "There was a time when we were very poor and we possessed nothing except a she goat, whose milk was our only source of subsistence. When Eidul Adha came, my husband said to me: "We own nothing except this she goat, let us sacrifice it in the name of Allah." I replied: "We have nothing but its milk to live on. Allah has not made it incumbent upon us to sacrifice an animal in such circumstances. Must we sacrifice it even then?" My husband gave in to my desire and we postponed our sacrifice till the next Eidul Adha. As chance would have it, we had a guest on that very day and I said to my husband: "We have been commanded to entertain our guests and we have nothing but this she goat. Let us slaughter it and cook the meat for our guest." When my husband prepared to slaughter it I said to him: "It would be better if you slaughter it outside the house, behind the wall, lest our children cry on seeing it slaughtered." He went outside with the goat and as soon as he was gone, I saw this she goat standing on the wall. As it bore a striking resemblance with our she goat, I thought it was our very goat which had broken loose from my husband's grip. When I went outside, to my astonishment I saw that he had already slaughtered our goat and had begun skinning it. I said to him: "How strange! Another she goat resembling our own has come into our home!" When I told him the whole story he said: "It is likely that Allah has granted us a good recompense for sacrificing our she goat on account of our guest." So this is the she goat which yields both milk and honey and it is all due to our entertaining our guest. This lady then advised her children: "My children, this goat feeds on what grows in the heart. As long as your hearts continue to be noble and un-tarnished by evil, its milk will be good. But, as soon as your hearts become corrupted, its milk will also turn bad. Guard your hearts against evil, everything will be of benefit to you."

(Fazaaile Sadaqaat)

Lesson: A clean heart attracts Allah's special mercy and attention and makes a person beloved in the sight of Allah, as well as the people.

Endless Earnings From Ramadhan

Mufti Yousuf Badat

The great mercy and love which Almighty Allah has for his sinful slaves is clearly evident by the verses of the Holy Qur'ân and Ahâdith of the Prophet Mohammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Let us take for example the Hadith al Qudsee wherein the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) states that Almighty Allah says "O my servants , if your sins reach the peaks of the heavens and then you seek forgiveness, I am prepared to forgive you and this will not bother me in the least"

Almighty Allah says in His holy book " Say (Oh, Prophet of Allah) Oh my servants that have transgressed, do not become dependant from the mercy of Allah , Allah is prepared to forgive all the sin of mankind" Almighty Allah is so merciful that He cannot tolerate it that anyone should lose hope in His mercy. Which parent can ever say to his child that no matter what injustice you do to me, I always guarantee you that the door of my favour is open to you? In fact, even a cursory perusal of Hadith literature will convince the scholar that an impression is created as if Almighty Allah is looking for opportunities to allow His slaves to somehow gain His favour, no matter how great sinners they may be. The rotation of specific occasions of profound mercy throughout the lunar Islamic year is for the purpose so that one may reap these blessings and benefits from the Almighty. Perhaps the most sublime and majestic display of divine tolerance, love and mercy is the annual appearance of the month of Rama-

dan.

The Holy month of Ramadan approaches us every year but is it of any value to us? Do we regard the days and nights as any other day and night? Do we go about to work, school and our daily routines without any change besides staying hungry and thirsty? How do we actually regard this month? Knowledge of the virtues and benefits of the blessed month of Ramadan will develop the understanding of the value and importance of this month, which in turn will create enthusiasm and eagerness to make this month a fruitful one. I do not want to list before you the endless list of authentic narrations explaining the virtues and benefits of this holy month but for a reminder a hadith is mentioned at this junction:

The Prophet Mohammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "The month of Ramadan, the month of blessings has come to you, wherein Allah turns towards you and sends down to you His special mercy, forgives your faults, accepts prayers, observes your competition for doing good deeds and boasts to the angels about you. So show to Allah your righteousness; for verily, the most pitiable and unfortunate one is he who is deprived of Allah's mercy in this month." (Tabrani)

If one studies the Ahâdith and teachings of the Prophet Mohammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) concerning Ramadan then we can come to a conclusion that there are certain guidelines which , if followed cor-

rectly, will make the month of Ramadan prosperous for us.

Abstain From Sin

Firstly, we should not commit any act of disobedience to Allah in this blessed month. When one abstains from sin, this is also regarded as worship and "Ibâdat". If one worships Allah in the day or night but at the same time commits sin, then this causes one's worship to go unrewarded. Our Prophet Mohammed (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "Many of those who fast, obtain nothing through such fasting except hunger; and many of those who perform Salâh during the night, obtain nothing by it, except the discomfort of staying awake." (Ibn Majah) It can be clearly understood in the light of this hadith that the consequences and effects of committing sins are so great that they destroy good deeds. Therefore it is necessary to stay away from as well as doing good.

Engage In Worship

Once we have saved ourselves from disobedience and sins, we should endeavour to spend as much time as possible in worship and Ibâdat such as Tilawaah (recitation of the Holy Quran), Fardh & Nafl salah, zhikr, tasbeeh, reading Hadith etc. If one has any qadha Salâh (missed Salâh) one should try and make up for them by completing them. We have to value our time and spend it doing good deeds. This is why we have to exert all efforts to devote ourselves for every precious second of Ramadan for the worship of Almighty Allah. Sheikh Mohammad Saleem Dhorat, rector of the Islamic Da'wah Academy U.K. said in one of his talks regarding Ramadan: "This is the season for gaining rewards. Consider the following example and try and learn a lesson from it. During the months of Hajj, the shopkeepers in Makkah and Madinah direct all their energy towards

their businesses in order to gain maximum profits during what is thought to be an exceptionally busy period. Some shopkeepers will even sleep in the shop so that they do not miss out on the business that the pilgrims generate. They are aware that once the Hajj season is over, trade will slow down for another year. By putting all their efforts into these months, they earn profits sufficient for the rest of the year. Similarly, Ramadan is the season for earning rewards for the Hereafter. Remember that once these thirty days are over, gaining rewards will not be that easy. In this month, not only does it become easy to perform good deeds but also the rewards of these deeds are manifold."

In order to make the worship easy for us and profit from the holy month of Ramadan we should set out a timetable or schedule which will assist us in our goals. A suggested timetable has been outlined below:

- *Wake up for Suhoor/sehree. (This is a Sunnah).*
- *Perform few rakaahs of tahajjud Engage in Dua (for at least 10 min. Do not forget the oppressed Muslims all over the globe)*
- *Pray Fajr salah in congregation. Sisters should also perform their obligatory salah.*
- *Engage in Ibaadah after Fajr until a little after sunrise (such as zhikr or tilawah)*
- *Perform salatul Ishraq*
- *Perform Dhuha salat (Chasht)*
- *Perform Zhur salat with congregation (even at work or school if possible)*
- *Perform Asr salat with congregation and remain in the mosque until Maghrib. (The time between Asr & Maghrib is very valuable, the dua of a fasting person is accepted especially near the time for opening the fast. We should not waste this time in worrying about food or in the kitchen but rather in dua and supplication)*
- *Open the fast (Iftar beginning with a date*

or water)

- Perform maghrib salat in congregation Return to the Mosque and make Ibaadah until Esha salat
- Perform the Esha salat & 20 rakaat of Taraweeh in congregation. (after Taraweeh engage in ibaadah or go straight home instead of wasting time by loitering around)

Besides the above one should take out time for rest so one can be fresh while performing worship etc. One should also set goals to try and complete one recitation of the Holy Qur'ân in the least if not more. During this blessed month Tahleel (Kalimah Tayyibah), Durood, Istighfar and repentance should be made frequently. This is the month in which sympathy should be shown to the needy and poor by means of charity, sadaqah and Zakâh. One should practise to control the nafs and desires and continue this throughout the year. We ask Allah to accept our efforts and make every moment of this month a means of attaining mercy and forgiveness.

Before the Sand Slips Away

Muhammad ash-Shareef

Imagine that you are on the beach. You are four years old. The camp leader has told you that you have five minutes to build a great castle.

“Quickly,” your three year old Ameer tells you, “the sand here is too soft. Run closer to the water and get better sand!” Off you run and grab, with your tiny hands, as much sand as you can hold. But, as you run back, plop, plop, plop, you feel the sand slipping through your fingers. You can do nothing about it. In your haste, all the sand has slipped away. Bang. The competition is over. This is the analogy of our lives. This is the analogy of our time in Ramadan.

For many living in Western countries, Ramadan is passed daily with 9 to 5 jobs or school - nights where we may or may not go for Taraweeh. A peak at the TV (may Allah protect us) and the night is over. Back to work where all around us people are eating and drinking from crystal water fountains. Blink. Ramadan is over.

The question of the hour is: how do we take full advantage of this gift of Allah? This is our topic, before the sands of Ramadan slip away.

How many years have we been fasting Ramadan? 10 or 15 or 40 years? Are we 10 or 15 or 40 times better? Or, does it seem like we have arrived back at the drawing board every time Ramadan comes around? All acts of worship are for our own benefit! Don't do it and harm befalls you, which is the way life was programmed.

Ramadan is no small matter. It is one of the pillars of this Deen of Islam – without it one's Islam would not be complete. In this month, Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – would intensify his worship of Allah ta'ala. In doing so, he laid the foundation for his Ummah after him to emulate.

Ibn AlQayyim – RA – wrote:

“From his blessed guidance – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – in Ramadan is that he used to intensify and diversify his actions of worship. So, for example, Jibreel used to rehearse the Qur'an with him during the nights of Ramadan. When Jibreel would visit him, he would intensify the amount of Sadaqah that he would give. He

was the most generous out of all people – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – and Ramadan was the time when he was most generous. In Ramadan, he would fill his time with Sadaqah, treating people kindly, reciting Qur'an, performing Salah, remembering Allah, and performing I'tikaaf." – from the book 'Zaad AlMa'aad'

Observers described the way Allah's Messenger– sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – gave like Ar-Reeh AlMursalah, like the blessed wind. Why? The blessed wind, as they knew it, was a wind that brought coolness to everyone – no one was denied its blessing. The blessed wind, additionally, was not lazy in bringing its goodness to the people. It would come swiftly to all. This is how Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – was described, and this is how our service to humanity should be: swift and encompassing. Bi idhnillah.

Below are ten ideas to and help make the most of Ramadan – before it slips through our hands.

Idea one: Compound Your Siyaam!

If you told your financial broker that you just want to keep money in the bank and save it, he would say, "You are wrong." "Invest it in the stock market. That way your money will be compounded – you will earn multiple times what you put in." So now I ask the question: Wouldn't you love to get two times the reward of fasting Ramadan? How?

Zayd ibn Khaalid AlJuhanee narrates that the Prophet – sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam – said,

"Whoever gives a fasting person (food) to break his or her fast, he (the one feeding) will get the reward equivalent to the (fasting persons) reward – without diminishing anything from the reward of the (fasting person)."

How do we do this? Ask any Muslim relief agency if they have a feed a fasting person program. Subhan Allah, you may find that it only costs \$1 to feed a person! So, for \$30

you could come out of Ramadan having doubled your reward.

And, we should not forget the needy in our city. We think that in a 'modern' western country or city there are no needy people. That is not true. There are many needy families that are waiting to be discovered. Ask around and you will find a gold mine of people to help, in your own backyard.

I speak about Washington, DC. If one was to have a food drive, all the food could go to needy Muslim families in DC and still not be enough! I've seen this with my own eyes. How blessed it would be to get the youth that just hang out in the back of the Masjid during Taraweeh to take on this task. Organize the collection of the food and distribute it. It can happen! It just takes a leader with vision to set this up for the youth and all the good people who want to make a difference.

Idea two: Operation Guide the Youth

Often in Ramadan, there are khaatirahs, words of wisdom, halaqahs and reminders, all geared to the adults praying Taraweeh. The youth, it seems, are being disrespectful by talking in the back of the masjid.

"Shhhhhsh!" someone shouts at them. "Listen or go outside (and we prefer if you just go outside)!" So, quietly they sneak out of the Masjid and chat and chill all Ramadan. How Eman boosting is that? Remember, Allah commands that you protect your wife and children also.

Try this: Just like there are things for the adults, we could have Ramadan activities and reminders geared specifically for the youth. And, it need not be 'in' the Masjid. Let's say the youth like to chat and chill outside in the parking lot. Why not organize the activity there? Yes, on the basketball court or in the parking lot. Have a 5-minute Khatirah, play games with them, and give them some noble projects to complete in Ramadan.

Again, making a difference like this

needs a leader with vision, one who recognizes that the youth are his or her responsibility. I pray that person is you!

Idea Three: Turnoff TV Month

Every parent knows that when they want their child to do well in their studies they tell them, "no TV." If this is for Dunya, then how about someone who wants to excel in Ramadan?

"Fasting and the Qur'an will come and testify on behalf of the 'Abd on the Day of Resurrection. The Fasting will say: O my lord, I denied him food and desires, so allow me to be a means for him to enter paradise. And the Qu'ran will say: O my Lord, I denied him sleep at night so allow me to be a means for him to enter Paradise. And (he will be entered into paradise) because of those two." – Musnad Ahmad

Try this: Announce in your household that Ramadan is the official turnoff TV month. Be an example for others and do fun and rewarding things instead. Visit people, take on a Ramadan feeding project, increase yourself in knowledge, etc. Turn off the TV and turn on life.

Idea Four: Dua' Time

Ramadan is the month of making dua' to Allah, an essential compliment to fasting. Rasul Allah – sal Allahu alayhi wa salam – said, "There are three persons dua' that will be accepted (by Allah). The fasting person, the oppressed one, and the traveler."

Try this: Make a list of all your goals in life. Make a section for your a) personal goals; b) spiritual goals; c) economic goals; and d) contribution goals. Every day during Ramadan, take out your list and make dua' to Allah to grant you the tawfeeq to accomplish your goals. Insha Allah, you will attain your goals with hard work, both during and after Ramadan.

Idea Five: Parent Appreciation Month

We all know that the one who wakes us up for Suhoor is our mom. I know it was for me. If not for her alarm clock, her early morning cooking, her motherly love to go and wake everyone up ... well, let's just say our iftars would have become our suhoors. If you are living away from your parents, you know what I'm talking about. Remember the hadith of the person who doesn't reach Ramadan with forgiveness? The end part of the Hadith says they found their parents in old age and they were not a means for him to enter Jannah!

So, why not announce it loud and clear this month, "Thank you Mom! Thank you Dad!" Let's take care of them this month with extra calls, extra hugs, and extra love.

Idea Six: Masjid Power Hour

During Ramadan, why not spend a few more moments in the Masjid before taking off. This could be done after Fajr or after Asr. Sit back, grab a Qur'an and remember Allah. As your time in the Masjid increases, bi idhnillaah, your love and heart attachment will increase. Make this your personal Masjid power hour.

Idea Seven: Bad Habit Buster

Many people already do this. They may have a smoking problem or a TV addiction. When Ramadan comes around they say, "I'm going to train myself to stop smoking or to stop watching excessive TV by abandoning it throughout Ramadan."

So, you don't have a smoking problem huh? Everyone has a bad habit and everyone has a recurring sin they pray they could desist from. Make Ramadan the training month by telling yourself to go without this sin for the entire month. Then, if Allah grants one Tawfeeq to complete the month,

one should continue to pray to Allah to keep them away from the sin after Ramadan.

Idea Eight: The Gift Groove

Have you ever noticed how beloved a bottle of perfume is when it is handed out by a little four year old Muslim? Everyone loves a gift.

Why not take this a step forward? Go to your local Islamic bookstore and request a bulk purchase of some beneficial Islamic materials, something in the \$1 range. Then, hand it out to everyone that comes to your masjid. Bi idhnillaah, you will find for the little effort one may put, people all throughout Ramadan will be learning from the gift.

Idea Nine: Ramadan Muslims, Convert!

It is true that on the first day of Ramadan, the number of Muslims in the local Masjid multiplies considerably. And, it is a sad moment on the first day after Ramadan that the Masjid attendance drops significantly. This idea is Operation No More Ramadan Muslims. We want people all year long!

Ibn Abbas l'tikaaf: A man came to Ibn Abbas while he was doing l'tikaaf in the masjid and asked him for his assistance. So, Ibn Abbas stood to leave and people around him warned him, 'but you are in l'tikaaf'. He replied, "To assist my brother in fulfilling his need is more beloved to me than to perform l'tikaaf for 2 months in the Masjid of Rasul Allah – sal Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam." Try this: Make a 'compassion crew' that reaches out specifically to Ramadan Muslims. Extra special attention is showered on them and roles of responsibility are delegated to them so that they can participate more in the Masjid. Invite them to special Iftars where they are the center of attention.

With this extra attention and responsibility, bi idhnillaah, every month will

be Ramadan for them and the masjids will be full all year.

Idea Ten: Home Halaqah

Muslim families often keep their worship for the Masjid, but why not make Muslim family time at home. It could work like this: After Taraweeh or Asr, the family gathers together for 15 minutes. There are many things you could do in your Halaqah, the main thing is that you set time aside for it.

For example, each family member may recite a few verses of Qur'an. Or, one of the kids can read a story of the Sahaabah so that all family members can be reminded. Or, each family member can speak about the blessings of Allah upon them and what they have in their lives for which they are thankful.

Just 15 minutes for the home Halaqah. For the entire family, bi idhnillah, it will be a spring of Eman.

Ten ideas to enhance your Ramadan:

Idea one: Compound Your Siyaam!

Idea two: Operation Guide the Youth

Idea Three: Turnoff TV Month

Idea Four: Dua' Time

Idea Five: Parent Appreciation Month

Idea Six: Masjid Power Hour

Idea Seven: Bad Habit Buster

Idea Eight: The Gift Groove

Idea Nine: Ramadan Muslims, Convert!

Idea Ten: Home Halaqah

The past saw Muslims that spent their nights of Ramadan awake praying to Allah. It saw days where people, for the sake of Allah, went thirsty.

They knew that this season may never return on them and they heard Allah's words "Ayyaman Ma'doodaat"— a limited number of days. Don't let the sand of Ramadan slip away.

The Month of Ramadan

Suheil Laher

The month of Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent down, a guidance for the people, and clear verses of guidance and criterion. [Quran: Chapter 2, 183]

It is appropriate that every Muslim should receive the blessed month of Ramadan with repentance, sincerity, resoluteness and earnestness. He/she should make the intention to perform extra acts of devotion and worship therein, including the Night Prayer (qiyam), recitation of Qur'an, and abundant charity to the poor and needy.

On the authority of Anas (RA): The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), used to say the following when the month of Rajab began. "Oh Allah! Bless us in Rajab and Sha`ban, and bring us, oh Allah, to Ramadan." [Narrated by Tabarani and Ahmad]

The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) addressed his companions on the last day of Sha`ban, saying, "Oh people! A great month has come over you; a blessed month; a month in which is a night better than a thousand months; month in which Allah has made it compulsory upon you to fast by day, and voluntary to pray by night. Whoever draws nearer (to Allah) by performing any of the (optional) good deeds in (this month) shall receive the same reward as performing an obligatory deed at any other time, and whoever discharges an obligatory deed in (this month) shall receive the reward of performing seventy obligations at any other time. It is the month of patience,

and the reward of patience is Heaven. It is the month of charity, and a month in which a believer's sustenance is increased. Whoever gives food to a fasting person to break his fast, shall have his sins forgiven, and he will be saved from the Fire of Hell, and he shall have the same reward as the fasting person, without his reward being diminished at all." [Narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah]

In another hadith, the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) says, "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]

The preceding hadiths bring attention to readiness and preparation for receiving Ramadan. This is achieved by having a clear understanding of this month in one's mind, and greeting Ramadan with love and yearning. Also, one should have the determination and intention to perform good deeds and worship, and one should lay down a program to accomplish this in the days of the blessed month.

It is communally obligatory upon the Muslims to seek the crescent at the time of sunset on the 29th day of Sha`ban, and the 29th day of Ramadan, in order to verify the

status of the start and end of their fasting. When seeing the crescent, it is sunnah for the Muslim to supplicate with the following supplication, which has been reported from the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).

On the authority of Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah (RA): when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) saw the crescent, he used to say, "Oh Allah! Cause it to appear over us with prosperity, faith (Iman), security and Islam. (Then to the moon:) My Lord and your Lord is Allah." [Narrated by Tirmidhi, who said it is a good (hasan) hadith.]

Qatadah said that he was informed that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to say, when seeing the crescent, "A crescent of goodness and orientation, a crescent of goodness and orientation, a crescent of goodness and orientation. (To the moon:) I believe in Allah who created you." (Three times), and then he would say, "Praise be to Allah who has taken away such- and-such month and brought such-and-such month." [Narrated by Abu Dawud]

The month of Ramadan has excellences over the other months, as is testified to by the Qur'an and Sunnah, and out of these we will bring to attention the following virtues:

1. It is the month of the Qur'an, with regards to revelation and study. ("The month of Ramadan is that in which was revealed the Qur'an." [Qur'an, 2:185]). On the authority of Ibn `Abbas: Angel Gabriel used to meet the Prophet every night in Ramadan and used to study Qur'an with him.

2. It is the month of seclusion. Ibn `Umar said, "The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to seclude himself for the last ten days of the month of Ramadan."

3. It is the month of generosity. Ibn `Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to be at his

most generous in Ramadan."

4. It is the month of standing (in voluntary night prayer). On the authority of Abu Hurayrah: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said, "Whoever stands (in voluntary night prayer) during Ramadan, with faith and in expectancy of reward, his previous sins are forgiven him."

5. It is the month of the compulsory fast, because of Allah's saying, "So, whoever among you witnesses the month should fast." [Qur'an, 2:185] A terrible error prevalent among people is to talk about Ramadan just as they talk about the obligation of fasting, as if Ramadan and fasting are synonymous, each carrying the meaning of the other and not anything more nor less. Yet, fasting is one of many acts of worship in Ramadan.

Many reports have been narrated from the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) explaining the distinction of Ramadan, of which we have selected the following.

"The month of Ramadan has come to you; a month of goodness and blessing." [Ibn Khuzaymah]

"The Master of the Months is Ramadan, and the Master of the days is Friday." [Ibn Khuzaymah]

"Whoever fasted Ramadan with faith and in expectancy of reward, his previous sins are forgiven him." [Bukhari and Muslim]

"When Ramadan comes, the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are chained." And in a narration from Nasa'i, the following words are added: "and a caller calls out every night: 'Oh seeker of Good, draw near! Oh seeker of Evil, desist!'"

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "None of my Companions should convey to me anything regarding another because I desire to meet everyone of you with a clean heart." [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

This May be Your Last Ramadan

All praise is due to Allah Ta'ala, may peace and salutations be upon His Messenger (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), his household and companions. We are once again blessed with the Honourable month of Ramadan... A month for renewing our faith, strengthening our willpower, and seeking forgiveness, a unique opportunity to strengthen the bond of love with our Creator, through fasting, recitation of the Qur'an, Taraweeh salaah, and through acts of charity.

People approach Ramadan... in different ways. Ramadan... means different things to different people. Some people view Ramadan... as a period of expressing their undying love for the Beloved. For them, Ramadan... is a valuable, precious, and rare occasion. They spend all their time doing good, convinced that the reward of each act is multiplied manifold. Patience, sympathy, and generosity beautify the demeanour. They guard their tongues and remain preoccupied in chanting Laa ilahaa illallah, seeking forgiveness, begging for Jannah, and seeking protection from Jahannam. They are driven by the words of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that say:

"The fish in the sea, seek forgiveness for them until they break their fast. Everyday Allah decorates Jannah for them and says to it: The time is near when my faithful servants shall cast the great trials (of the world) and come to you... On the last night of Ramadan... they are forgiven..." (Ahmad)

There are others who 'welcome'

Ramadan... with sighs of reluctance. To them Ramadan... is an unfair imposition, a month of deprivation and hardship. They grudgingly keep fast and drag themselves to the Masjid for the Taraweeh prayer. Their concept of fasting is limited to physical abstention of food, drink, and sexual relationship. They spend their time in gossip, watching sport, and wasting their nights parked at cafe corners and restaurants. They are hardly ever stirred to Tilawah, Zikr, and dua, nor are they careful of their salaah. Their goal in Ramadan... IS to prepare for Eid. The words of Rasulullah(sallallanu alayhi wa sallam) aptly describes their spiritless endeavours: " Many are the ones who fast attaining nothing by such fasting except hunger , and many perform salaah by night attaining nothing by it except the discomfort of staying awake." (Ibn Majah)Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) further stated that: " Allah does not require the discarding food and drink of the person who fasts but does not refrain from bad speech and action." (Sahih Bukhari)

There is yet a third group who is hardly ever moved by Ramadan... They neither read salaah, nor fast. They continue living recklessly in sin. They neither have the will or the time to make any sort of change in their dai ly routines. The following words of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) should serve as a grim reminder to them: " ...Jibraeel (alayhis salaam) appeared before me and said: " Woe to him who found the blessed month of Ramadan... and let it pass by with-

out gaining forgiveness." Upon that I said:

Aameen. (Sahih Bukhari) He also said: "Whoever does not fast for even one day in Ramadan..., without a valid excuse, shall never be able to repay that day even if he fasts for the rest of his life" (Ahmad)

Brothers and sisters in Islam! Fear Allah Ta'ala and beware of wasting your life away in futile activities. Make use of your time by being positive and constructive, for it is by doing so you can achieve the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. This may well be your last Ramadan..., your last opportunity to benefit from the special blessings and forgiveness that accompanies this month. Know that Ramadan... is a manifestation of Allah Ta'ala's bountiful blessings on His slaves. Use it as a turning point in your life; a time for transformation towards a better way of life; a change from the ignominy of sins to the glory of obedience; from weakness and laziness to strength and vigour; from bad customs and detestable habits to righteousness and upright conduct.

Resolve O' Honourable Muslim!

- To perform the five daily salaah with the congregation,
- To perform the Taraweeh salaah diligently.
- To spend as much time as possible in dua, Tilawah, and Zikr
- To take part in the various Ramadan... programmes at your Masjid.
- To protect your fast by guarding your tongue, eyes, and thoughts.
- To beautify your fast by sharing your iftaar with your neighbours and the needy.
- To be patient, tolerant, and sympathetic. Especially to your parents and spouse.
- To be kind and generous to the poor and needy. Especially to our destitute Muslim brothers and sisters from foreign countries.
- To serve at least one sick, aged, or disabled person during this Ramadan...
- To make dua for the Ummah daily before iftaar.

May Allah Ta' grant us the faith, strength, and spirit to make this a unique and special Ramadan... May He grant us the ability to be consistent in our endeavours. May He protect and preserve our faith.

Notable Quotes

Forgive people so that Allah may forgive you

(Sayyiduna Umar ibn Khattab (RA))

To compel someone to adopt virtue never makes a virtuous man. Also forcing people to have faith never result in faithful hearts. It is freedom which is the base of virtue.

(Imam al-Ghazali (RA))

When Allah tests you it is never to destroy you, when He removes something in your possession, It is (only) in order to empty your hands, for an even greater figt.

Ibnul al-Qayyim

Everyone who is being overtaken by death asks for more time while everyone who still has the time makes excuses for procrastination.

(Sayyiduna Ali ibn Talib (RA))

The Inner Dimensions of the Fast

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith al-Dahlawi

You should know that sometimes a person comprehends, due to God's inspiring him with this knowledge, that his physical animalistic form is keeping him from what would constitute his fulfillment in terms of it's obeying the angelic side. Therefore he comes to detest the animalistic side and seeks to shatter its force. He won't find anything that helps him to do this as much as hunger, thirst, forswearing sex, and practicing vigilance over his tongue, heart, and limbs. Persistence in this is a cure for the sickness of his soul. There follows him one who learned this from the truthful news-bearer [the Prophet] with the witness of his heart, then next the one whom the prophets guided out of solicitude for him, while he did not realize it, so that he gets the benefit of this in the next life through the shattering of the [animalistic] form.

Sometimes a person becomes aware that having the physical nature obey the intellect is his perfection, while his physical nature is rebellious, obeying sometimes and not obeying at other times. Thus he needs training, so he takes up some severe practice such as fasting and imposes it on his physical side and perseveres in fidelity to his pledge, more and more, until he obtains the desired object.

Sometimes he commits a sin, so that he perseveres in fasting for many days oppressing himself in response to the sin in order prevent himself from committing more like it.

Sometimes his lower soul craves

women, but he is unable to marry and he fears committing fornication, so he defeats his lust through fasting and this is his saying, may the peace and blessing of God be upon him, "Fasting suppresses sexual desire."

Fasting is a great good deed which strengthens the angelic [side] and weakens the animalistic. There is nothing like it for polishing the face of the spirit and subjugating the physical nature. Therefore, God, may He be exalted, said, "Fasting is for My sake and I reward it."

His sins are forgiven to the extent that the animalistic form is diminished and through this is achieved a great similarity to the angels, so that they love him. The attachment of love helps effect the weakening of the animalistic side and this is his saying, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, "The bad breath of the one who fasts is sweeter to God than the fragrance of musk."

If it is made a common convention it avails against the damages of [poor] conventions. If a community persists in fasting their devils will be chained and the gates of the gardens of Paradise are opened to them and the gates of the fires of Hell are locked against them.

When a person tries to subjugate the lower soul and eliminate its bad qualities, his act will take on a sanctified form in the World of Images. Among the purest of the gnostics is the one who concentrates on this form, for he is furnished with knowledge from the Unseen World and achieves union with the Divine Essence because of transcendence and

sanctification. This is the meaning of his saying, may the peace and blessings of God be upon him, "Fasting is done for My sake and I reward it."

Sometimes a man comes to understand the harm of his being preoccupied with his worldly affairs and his filling his senses with external stimulation. This is helped by devoting himself to worship [5] in a mosque designed for prayers, so that it is not possible for him to persist in that [preoccupation]. Even if he cannot completely fulfill this retreat, he should not give it up completely. Thus he snatches opportunities from his situation and retreats in a mosque for as long as is decreed for him. Next there is the person who accepts this wholeheartedly from the truthful news-bringer [the Prophet], and [then comes] the ordinary person who is overcome, as was previously mentioned.

Sometimes a person may fast but he is not able to purify his tongue except through retreating to the mosque. Sometimes he may make a request on the Night of Power (Lailat al-Qadr), and seek a connection with the angels, and this contact is not possible except through doing a retreat in the mosque. You will be given the meaning of the Night of Power, and God knows better.

*Taken from English translation of Hujjat Allah al-Balighah by Prof. Marcia K. Hermansen.
(Courtesy: deoband.org)*

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a house after seeking permission, his invocations before and after meals and on sighting the new moon, how he saluted and invoked blessings on others, the way he set off for travels, his method of solemnizing marriages, his dislike for harsh language, how he treated the captives, spies and hypocrites, his dealings with the followers of revealed religions and unbelievers and his method of treating certain ailments.

"A WISH FULFILLED"

*Never did I know death would be
so sweet*

*Never did I feel so relieved
Things sweetest smoothly pass by*

Like a bird was freed

Ere it would die

Respite I got.

Weightlessness it brought

Floating in the sky

Heavenly breezes took me.

An awesome figure caught my eye.

Yearning I had been for the same.

The day I am living my dream came.

Time wished would halt forever

In that momentary ceasing

I cherished this never.

With lowered gazes stand the stars

Moons with bowed heads are

Sun in humility is

Sunk in ecstasy I am

Behold! his (sallallahu alaihi wasallam)

fervid face it is.....

Nida Fatima

14 Gifts to Those Who Fast

Shaykh `Aa'id Abdullah al-Qarnee

At this stage I cannot find a better gift or greater masterpiece than to present to those who fast gifts from the Prophet of guidance sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam. They are those practical hadiths that have been mentioned in connection with rewards and blessings. Behold! They are the hadiths that lead to the doors of happiness and the paths of goodness in this world and the Hereafter.

O you who fast! Record these hadiths and implement them:

1. The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: "Whoever says at daybreak: 'There is no God save Allah alone, He has no partner, to Him belongs the dominion and the praise and He has power over all things;'... ten good deeds will be written for him, ten misdeeds will be erased, and he will be elevated ten levels. He will be protected from Satan until evening, and if he says it in the evening, he would have the same rewards until morning." (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah - sahih).

2. The Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam also said: "Whoever says in the morning or in the evening: 'O Allah! You are my Lord. There is no God beside You. You created me and I am Your slave and I have taken a covenant to You and promised You what I am able to do. I seek refuge with You from the evil of what I have done, I acknowledge Your favour upon me and I acknowledge my sin. Forgive me because none forgives sins except You.' If a servant died during the day

or night after having said this prayer, he will enter Paradise." (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Al Nisa'e, Ibn Majah, Ibn Hibban, Al Hakim - sahih; Al Bukhari transmits another version of this hadith).

3. Again the Prophet sallallahu `alaihi wa sallam said: "Whoever says at morning or evening: 'Glory and praise be Allah the Great' one hundred times, no one will come forward on the Day of Judgement with better than he; except if someone said the same as him and added to it." (Muslim, Ahmad, Abu Daud, Al Tirmidhi).

4. "Whoever said: 'Glory and praise be to Allah the Great', a date tree will be planted for him in the Paradise." (Al Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, Al Hakim - sahih).

5. "Whoever says: "Glory and praise be to Allah" one hundred times in a single day his sins would be erased even if they were like the waves of the sea." (Bukhari and Muslim).

6. "Whoever implements ten verses of the Quran will not be included among the negligent. Whoever implements one hundred verses will be considered among the obedient. And, whoever implements one thousand verses will be among he extremely rich." (Abu Daud, Ibn Hibban - sahih).

7. "Whoever says in the evening: 'In the name of Allah with whose name there can be no harm in the earth or in the heavens and He is the Hearer the Knower,' three times, he will not be afflicted with a sudden calamity before morning. And whoever says it

in the morning three times will not be afflicted with a sudden calamity before evening." (Abu Daud, Ibn Hibban, Al Hakim - sahih).

8. "Whoever says: 'I seek refuge with the perfect words of Allah from the evil that He created' three times in the evening will not be harmed by the bite of a serpent during that night." (Al Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, Al Hakim - sahih).

9. "Whoever says upon leaving his house: 'In the name of Allah, I trust in Allah, there is no movement and no power except with Allah', it would be said to him: 'You have been contented and you took precaution,' and Satan will turn away from him." (Al Tirmidhi, Abu Daud, Ibn Hibban, Ibn al Sunni - sahih).

10. "Whoever says when he hears the caller to prayer: 'And I bear witness that there is no God save Allah, He is alone and has no partner and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. I am

pleased with Allah as Lord, Muhammad as Prophet and Islam as religion,' all his sins will be forgiven." (Muslim and the other five).

11. "Whoever recites the Surah al Ikhlas ten times, Allah will build for him a house in the Paradise." (Ahmad - sahih).

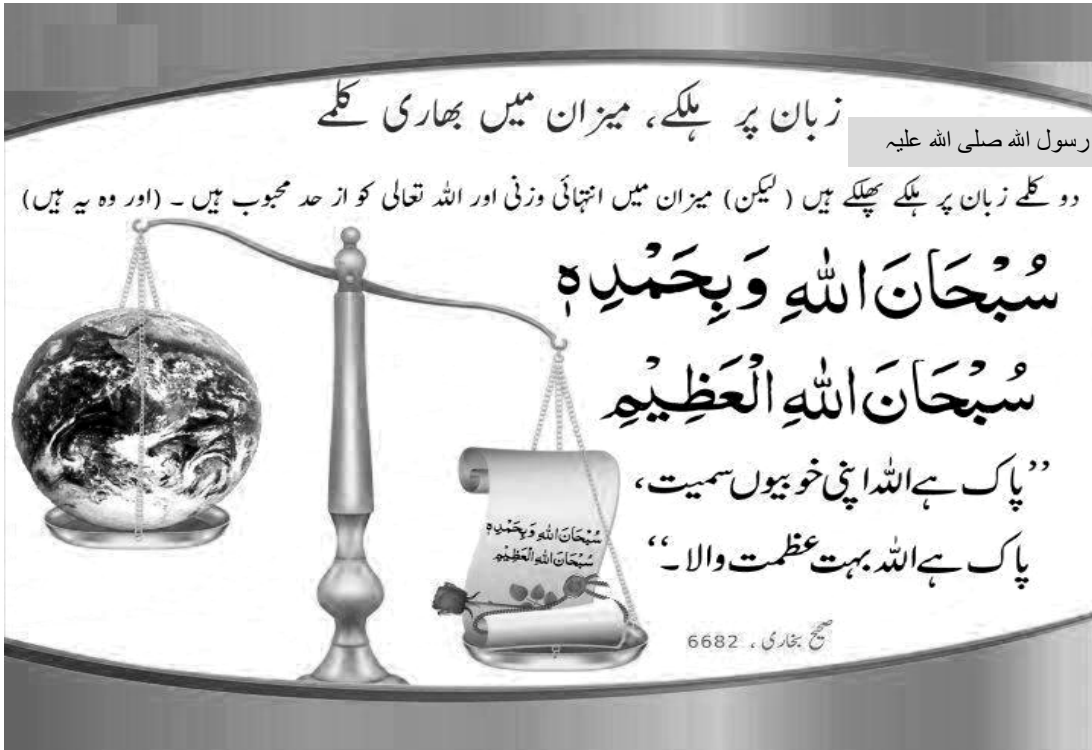
12. "Whoever recites the Surah al Kahf on a Friday, a light will be created for him until the next Friday." (Al Hakim and Al Bayhaqi - sahih).

13. "Whoever recites Aayat al-Kursi (the Verse of the Throne) after every compulsory prayer will not be forbidden entrance to Paradise." (Ibn Hibban and Al Nisa'e - sahih).

14. "Whoever recites Surah al Ikhlas it is as if he read one-third of the Quran." (Ahmad, Al Nisa'e, Al Tirmidhi - sahih).

This bouquet from Muhammad salallahu `alaihi wa sallam we grant to all those who fast.

O Allah! Help us to remember You, thank You and worship You in the best way. Ameen.



The Situation of the Ummah

Causes & Cures

A Sermon by Ali al-Huthaifie

Fellow Muslims! Fear Allah and hold fast unto Islaam. That is the most trustworthy handhold. It is the fear of Allah that sets the matters of one's life and Hereafter right. Know also that the Sunnah of Allah (His rules on His creatures) in this universe never changes. Allah says what translates as, "No change will you find in Allah's Sunnah (way of dealing) and no turning off will you find in Allah's Sunnah." (Faatir: 43).

It is in the Sunnah of Allah and His rules that whoever sows good will harvest good and that whoever sows evil will harvest evil. He says, "Whoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it." (Az-Zalzalah: 7-8).

It is a rule of Allah over His creatures that whoever takes the way that leads to the success of his life of this world and its pleasure shall attain whatever Allah has destined for him of this world and whoever takes the way that leads to the success of his hereafter and the Paradise, Allah will make him reach his goal. Also, whoever takes the way that leads to the success of both this world and the Hereafter, obeys Allah and abstain from sins, he will attain the success of this both world and the Hereafter. Allah says what translates as, "Whoever desires the quick-passing (transitory enjoyment of this world), We readily grant him what We will for whom

We like. Then afterwards, We have appointed for him Hell; he will burn therein disgraced and rejected (far away from Allah's Mercy). And whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it, with the necessary effort due for it, then such are the ones whose striving shall be appreciated. On each –these as well as those- We bestow from the Bounties of your Lord. And the Bounties of your Lord can never be forbidden." (Al-Israa': 18-20).

It is also of the rule of Allah to test His slaves with the good and evil. He says what translates as, "We shall make a trial of you with evil and with good. And to Us you will be returned." (Al-Anbiyaa': 35).

As for the Muslim, whenever any good affects him he knows that it is a favour from his Lord, for he knows that he deserves nothing from Allah by right and this belief will make him thank his Lord and praise Him. Also, if any evil afflicts him he perseveres and seeks the reward of his Lord, for he knows that, that is the result of a sin he has committed or that Allah wants to elevate his rank in the Hereafter. Allah says what translates as, "And whatever of misfortune that befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons much." (Ash-Shooraa: 30).

The Muslim examines himself, review his deeds and repents for every sin he commits. As for the disbeliever, if any favour comes his way, he becomes insolent and ar-

rogant and starts transgressing. And when any calamity afflicts him he despairs and becomes impatient. This world is his Paradise and his lord is his desires.

Brethren in faith! Muslims, these days, are afflicted with many calamities. Many causes have however been given for these tribulations. Some say that they are a result of the evil plan of the enemies; some say they are the result of our economic recession and some say they are the result of the Muslim's industrial and technological backwardness etc. All this are just symptoms of the ailment. The real cause of this sorry situation is the Muslim's negligence of their religion individually and collectively. Allah says what translates as, "(What is the matter with you?) When a single disaster smites you, although you smote (your enemies) with one twice as great, you say, 'From where does this come to us?' Say (to them): It is from yourselves (because of your evil deeds).' And Allah has power over all things." (Aal 'Imraan: 165).

He also says what translates as, "Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves." (Ar-Ra'd: 11).

Muslims in their history have passed through some periods which were more severe than the present one in afflictions and in which their enemies subjected them to persecutions. But then they made a sincere return to their religion with knowledge and Faith. They therefore, attained security and regained their honour, unity and wellbeing under the shade of Islamic law. This injury was healed and their condition became better. In this age, the calamity is actually great for the Muslim nation, but it remains an indisputable fact that the affairs of the latter generation of the Muslim nation will never be set aright except by that which set right the affairs of their predecessors. So, blaming the enemies of Islaam for these calamities does

not in any way absolve the Muslims from being responsible for their own woes, for how will the Muslims expect the unbelievers to solve their problems for them if they themselves fail to do so through the Book of Allah, the Sunnah of his Prophet sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam and in the light of their interests and those of their coming generations? The solution to Muslims' problems therefore lies with Allah and then with their rulers and scholars by letting the people know all that is good, encouraging them to do that and warning them against all that is evil as far as matters of their religion and life is concerned. This is a great responsibility that requires strong will and sincerity.

Fellow Muslims! Whenever a calamity afflicts a community, the first step to take is to have a sincere repentance. Allah says what translates as, "And all of you beg Allah to forgive you, O believers, that you may be successful." (An-Noor: 31).

Every Muslim needs to have a sincere repentance. If anyone however says, 'What is the relevance of my personal repentance to the rectification of the Muslims' condition?' He should be told that the cause of all good in this world and the Hereafter is the obedience to Allah and the cause of evil retribution is to disobey Him. He should also be told that, the repentance of every individual brings greater good and reduces calamities on the Muslims.

Muslims should also unite in the face of this changing world that aspires to change the creed of Islaam and eliminate its values and laws.

Further, past nations were destroyed because of the existence of many sinners and fewness of righteous people. The sin of a single individual may destroy a whole nation. Allah caused the people of Thamood to perish because one of them killed the camel. He caused epidemics to spread

among the children of Israel –even in the presence of Musaa and Haarooon because some of them committed adultery. Allah says about some of the destroyed nations, “So We punished each (of them) for his sins; of them were those on whom We sent a violent wind with shower of stones, of them there were those who were overtaken by awful cry, of them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow and of them were those whom We drowned. It was not Allah who wronged them, but they wronged themselves.” (Al-‘Ankaboot: 40).

Zainab bint Jahsh, may Allah be pleased with her, narrated that the Messenger of Allah sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam said, “Woe unto the Arabs because of an impending calamity. Today the debris of the Gog and Magog has been opened to this extent. And he demonstrated that extent by making a circle with his index finger and the thumb.’ Zainab, may Allah be pleased with her, said, ‘I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! Are we going to be destroyed while there are righteous people among us? The Messenger of Allah sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam said, “Yes, when immorality and alcoholic drinking have become widespread.” Do not therefore treat the matter of repentance lightly for it is the way out of all hardships. Hold fast unto the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam, for they are the light and guidance that save from darkness and error.

Brethren in faith! The religion of Islaam commands the Muslims to be united and forbade them from disunity. Allah says what translates as, “And hold fast unto the Rope of Allah (the Qur’aan) and do not be divided among yourselves.” (Aal-‘Imraan: 103).

He also says what translates as, “And do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength departs, and

be patient.” (Al-Anfaal: 46).

The religion of Islaam while enjoining unity among Muslims, does not however mean that the non-Muslims can be attacked or denied their rights which they enjoy under the Islamic law. If many non-Muslims understand the justice of Islaam and its beauties, they would embrace Islaam and would not have blamed it for wrongful acts of some Muslims. Allah says what translates as, “Say (O Muhammad to the people): ‘Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him, be good and dutiful to your parents, kill not your children because of poverty –We provide sustenance for you and for them, come not near the shameful sins, whether committed openly or secretly and kill not any one whom Allah has forbidden except for a just cause (according to Islamic Law). This He has commanded you that you may understand.’” (Al-An’aam: 151).

Brethren in Faith! Fear Allah as He should be feared, seek nearness to Him through righteous deeds and abstain from sins. Send forward good deeds before you meet Him and make good use of your life. Allah says what translates as, “O you who believe! Fear Allah and keep your duty to Him. Let every soul look for what he has sent forth for the morrow and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what you do.” (Al-Hashr: 18).

Provide for yourselves answers that will save you from the hardship of the Day of Resurrection. The Messenger of Allah sallallahu ‘alaihi wa sallam said, “The foot of man will not slip on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked of his life as to how he has lived it, of his youth as to how he has used it, of his wealth as to how he got it and in what he spent it and about his knowledge as to what he did with it.”

The Status of the Tarawih Supplication (Tasbih)

By Abrar Mirza

Tasbīh al-Tarāwīh

Traditionally, in each tarwīhah, the mustahabb break between each set of four rak'ahs of the Tarāwīh prayer, the Muslims of different regions, especially in Makkah and Madīnah, observed different acts of worship. The Muslims in Makkah used to make tawāf of the Ka'bah during each tarwīhah, whereas those in Madīnah, unable to make tawāf, would pray an additional four rak'ahs instead.

However, during the tarwīhah, a person may recite the Qur'ān, tasbīh (Subhān Allāh), tahmīd (Alhamdulillāh), tahlīl (Lā ilāha illallāh), pray nawāfil individually, send durūd (blessings) on the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) or simply remain silent. This is mentioned by the fuqahā' and 'ulamā' in their books, including al-Mabsūt, al-Muhīt al-Burhānī, Badā'i' al-Şanā'i', Mukhtārāt al-Nawāzil, al-Fatāwā al-Tātārkhāniyyah, Ghunyat al-Mutamallī, Nihāyat al-Murād, Fath Bāb al-'Ināyah, Majma' al-Anhur, Imdād al-Ahkām,[10] and Fatāwā Rahīmiyyah.

Surprisingly, none of the abovementioned books mention any masnūn or mustahabb du'ā' for the tarwīhah, including the du'ā' commonly read by Muslims in several Masjids, many of which advertise the du'ā' on large printed banners. This du'ā', commonly known as the "Tarāwīh Du'ā'," is as follows:

Exalted is the Possessor of the hidden and the manifest dominion. Exalted is the Possessor of Might, Greatness, Reverence, Power, Pride, and Majesty. Exalted is the Master, the Living, the one who neither sleeps nor dies. All-perfect, All-holy, Our Lord, and the Lord of the angels and the souls. O Allāh, grant us refuge from the Hellfire. O Granter of refuge, O Granter of refuge, O Granter of refuge.

Unfortunately, a thorough search of the books of ahādīth, tafāsīr, fiqh, etc. did not reveal a single mention of this du'ā' anywhere. However, some parts of the above du'ā' are mentioned in several books of tafāsīr as the tasbīh of the angels. Yet, none of the books, whether of tafāsīr or any other Islāmic science, have narrated this exact du'ā' in any context, let alone as the "Tarāwīh Du'ā'."

Apparently, the basis for any specific du'ā' for the tarwīhah stems from Imām Ibn 'Ābidīn mentioning in Radd al-Muhtār[13] that one should recite the following du'ā' three times:

Exalted is the Possessor of the hidden and the manifest dominion. Exalted is the Possessor of Might, Greatness, Power, Pride, and Maj-

esty. Exalted is the Master, the Living, the one who does not die. All-perfect, All-holy, Our Lord, and the Lord of the angels and the souls. There is no god except Allāh. We ask Him for forgiveness, we ask Him for Paradise, and we seek refuge in Him from the fire.

Surprisingly, even Imām Ibn ‘Ābidīn did not quote the words of the “Tarāwīh Du‘ā’.” In Ṭawālī’ al-Anwār, Imām ‘Ābid al-Sindhī has also narrated the same words as Imām Ibn ‘Ābidīn. Although neither have claimed the the du‘ā’ they quote as sunnah or mustahabb, Khayr al-Fatāwā mentions reading the above-mentioned du‘ā’ as mustahabb based on the text in the Radd al-Muhtār.

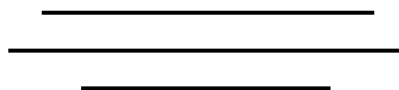
Furthermore, both Imām Ibn ‘Ābidīn and Imām ‘Ābid al-Sindhī quote the du‘ā’ from Imām Quhustānī. Imām Ibn ‘Ābidīn, when quoting Imām Quhustānī, states that the du‘ā’ is mentioned in Manhaj al-‘Ibād. On the other hand, Imām ‘Ābid al-Sindhī quotes Imām Quhustānī mentioning Mafātīh al-‘Ibād as the source of the du‘ā’. In Jāmi’ al-Rumūz, [16] Imām Quhustānī mentions the source of the du‘ā’ as Manāhij al-‘Ibād. Regardless of whether the correct name of the book is Manhaj al-‘Ibād, Manāhij al-‘Ibād, or Mafātīh al-‘Ibād, it is not a reliable book in establishing any preference for the recitation of this du‘ā’, let alone in each tarwīhah, nor does Imām Quhustānī, from whom others narrate, attach any special reward to it.

Therefore, it is incorrect to regard the “Tarāwīh Du‘ā’” as sunnah or mustahabb. Although the actual words of the du‘ā’ are not problematic, one should realize that it is simply mubāh (permissible), nothing more. In addition, if one wishes to act according to the recommendations or practices of our pious predecessors, then one may recite the du‘ā’ mentioned by Imām Quhustānī, also quoted from him by Imām Ibn ‘Ābidīn and Imām ‘Ābid al-Sindhī, the wordings of which are different from the words of the “Tarāwīh

Du‘ā’.” Furthermore, Imām Gangohī’s practice was to recite:

Exalted is Allāh and all-praises be to Allāh. There is no god besides Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest.

Nonetheless, one should be fully aware that there is no sunnah or mustahabb du‘ā’ for each tarwīhah. Rather, one should engage tasbīh, tahmīd, nawāfil, durūd, etc. or simply remain silent, as quoted earlier from several books of fiqh. However, if one wishes to recite the du‘ā’ quoted from Imām Quhustānī or even the “Tarāwīh Du‘ā’,” then it is permissible as long as he/she accepts that it is simply mubāh, realizes that it does not hold any special merit, does not look down on the one who does not recite it, and does not give the impression to others as if it is sunnah or mustahabb through, for example, hanging posters of the du‘ā’ in the Masjid.



Cont’d from page 6

them. But they disagreed among themselves. So, there were some who believed and there were some who disbelieved, and if Allah so willed, they would have not fought against each other. But Allah does what He intends.¹⁴² (2:253)

142. Holy Spirit is the title of Jibra’il (Gabrael) who remained with Isa (AS) (Jesus) as a guard to protect him from his enemies.

143. Allah had the power to force all of them to accept the truth, in which case there would remain no religious differences, but the basic purpose was that everybody should accept the true faith with his choice and free-will, so that they might be tested. Therefore, they were given freewill, and were given guidance through messengers to see whether or not they accept it through their freewill.

Creation of "MAN"

As Per The Glorious Qur'an

We are living in an era of information explosion in which data, news and knowledge of all kinds stream into our lives 24/7 via multiple media inlets, so much so that now it has become a challenge to pick and choose that input which we want to receive; which we deem relevant.

Pregnancy, childbirth, infant care and parenting topics are no exception.

From detailed pregnancy books to 3D-animated videos; subscriptions that facilitate personalized, week-by-week email pregnancy updates, to extensive online obstetric resources and pediatric websites, an expectant mother nowadays is amply aware of every change that is going on inside her body, as it happens or even beforehand.

The Quran Before Modern Science

The Quran revealed the process of the creation of man long before science gave every part of his anatomy, down to the inner contents of his individual cells, a unique name and pictorial description.

In fact, in the Quran, God described the chronological phases of fetal growth and development 14 centuries ago, long before any ultrasound machine existed:

{Verily We created man from a product of wet earth; then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging; then We fashioned the drop into a clot, then We fashioned the clot into a little lump, then We fashioned the little lump into bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and

then produced it another creation. So blessed be Allah, the Best of Creators!} (Al-Mu'minun 23: 12-4)

{It is He Who has created you from dust then from a sperm-drop, then from a leech-like clot; then does he get you out (into the light) as a child: then lets you (grow and) reach your age of full strength; then lets you become old- though of you there are some who die before;- and lets you reach a term appointed; in order that you may learn wisdom.} (Ghafir 40: 67)

According to Tafsir Ibn Kathir, this reference to man's creation from dust, implies the origin of mankind the creation of the first human being, Prophet Adam (AS) from dust:

{And Allah did create you from dust, then from Nutfah} means, He initiated the creation of your father Adam from dust, then He created his offspring from semen of worthless water.

Modern science has, by now, explained the entire process of the creation of a human being, down to those minute, microscopic intricacies that were invisible to the human eye centuries ago.

Many times in the Quran, God draws our attention to the way we were created. It is interesting to remember though, that at the time when these verses were revealed, human beings had limited knowledge about the process of human birth, unlike now.

Why would God then invite us to

ponder on the origin of our creation? The contexts in which He mentions our origins lead to some interesting observations. But first, let's analyze the word most oft-repeated in the Quran when God mentions man's creation:

The "Nutfah"

The root of this word is: natafa yan-tifu: "To flow gently, trickle, ooze, drop."

The dictionary meaning of the word "nutfah" is – "Drop of fluid; semen".

"It is clear liquid, a little or a lot. From this it is used for the semen of a man."

Man Is a Disputer

God says in the Quran:

{He (Allah) has created man from a sperm-drop; and behold this same (man) becomes an open disputer!}(An-Nahl16: 4)

{Does not man see that it is We Who created him from a sperm-drop? Yet behold! He (stands forth) as an open disputer!}(Ya-Sin 36: 77)

The word "khasim" is derived from "khasama" which means he contended in an altercation, and the word "khisam" means the statements that a listener is made to hear, which may cause him to desist or refrain from his assertion, plea or claim.

In another place in the Quran, God says about man: {And he is the most rigid of opponents} (Al-Baqarah 2: 204)

The question is, why does God mention the origin of man (the nutfah) along with the fact that man is an open disputer?

Man disputes about God; about religion; about being right. Sometimes, man goes on arguing even if he possesses little knowledge of what he is arguing about, just to prove himself to be right, or to be better, than his "opponent".

This type of arguing and disputing is, usually, less about establishing the truth and abolishing falsehood, and more about one-

upping the adversary to come out looking better, or on the right path, as the definition of the word "khisam" implies; also, to attempt to make the adversary clam up and desist from putting forth their claims or opinions.

God mentions how man was created from nothing but a microscopic sperm, which is not even visible, and yet he grows into a creature who argues about the very being that created Him from this miniscule little drop of fluid – he disputes about God, His attributes, or any other aspect of Islam, to avoid submitting to Him – the Creator who not just created him, but also gave him provision since day one to make him grow, acquire a physical form, then be blessed with sight, hearing, and intellect:

{Verily We created Man from a drop of mingled sperm, in order to try him. So We gave him Hearing and Sight.}(Al-Insan 76: 2)

Man Falls into Disbelief and Ingratitude

Another context in which God mentions the origin of man as being from the nutfah, is the fact that man falls into disbelief, i.e. when he grows up, he starts to deny God's blessings, or to belie His Prophets and their monotheistic message, or reject God's commands, refusing obstinately to obey them. Disbelief also constitutes the denial of the establishment of the Last Day.

The Quran mentions a man who owned two luscious gardens was conversing with his pious companion and bragging about possessing more wealth and a larger family than him. He went on to say that:

{I do not think that this (wealth) will perish – ever. And I do not think the Hour will occur. And even if I should be brought back to my Lord, I will surely find better than this as a return.}(Al-Kahf 18: 34-6)

His pious companion, who was a believer, responds by making him recall how God created him, saying:

{His companion said to him, in the course of the argument with him: "Do you deny Him Who created you out of dust, then out of a sperm-drop, then fashioned you into a man?} (Al-Kahf 18: 37)

In this context, God warns us through these verses of the Quran, not to fall into the same trap – that if we have been blessed with abundant wealth and a large family, we should not be fooled by this superfluous worldly benefits into denying the absolute reality of the imminence of the Last Day.

Heedlessness about the Hereafter makes one slowly slip down the slope of adherence to the commands of faith, and disbelief starts to creep into our hearts like rust, chipping away our faith in God and in the Hereafter.

One of the ways suggested, in the above verse of the Quran, to keep ourselves humble before God and firmly grounded in the correct belief, is to remember our origin – our creation. How, once, we were nothing more than a tiny embryo, a single ovum fertilized by a single sperm, from which God fashioned us into a complete, symmetrical, fair-looking human being in our mothers' wombs, having a body that contains innumerable anatomical systems (respiratory, nervous, digestive, cardio-, reproductive etc.) functioning together in perfect unison:

{From a sperm-drop He had created him, and then moulds him in due proportions;} (Abasa 80: 19)

{That He did create in pairs,- male and female, from a seed when lodged (in its place);} (An-Najm 53:45-6)

The "miracle" of our creation enables us to recognize and remain in total awe of God's limitless powers. That in turn allows us to submit to Him and to His message conveyed to us through His Prophets.

For surely, the magnificent Creator who fashioned a complete living being out of a mere sperm drop, can resurrect that same

human being hundreds of years after his death; after his total decomposition into nothingness.

Because for the one for whom the first, original creation was so easy, the resurrection will be even easier:

{...Even as We produced the first creation, so shall We produce a new one; a promise We have undertaken. Truly shall We fulfill it.} (Al-Anbiya' 21: 104)

The "Despicable" Water

Another context in which God mentions the creation of man, is how he originates from a "lowly" water (human semen). Whilst the first human being was created and fashioned from dust, his progeny continued on earth via this water:

{Have We not created you from a fluid (held) despicable?} (Al-Mursalat 77: 20)

The place in the human anatomy from where this "despicable" water originates is also mentioned by God:

{Now let man but think from what he is created. He is created from a drop emitted. Proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs.} (Al-Buruj 86: 5-7)

God then goes on to exhort how, if He could create a human progeny from such a water that gushes forth from man's own body, He is utterly and completely able to recreate man in the Hereafter, after his death and decomposition in this world:

{Surely He (Allah) is able to bring him back (to life)!} (Al-Buruj 86: 8)

God mentions 3 other words in another place in the Quran where He mentions the "despicable" water:

{Who made all things good which He created, and He began the creation of man from clay; And made his progeny from a quintessence of the nature of a fluid despised.} (As-Sajdah 32: 7-8)

The point that comes across is how God brought every one of us into this world

from a mere drop of fluid – a fluid that is considered dirty, lowly and worthy of being washed off and discarded; which emanates from a part of the body that is also kept hidden and considered shameful; a part that excretes the filth (urine) from our bodies.

Furthermore, when a human baby comes into this world, it again does so through the same anatomical part of his mother's body.

God reminds man again and again of his lowly and inferior origins, of his first and subsequent creation, in order to cull his arrogance and reinforce his belief in God's absolute power of creation and resurrection.

Because as long as we keep reminding ourselves of how we were created, how we were born, and how we came into existence from nothing, to ultimately grow bigger and take the shape of a functioning human being from the merger of two tiny cells, we will perhaps be able to stop doubting how God will put us back together in the Hereafter when the Hour is established.

Courtesy: turntoislam

The Pioneers

Ali Ibn Ahmed Ibn Yusuf Ibn Al-Khizr Al-Amidi

It is commonly known that in 1824 a Frenchman by the name of Louis Braille invented a system of writing for the blind in which he used a pattern of "6 dots". It was initially called the "cell" system for the blind.

It is interesting to note that 600 years before Braille Ali Ibn Ahmed Ibn Yusuf Ibn Al-Khizr Al-Amidi, a Syrian Muslim, who died in 1314 CE was an expert in reading such a system. He too was blind from childhood.

It is a well known fact that the finger tactile receptors of blind people are exceptionally well developed and Al-Amidi was also gifted in this super-sense.

It allowed him not only to locate books on shelves by the sense of touch but also enabled him to determine the number of pages of the book. He was also able to ascertain the value of the books by the spacing of the lines.

This in fact was the beginning of the "Braille" writing almost 600 years before the birth of Louis Braille. It is ironic that this fact is hardly recorded or not mentioned at all in the history books.

The Ideal Prophet

The Perfectness of the Holy Prophet's Life

Maulana Syed Sylaiman Nadvi (RA)

Perfection is the test of an ideal life. Historicity of any character is, however, not the criterion of perfection, although it is absolutely essential to have solid and complete knowledge about the life and conduct of a perfect guide and an ideal mentor.

The life of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), from his birth to death, is before us like an open book. His companions knew him in full and they also took care to transmit whatever they knew about him to the posterity. There was never a time, howsoever short, that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had spent in seclusion, away from the gaze of his contemporaries. We know about his birth and childhood, his boyhood and youth, his trade, his behavior with his friends, his marriage, his participation in the battle of the Quraish and the treaty thereafter, his earning the title of 'trustworthy', installation of the black stone of Ka'bah by him, his meditations and prayers in the cave of Hira, the coming of revelations, birth of Islam, his preaching and opposition by the Makkans, his wanderings in Ta'if, his ascension to the Heaven and migration to Madinah, his incursions and battles, the treaty of Hdaybia concluded by him, his epistles to the kings and rulers of surrounding countries, his farewell pilgrimage, the completion of revelation and his death, in short, there is nothing of his life that is not known to the world. All of it was put into writing: even what was known to be ambiguous was also preserved by his followers so that the coming

generations might themselves be able to decide what was acceptable or not. One might ask: "Why were the traditions known to be weak or untrustworthy preserved at all by the early traditionists? What was the wisdom behind it?" Really, it was not without purpose, for they did not want to be accused of suppressing unfavorable reports about their Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) - a criticism pertinently applied to the Christian Gospels. This was the proof of their genuine candor and faith in the strength of their Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) character.

The traditions do not hide anything about the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). The manner of his speaking, sitting, lying, sleeping, dressing and walking; his marriages, wives, children, friends and followers; his engagements in camps and cantonments; his prayers in the mosque and command of armies in the battlefields; his habits, likes and dislikes; even his dealings with his wives in privacy-everything can be found here as plain as day. To be more exact, let us quote here the headings of the chapters of the *Shama'il* of Muhammad b. 'Isa Tirmidhi, a book on the appearance, habits and character of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam):

Chapter

1. Prophet's appearance and features.
2. His hair.
3. His combs.
4. His gray hairs.
5. His hair-dye.

6. His use of Collyrium.
7. His dress.
8. His daily routine.
9. His stockings.
10. His shoes.
11. His finger ring.
12. His sword.
13. His chain armor.
14. His helmet.
15. His turban.
16. His pair of trousers.
17. His gait.
18. His covering of the face with cloth.
19. The manner of his sitting.
20. His bedding and pillow.
21. His reclining against the pillow.
22. His habits in eating.
23. His manner of taking bread.
24. His manner of taking soup and meat.
25. His way of ablution.
26. His invocations before and after taking meals.
27. His bowls and cups.
28. Fruits taken by him.
29. On his drinks.
30. How he drank.
31. His use of perfumes.
32. His way of talking.
33. His manner of reciting verses from the Qur'an.
34. His narration of stories.
35. His way of sleeping.
36. His way of praying.
37. His way of smiling.
38. His wit and humor.
39. His morning prayers.
40. His voluntary prayers at home.
41. His fasts.
42. His recital of the Qur'an.
43. His lamentations at prayer.
44. His beddings.
45. His hospitality.
46. His politeness.
47. Trimmings of his hair.
48. His names.

49. His mode of living.
50. His age.
51. His death.
52. His bequest.

These are the topics discussed, briefly or in detail, describing every aspect of his life. Whether he was in the midst of his wives and children, or among his friends and followers, every moment of his life was reported and recorded.

Even the greatest of men are commoners in their own houses. That is why Voltaire once remarked that "no man is a hero to his valet." But Voltaire's dictum was reversed, says Bosworth Smith, at least in the case of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). A historian like Edward Gibbon vouches that "the first and the most arduous conquests of Mahomet were those of his wife, his servant, his pupil and his friend; since he presented himself as a prophet to those who were most conversant with his infirmities as a man." [*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. V, p.351-52] With enthusiasm they all yielded to the voice of prophecy.

It cannot be gainsaid that nobody can be more aware of the weaknesses of a man than his own wife. And, is it not a fact that the first who believed in the mission of Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was Khadija (RA), his own wife, who had been his companion for the last fifteen years? Was she not expected to know him inside out, but no sooner than did he make the claim to apostleship that she confirmed the veracity of his message.

But, this is not all. No man, however great or truthful, can allow his wife to tell others everything she knows about him. Nobody can take this risk even if he has only one wife. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), however, had nine wives, and he had permitted all of them to tell everyone whatever they saw of him doing in the light of the day or the darkness of the night. He had definitely asked

them not to keep anything secret about him. Is there even one example of a similar self-confidence and moral courage exhibited by any man in any age?

All the books on traditions speak eloquently about the fine virtues and high morals of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). However, of these one that deserves to be specially mentioned here is the *Kitab al-Shifa* of Qadi 'Ayaz Andalusi. A European orientalist once told me, during my visit to France, that it would be sufficient to render Qadi 'Ayaz's *Al-Shifa* in one of the European languages for acquainting the Westerners with the moral virtues of the holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). Of a fact the information available today about the character and morals of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) can be gauged from the sub-headings of the chapter on 'Character' of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), in my own book entitled *Sirat-un-Nabi*. These are: His countenance, the Seal of Prophethood [a large mole on the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) back which is said to have been a divine sign of his prophetic office], his hair, gait, speech, smile and laughter, dress, finger-ring, chain-armor and helmet, the food relished by him and his manner of eating, his habits in eating, his liking for good dress, colors preferred and disliked by him, the perfumes used by him, his refined taste and fondness for riding.

The captions dealing with the Prophet's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) worship are supplications, fasting, *zakat*, charity, pilgrimage, remembrance of God, ardor for the Lord's companionship, prayers in the battlefield, awe of God, lamentations, love of God, reliance on God, endurance and thanksgiving.

The moral virtues of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) have been explained with the details about his character, perseverance, politeness, fair dealing, justice, generosity, selflessness, hospitality, aversion

to begging and refusal to take alms, acceptance of presents, avoidance of obligations by others, non-violence, dislike for the show of piety, disdain of flattery and fault-finding, simplicity, distaste for riches and ostentation, sense of equality, dislike for undue veneration and approbation, sense of modesty, doing of his work himself, fortitude, forbearance and forgiveness, pardoning of the pagans and enemies, kindness to unbelievers, treatment of the Jews and Christians, affection for the poor, prayers for the welfare of his foes, love for children, courtesy to women, kindness to animals, affection and mercifulness, kindheartedness, nursing the sick and consoling the bereaved, wit and humor, affection for his own children and treatment of his wives.

Hafiz Ibn Qayyim has given in the *Zad al-Ma'ad* even additional details about the personal bearing and deportment of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), such as, his communications and correspondence, his marital life, his manner of sleeping and getting up, his way of riding, his manner of accepting slaves for his service, his dealings in sales and purchases, how he satisfied his physical needs, his growing and cropping of moustaches, his manner of speaking and keeping silence, lamenting and laughing, how he delivered his sermons, how he performed ablution, *masah* and *tayammum*, the way he offered prayers, performed prostrations and ended the prayers, his prayers in the mosque and at home, his vigils and orisons in the night, his manner of performing funeral prayers, his recitation of the Qur'an, his charities, his fasts at home and in travels and the fasts in the month of Ramadhan and on other days, his meditations and way of performing pilgrimage, his oblations, his performance of Friday prayers, how he performed the rite of *'aqiqa* of new born babies as also naming and circumcision of children, the way he entered

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