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RADIANT REALITY

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

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Question.

What happens when you are sitting in a group of three people and the two people are talking and they don't involve the 3rd person. What is the ruling

Answer.

In Islam, much consideration is given to the feelings of others. Islam promotes a cohesive and united society and such a society can only develop when due regard is shown to the feelings of others. Failure to respect the feelings of others breeds enmity and destroys the unity that Islam seeks to build.

For this reason, Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam forbade two people conversing to the exception of the third when there are only 3 people in a group. Abdullah ibn Masood Radhiyallahu Anhu quotes Rasulullah Sallallahu Alayhi Wa Sallam as saying, "Should there be three of you, then let not two of them be in conversation to the exclusion of the third, because this will hurt him." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Mufti Moosa

Question.

On the topic of showing it all off to breastfeed. Islamically we must cover in front of men and I heard about modesty when it's just women as well. Would breastfeeding openly in front of my kids be sinful?

I heard after 2 years of age boys should not be seeing their mother partially nude. Am I wrong? Is it okay to breast feed in front of your older sons?

Answer.

It will not be sinful for a woman to expose the upper portion of her body during breastfeeding in the presence of her minor and major sons as this does not fall under her Awrah (parts of the body that must be concealed) for Mahrams.

However, for the sake of modesty, she should cover herself as much as possible and take the necessary precautions while breastfeeding. (Hidaaya 4/370 - Shaami 6/371)

Mufti Ismael

Question.

What Dua should be read during heavy rain and floods?

Answer.

The following Duas and supplications are reported for Rain and Floods in the Hadith:

Sayyiduna Anas Bin Maalik Radhiyallahu Anhu reports: "There was a drought during the time of Nabi (saws). While Nabi (saws) was delivering the sermon on the day of Jum'ah, a Bedouin stood up and said: 'O Rasool of Allah, wealth has been destroyed and our children are hun-

gry; pray to Allah for us. 'He (saws) raised his hands and said (in one narration):

Allahuma Agithna, Allahuma Agithna, Allahuma Agithna

'Oh Allah, bless us with rain, Oh Allah, bless us with rain, Oh Allah bless us with rain'

...and we could not see even a wisp of a cloud in the sky. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, he did not lower (his hands) before clouds like mountains appeared, and he did not come down from his Mimbar before we saw rain dripping from his beard. It rained that day and the next day, and the day after, until the following Jumuah. Then that Bedouin - (or the narrator said), or someone else - stood up and said: 'O Rasool of Allah, buildings have been destroyed and wealth has drowned; pray to Allah for us. He (saws) raised his hands and said:

Allahuma hawalaiha wala alaina

'O Allah, (send down rain) around us and not on us.'

...He did not point in any direction but the clouds dispersed, until it became like a ring (of clear sky above Madinah). The valleys (outside of Madinah) flowed with water and no one came from any direction but he told us of the heavy rains." (Bukhari)

Mufti Ismaeel Bassa

Question.

Can a women perform Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah in Haidh? Does she have to perform Tawaaf-e-Widaa if she is in Haidh?

Answer.

A woman in the state of menstruation (Haidh) will perform all the rituals of Hajj during the five days of Hajj expect for the following two rituals: 1) Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah: The performance of Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah is a compulsory (Fardh) act of Hajj, which is performed after pelting on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah until the 12th of Dhul-

Hijjah. A woman in the state of menstruation cannot perform Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah until her menstruation has terminated. She should wait for her menses to terminate and then perform Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah even if it terminates after the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah.

N.B. If a woman performs Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah in the state of menstruation, a penalty of a big animal (Badanah) i.e. cow, camel etc. becomes necessary (Waajib) to compensate for it. In doing so, the performance of Tawaaf-e-Ziyaarah will be fulfilled and the Hajj would be completed.

2) Tawaaf-e-Widaa: The performance of Tawaaf-e-Widaa is a necessary (Waajib) act of Hajj for non-residents of Makkah, which is performed before departing from Makkah Mukarramah after performing all the rituals of Hajj. A woman in the state of menstruation is exempt from performing Tawaaf-e-Widaa, if she has completed all her rituals of Hajj and it is time to depart. In such a case, no form of penalty will apply. (Muallimul-Hujjaaj 183/186/196/197/231)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My eight year old daughter passed away. She had a substantial amount of assets given to her on her name. Does the parents own her assets after her demise?

Answer.

Upon the demise of a person, including any minors, their assets form part of their estate. The parents cannot take full possession of the minor's assets without following an estate distribution according to Shariah.

The normal distribution process of estates according to Shariah will be applicable to minors irrespective if they have a small amount or a substantial amount of assets.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

I am a Hanafi. I did not perform my Zuhr Salaah on time. When I came home, the Shafi Asr

time started. Did I miss my Zuhr Salaah at the time and do I perform it as a missed Salaah?

Answer.

A Hanafi should follow the rules of the Hanafi school of thought and likewise, a Shafi should follow the rules of the Shafi school of thought. The same applies to them following the respective times of Salaah.

In the enquired situation, if the Shafi time of Zuhr Salaah terminated and the Shafi Asr time commenced, a Hanafi will still perform the full Zuhr Salaah as the Hanafi time of Zuhr Salaah has not yet terminated. The Zuhr performed will not be a performed as a missed (Qadha) Salaah.

N.B. The Shafi time of Zuhr Salaah expires before the Hanafi time of Zuhr Salaah expires.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Would like to know if it's Jaaz to take the tea bags, sugar, toilet rolls etc from a hotel room if one did not use it during his stay..

Answer.

The ruling of taking items from a hotel, which are provided by the hotel management for its clients, will depend on the hotels terms and conditions of usage.

If one wishes to take items from the hotel, one should enquire from the hotel management before doing so.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

If someone reads full salaah instead of short salaah on travel, should they make qadha of those salaahs?

Answer.

If a person performs a complete 4 Rakaats Fardh Salaah instead of a 2 Rakaats Fardh Salaah on a journey, mistakenly or due to miscalculation of the distance of travel etc., the Salaah performed

will be valid.

However, if the Salaah time remains and a person is made aware of his/her mistake, it will be necessary to repeat the Salaah during the Salaah time. If the Salaah time expires, it will not be necessary to repeat it.

On the other hand, if a person performs a complete 4 Rakaats Fardh Salaah instead of a 2 Rakaats Fardh Salaah on a journey knowingly and intentionally, it will be necessary to repeat all such Salaah performed in this way. (Al Bahrur-Raiiq 2/141 - Khairul Fataawa 2/681-682)

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

My mother passed away and she left behind gold and silver jewellery as inheritance for her heirs but she did not pay the Zakaat on it for almost 10 years. Is it permissible for her heirs to accept the jewellery as inheritance?

Answer.

In the enquired case, it was the responsibility of your deceased mother to discharge the Zakaat on her gold and silvery jewellery during her lifetime. If she did not discharge the Zakaat during her lifetime, it was her duty to record it in her will for it to be discharged from one third of her estate upon her demise.

If she did not record it in her will to be discharged from one third of her estate upon her demise, then her heirs are absolved of any responsibility to discharge the Zakaat on the jewellery.

In such a case, it will be permissible for her heirs to accept their inheritance without being responsible for discharging the deceased's Zakaat. However, if the heirs discharge the deceased's Zakaat on her jewellery from their own shares, she would be absolved of any consequence in the hereafter Insha'Allah.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Is the son or daughter responsible to take care of their mother if she remarried? The mother's new husband does not work and does not provide maintenance.

Answer.

In the enquired case, the wife's (new) husband is primarily responsible for her maintenance i.e. shelter, food and clothing.

The son and daughter are not primarily responsible for their mother's maintenance.

However, if the son and daughter provide for their mother, they will be greatly rewarded for it and it will be a huge investment for their hereafter.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

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

Answer.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wa-alaikum

Translation: And to you to.

Mufti Ismaeel

Question.

Upon which wealth does a person have to pay zakaat?

Answer.

Zakaat will be paid on the following:

Cash (including the balance of your bank deposits).

The market value of the merchandise contained in the share of the company i.e. one will be obligated to discharge the zakaat of the company's zakaatable assets (merchandise) contained in the share excluding the non-zakaatable items e.g. fixtures and fittings, transport vehicles, etc. which are not part of the merchandise of the company. The value of all these assets will be evaluated in the share and will be excluded when discharging the zakaat. If it is difficult to differentiate between the zakaatable and non-zakaatable assets of the company, then as a precautionary measure, one should discharge the zakaat on the market value of the entire share.

Face value of the financial papers like bonds loaned to the government, etc. It should be noted that when the loan is paid back by the government, it will only be permissible for one to retrieve the original amount of the loan given. The interest amount paid out by the government will be impermissible. It will have to be given in sadaqah without the intention of receiving reward. Similarly, it should be known that it is impermissible for a believer to deal in any form of interest (usury) whether it be receiving or giving an interest bearing loan.

The market rate of the balance of stock in trade (including raw material).

Receivable amounts i.e. debts owed to a person, monies loaned to people, etc.

Foreign currencies.

Gold and silver.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

Is it permissible to greet non-Muslims for their holidays and festivals by using words such as “merry christmas”, “happy easter” etc?

Answer.

Nabi (saws) said, “The one who emulates a people will be counted from amongst them (in the court of Allah)”. Hence, it is not permissible for a Muslim to share in the happiness of non-Muslims celebrating their holy days and festivals.

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

I have heard that if Surah Baqarah is recited in a house, then Shaitaan does not enter that house. Surah Baqarah is a long Surah. Is there any specific verse or verses that can be recited instead of Surah Baqarah?

Answer.

Recite Aayatul kursi and the last two verses of Surah Baqarah at night before retiring to bed. Allah will protect your home from harm.

Hazrat Abu Mas'ood Ansaari (ra) reports that Rasulullah (saws) said:

“The last two verses of Surah Baqarah are such that they will suffice the one who recites them at night (from all harmful things).”

It is reported by Hazrat Ali (Radhiallahu Anhu) that Rasulullah (saws) said:

“The one who recites Aayatul kursi after every fardh Salaah, nothing will prevent him from entering paradise except death, and the one who recites Aayatul kursi at night when retiring to bed, Allah will protect his home, the homes of his neighbours and the homes of the people around him.”

Mufti Zakaria

Question.

1. What is the Shar'ee ruling regarding hair dye? Is it permissible to use?

2. What colours of dye should one use and which colours should one avoid using?

3. Is there any difference in the ruling between men and women?

4. Is it permissible to use hair dye which is non-porous and prevents the water from touching the hair? If one used such dye, will one's wudhu and ghusal be complete?

5. I heard that applying mehndi is a Sunnah. Can a person dye his beard or hair with mehndi and will one receive the reward of the Sunnah if one applies it?

Answer.

1. If the hair has turned grey or white then it is permissible to dye the hair, however one should avoid using black dye. It appears in the Hadith that the father of Hazrat Abu Bakr (Radiallahu Anhu), Hazrat Abu Quhaafah (Radiallahu Anhu), was brought before Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah Mukarramah. Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had seen that his head and beard were completely white. Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) advised him to dye his hair as well as his beard, however Nabi (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) instructed him to abstain from using black dye.

2. Avoid using black dye and refrain from imitating the styles and colours of the kuffaar.

3. The ruling that applies to men also applies to women.

4. If it is porous, it will be permissible. Refrain from using non-porous dye as it will prevent the water from reaching the hair, thereby causing the wudhu and ghusal to be incomplete.

5. Applying mehndi to the hair is Mustahab as proven from the Ahaadith. If one applies mehndi out of love for Nabi (sallallahu alaihi wa sallam), one will definitely be rewarded. One will only apply the mehndi to the white hair or grey hair. Black hair does not need to be dyed.

Mufti Zakaria

*Lesson from
The Qur'an*



Overcome Vile Habits

○ those who believe, no men should ever mock at other men, since it is possible that the latter are better than the former, nor (should) women (ever mock) at other women, since it is possible that the latter women are better than the former ones. And do not find fault with one another, nor call one another with bad nicknames. Bad is the name of sinfulness after embracing Faith. And whoever does not repent, such people are the wrongdoers. [49:11]

This verse mentions the rights and etiquettes to be observed between individuals. It prohibits three social evils: [1] ridiculing one another; [2] finding fault with one another; and [3] reviling one another with nicknames.

According to Qurtubi, mocking or scoffing does not only connote mocking with the tongue, but it also implies mimicking someone, making pointed references to him, laughing at his words, his works, his appearance, his dress or calling people's attention to some of his defects, so that they may laugh at him. Mocking includes all of this. By the clear text of the Qur'an, poking fun at someone or ridiculing him is absolutely forbidden.

Stylistically, the Qur'an has, on this occasion, addressed men and women separately. Men are referred to as qawm, a word that is specifically reserved for male members of the human society, though by extension the word most often includes the female members of the human society as well. The Qur'an, however, generally employs the word qawm for both men and women, but here it is specifically used for men in contradistinction to the word nisa' which specifically refers to women. Here both men and women are reminded that mocking one another is a disdainful and evil act. They must refrain from it, because it is very likely that the man who is mocked at may be better than the mocking person and the woman who is mocked at may be better than the mocker. Here the Qur'an prohibits men from mocking other men, and women from mocking other women. This, however, does not mean that it is permitted for men to mock at women or for women to mock at men. The actual reason for making separate mention of the two sexes is that Islam does not allow free intermingling of the two sexes. Ridiculing each other generally occurs where there is such an intermingling. Therefore, in a Muslim society it is inconceivable that men would mock a woman or women would mock a man in an intermingling situation.

In short: no one dare make mockery of a person whose body, face, shape and stature are defective, imperfect, impaired or deformed, be-

cause he does not know that the other person, in the sight of Allah, might be better than him on account of his sincerity and purity of heart. When the righteous predecessors heard this verse, they adopted a conducive attitude: For example, Sayyidna ‘Amr Ibn Shurahbil (ra) said that he would not laugh at a person when he sees him drink milk direct from the udders of a goat, lest he should become one like him. Sayyidna ‘Abdullah Ibn Mas’ud (ra) said: “I would not like to scoff at a dog, lest I be metamorphosed into a dog (Qurtubi).”

It is recorded in Sahih of Muslim on the authority of Sayyidna Abu Hurairah (ra) that the Holy Prophet (SAWS) said: “Allah does not look at your faces and your wealth; He looks at your hearts and your works.” Qurtubi derives a legal maxim from this tradition of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) that in any matter it is not proper to pass a categorical judgment on the basis of overt evidence or circumstances, because it is possible that a person’s overt actions might seem to be good but in the sight of Allah, on account of the insincerity and impurity of his heart, they could be bad, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people’s hearts. On the contrary, a person’s overt actions might seem to us bad, but in the sight of Allah, on account of the sincerity and purity of his heart, they could serve as an expiation of the bad actions, as He is fully aware of the inner state of people’s heart.

The next thing that is prohibited in the verse is lamz which connotes to find fault with someone or to upbraid him. The verse says *Wa laa talmizoo anfusakum* literally it means, “Do not find fault with your selves.” But the intention is: “Do not find fault with one another” [49:11] as is seen in the translation above. This expression is similar to the expression *laa taqtuloo anfusakum* ‘...And do not kill yourselves - [4:29]’. Although the verse commands “do not kill yourselves”, it purports to say “do not kill one another”. This expression indicates that, from one point of view, killing another person

amounts to killing oneself. Often it happens that if one person kills another person, the victim’s supporters kill the murderer. Even if this does not happen, a Muslim is the brother of another Muslim. Killing one’s brother is like killing oneself and rendering oneself crippled, helpless and powerless. Similarly, the expression ‘and not find fault with yourselves’ means when you find fault with others and upbraid them, others will find fault with you and upbraid you, because no man is normally free from any fault. Scholars have formulated the maxim: *feeka guyoob wa lin-naasi a’yun* “You have faults and people have eyes” with which they see them. Thus if someone seeks out the imperfections of some other person and broadcasts them, the latter will do the same in return. If, however, he exercises patience and evades retaliation to his verbal attacks, it comes down to the same thing: If one considers carefully, he will find that defaming and despising one’s Muslim brother is actually casting aspersions on oneself.

Scholars have suggested that the satisfaction, well-being and happiness of man lies in examining his own faults and finding ways of mending them. This approach to life will give him no time to find fault with others and broadcast it. How well the last king of India Bahadur Shah Zafar has versified it (translation):

As long as we were unaware of our own faults, we looked into the faults and failings of others; But when we looked at our own faults there remained no one faulty in the world.

The third thing that is prohibited in the verse is reviling one another with nicknames which are offensive to them, e.g. calling a person lame, hands cropped, blind or one-eyed; or referring to him by other offensive nicknames. Sayyidna Abu Jabirah Ansari (ra) says, “This verse was revealed in connection with us. When we migrated to Madinah, most of us had two or three names. Some of them were popularised in order to denigrate, defame or belittle the bearer of the

Cont’d on page 34

Lessons from Sahih Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of the Times of Salah

Chapter 17 : The one who gets one rak'at of Asr before sunset.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

According to the learned scholars, here, Imām Bukhāri wants to tell us that the timing of Asr salāh lasts till sunset.

Hadith No. 526

Narrated Abu Huraira

Allah's Apostle said, "If anyone of you can get one Rak'at of the Asr prayer before sunset, he should complete his prayer. If any of you can get one Rak'at of the Fajr prayer before sunrise, he should complete his prayer."

Comments

In the above hadith the word 'Sajda' has been mentioned whereas Imām Bukhāri has used the word 'Rak'at' in the title (Tarjamatul Bāb). According to the learned scholars these two words are synonymous in the sense that a Rak'at is considered complete after the Sajda. Some scholars hold the opinion that here Imām Bukhāri refutes the opinion of some Shaafite scholars who say that the timing of Asr salāh lasts till the time sun turns pale before finally setting. (Eidhahul Bukhāri)

Hadith No. 527

Narrated Salim bin Abdullah

My father said, "I heard Allah's Apostle saying, 'The period of your stay as compared to the previous nations is like the period equal to the time between the Asr prayer and sunset. The people of the Torah were given the Torah and they acted (upon it) till mid-day then they were exhausted and were given one Qirat (of gold) each. And then the people of the Gospel were given the Gospel and they acted (upon it) till the Asr prayer then they were exhausted and were! given one Qirat each. And then we were given the Qur'an and we acted (upon it) till sunset and we were given two Qirats each. On that the people of both the scriptures said, 'O our Lord! You have given them two Qirats and given us one Qirat, though we have worked more than they.' Allah said, 'Have I usurped some of your right?' They said, 'No.' Allah said: "That is my blessing I bestow upon whomsoever I wish."

Hadith No. 528

Narrated Abu Musa

The Prophet said, "The example of Muslims, Jews and Christians is like the example of a man who employed laborers to work for him from morning till night. They worked till mid-day and they said, 'We are not in need of your

reward.' So the man employed another batch and said to them, 'Complete the rest of the day and yours will be the wages I had fixed (for the first batch). They worked till the time of the Asr prayer and said, 'Whatever we have done is for you.' He employed another batch. They worked for the rest of the day till sunset, and they received the wages of the two former batches."

Comments

In these two hadiths Rasulullah (saws) has compared Jews, Christians and Muslims with the help of a metaphor. He (saws) said that the Jews are like those labourers who work from morning to mid-day and leave it uncompleted halfway due to tiredness and get a caret of gold. The Christians are like those labourers who work from mid-day to Asr time and leave it there unfinished due to tiredness and get a caret. The Muslims are like those labourers who work from Asr till Maghrib only but since they complete the work they get double the reward i.e., two carets of gold.

The message is that the Jews and Christians were given good amount of time to accomplish the job but they failed and hence got half the reward; whereas the Muslims, though getting less working hours, finished the job to its completion and were rewarded two fold.

According to the learned scholars the Jews got almost two thousand years i.e., the time period between Sayyidna Musa (AS) and Sayyidna Eisa (AS), the Christians got around six hundred years i.e. the time period between Sayyidna Eisa (AS), and Rasulullah (saws) and this Ummah has so far been there for more than fourteen hundred years and will continue to remain until the Day of Judgment whose exact time is only known to Allah. As per the learned scholars, it is not these periods which have been referred to in the hadith but it is in reference to the life span of individuals. The earlier people had longer life span than the average life span

of the individuals of this ummah. Since the religion of Islam stands completed and sealed forever at the hands of Rasulullah (saws) through Qur'an, so this Ummah, while acting upon the perfect Deen, gets more reward irrespective of working for a relatively lesser period of time. Allah knows the best.

Allah Ta'ala says in the Holy Qur'an:

Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as Din (religion and a way of life) for you. (5:3)

In this connection, Allama Ayni seems to give a better explanation. He says that those Jews who faithfully followed Musa (AS) would get full reward and those who believed in Musa (AS) alone but rejected Eisa (AS) would get half the reward. In the same way those Christians who believed in Eisa (AS) only and rejected Muhammad (saws) would also be denied full reward.

It has been narrated in a hadith that those Christians who believed in Eisa (AS) and also accepted Rasulullah (saws) as the prophet, would get double reward. The Muslims believe in all the prophets and follow the perfect Deen presented by Rasulullah (saws), so they would get double the reward even though their working period is less.

Relation of these two hadiths with the title (Tarjamatul Bāb)

This chapter is about the timing of Asr salāh and according to the learned scholars these hadiths convey that the working time of this Ummah is from Asr till sunset, and this is what Imām Bukhāri wants to convey.

The Hanafite scholars prove their point from these hadiths by saying that the timing of Asr salāh has to start from the time when the shadow of an object becomes double its height (i.e., two Mithl) then only the working time of this Ummah will be lesser than the Jews and

Christians. If it is considered from the time when the shadow of an object equals its height (one Mithl) then the time period between Zuhr and Asr, and, Asr and Maghrib becomes almost equal.

Chapter 18 : The time of Maghrib.

‘Ata’ said, “A sick person can offer Maghrib and Isha together.”

Purpose of Tarjamatul Bāb

Here Imām Bukhāri is commenting about the timing of Maghrib salāh which starts soon after sunset. By quoting the statement of Ata that a sick person can offer Maghrib and Isha salāh together, Imām Bukhāri wants to convey that the time of Maghrib salāh lasts until Isha.

Hadith No. 529

Narrated Raafe bin Khadij

We used to offer the Maghrib prayer with the Prophet and after finishing the prayer one of us may go away and could still see as far as the spots where one’s arrow might reach when shot by a bow.

Hadith No. 530

Narrated Jābir bin Abdullah

The Prophet used to pray the Zuhr at mid-day, and the Asr at a time when the sun was still bright, the Maghrib after sunset (at its stated time) and the Isha at a variable time. Whenever he saw the people assembled (for Isha’ prayer) he would pray earlier and if the people delayed, he would delay the prayer. And they or the Prophet used to offer the Fajr Prayers when it still dark.

Hadith No. 531

Narrated Salmah

We used to pray the Maghrib prayer with the Prophet when the sun disappeared from the

horizon.

Hadith No. 532

Narrated Ibn Abbas

The Prophet prayed seven Rak’ats together and eight Rak’ats together.

Comments

Raafe bin Khadij says that they used to offer Maghrib salāh with Rasulullah (saws) at such a time when after the completion of the salah there would still be enough light. Giving an example he says that if anybody shoot an arrow he would be able to easily locate where it landed. It means that Rasulullah (saws) used to offer Maghrib salāh soon after sunset; had it been delayed a little, darkness would have prevailed. According to the second and third hadith quoted above, it is evident that Maghrib salāh was not usually delayed. As per the fourth hadith, discussed earlier as well, Maghrib salāh can be delayed in case of sickness, rain etc.

A hadith reported on the authority of Sayyidna Abbas says that Rasulullah (saws) said that this Ummah will remain in its natural state as long as it won’t delay Maghrib salāh until the time stars appear in the sky (i.e., when it is dark).

Hajjaj bin Yousuf, who was appointed governor of Madinah by Khalifa Abdul Mālik bin Marwaan in 74 Hijri, delayed salāh timings considerably. Muhammad bin Umru enquired of Sayyidna Jābir bin Abdullah about the timings at which they used to offer salāh with Rasulullah (saws). In this hadith also, Jābir says that they used to offer Maghrib salāh soon after sunset.

**“The sleeves of the shirt of
Rasulullah (saws) reached his
wrists.”**

(Abu Dawood)

A System that has Crumbled

*Straight
Talk*



Syed Iqbal Zaheer

It was the practice of the Prophet to accept bay`ah (pledge of obedience) from his Companions at the time they entered into Islam. In addition, he sought their pledge on other special occasions, (or, occasionally, without any occasion). Such bay`ah was approved by Allah who mentioned one of the pledges in a Qur`anic passage. Such bay`ah was also necessary because Islamic call was new, and the meaning of the Kalimah Shahadah was not apparent to the pre-Islamic Arabs. On the occasion of the bay`ah, the Prophet explained to them what entry into Islam meant in theoretical and practical terms, and that, pronouncement of the Kalimah was pronouncement of one's willingness to henceforth obey Allah and His Messenger.

History tells us that there had been bay`ah before the advent of Islam, and hadith literature informs us that there will be a bay`ah at the advent of the Mahdi as another (perhaps the final) at Bayt al-Maqdis, probably during the time of the closing events.

Subsequent to the Prophet, bay`ah of obedience to Allah and His Messenger was not considered necessary because of the spread of knowledge and the general understanding that without willingness to obey Allah and His Messenger, there could be no Islam. People freshly entering into Islam, therefore, at the time of the Companions and their followers,

were not asked to execute a pledge to this effect since they knew the demands of the testimony of Islam: it was shelving of one's older way of life in favor of the new one they were embracing. Islam was submission to Allah, no more and no less. Everyone lived by Islamic ordinances, the society was modeled on the Islamic pattern, the economy ran on Islamic principles, the state was guided by Islamic injunctions, and there was no question of obedience to any other, than Allah and His Messenger.

Although out of use for a while in the strict religious sense, bay`ah acquired a political character after the Prophet. Since there could be more than one claimant to Muslim leadership, meaning, political authority, it became necessary to seek the pledge of obedience from the citizens for only one nominate or claimant; and hence, he who refused to take a pledge, was thought to be refusing to be in the mainstream, parting his ways with the Jama`ah. The first bay`ah of this nature was instituted by `Umar ibn al-Khattab, who pledged his own hand to the first Khaleefah, Abu Bakr. It is in this political sense that the Prophet is reported to have said that he who died without having entered into a pledge, died a Jaahiliyy death. It was political bay`ah that he meant, that is, bay`ah at the hands of a Khaleefah or Ameer, to obey him in politi-

cal matters (and not personal), so long as he did not command a wrong. A bay`ah covering obedience to Allah and His Messenger was uncalled for because any other alternative was simply out of the question.

With weaknesses creeping in, however, after a few centuries there began to appear Muslims who failed to lead a purely Islamic life, or who did not, for a variety of reasons, possess enough knowledge to be able to lead their lives in a manner desired by Islam. Nonetheless, at a point in their lives they retreated from their life of disobedience, hoping to, thereonward, lead the life of total devotion to Allah. Yet, many had no idea what they were to do by way of reformation, repentance, penance and atonement for what they had neglected so far. There were others who were aware of their own moral shortcomings, conscious of the need to purify themselves, but did not know how to go about doing it, or control their base instincts before getting into a worse situation.

Naturally, they sought a person who was knowledgeable and devoted to Allah who could help. There were of course many who could, and the system of bay`ah with a religious character reappeared. But, since Shuyukh had no ecclesiastical power, bay`ah at their hands remained, primarily, the expression of a mere wish. It did not, and could not acquire the characteristics of a religious obligation.

The dubious nature had its implications. Experience taught the Shuyukh that mere admonition on their part, and pious intentions on the part of their followers, were not the cure for the anomalies. Those who came to them for help did not always live by what they were taught. And yet, their own names could be dragged into the misdeeds of their followers. It could be said, "So and so is of such poor character, although he attends the assembly of such and such a Sheikh!"

The Shuyukh therefore developed a whole plan of action and techniques of reformation

complete with a kind of curriculum for those who would pledge their hands to them promising to obey Allah and His Messenger. They also added obedience to themselves as a necessary ingredient of the bay`ah and the right to inquire and told what happened at the personal and private level, so as to discover the impediments to reformation. In other words, the inclusion of this last clause helped them inquire, get the information, scrutinize, analyze, discover weaknesses, and suggest the cures. They even began to guide them in their family affairs – by extending their influence to that sector – to help their followers out of social and sometimes even economic difficulties, in order to free them for training and observation of religious obligations. Through the curriculum they drew, they guided them from time to time, stage to stage, leading them – through education and application – to higher moral and spiritual states. Not surprisingly, before accepting a novice, some of the Shuyukh would not merely inquire about what kind of books the novices had read earlier, but also, whether they knew horse riding, warfare techniques and so on. So that, when the occasion for Jihad arose, these novices (murids), inspired by the Shuyukh participated in thousands.

Thus, with the passage of time, the Shuyukh became spiritual guides for the individuals and their families, sort of adopting the family, and guiding them all, not necessarily in devotional matters alone, but in all affairs of life with the spiritual ends in view. So that, affairs such as what profession to choose, whom to appoint as teachers of the children, and with whom to make marriage alliances, were all decided on the advice of the Shuyukh. In other words, the family had a moral and spiritual head in addition to the temporal head.

This was successful so long as there were sincere Shuyukh and sincere followers of Islam. But, with insincerity towards Allah and

His Revelation settling into the hearts, the system began to crumble and ultimately became corrupt. The idea became prevalent that if you were attached to a Sheikh, he would look after your affairs of the Hereafter, guiding you through to Paradise through his influence and intercession. Another, and no less serious corruption was that you get connected to an important Sheikh of the past, through allegiance to the present-day nominated representative (Khaleefah) in order to gain greater material benefits in this world, and climb to higher spiritual status in the Hereafter. It became necessary to profess this because the murids of today could clearly see that their present-day Sheikh (peer) was fatally below the moral and spiritual norms required of a man of this position, pretty poor in application of Islamic rules of life to himself and family, was in fact a gatherer of wealth, fattening himself upon the hard earned money of his followers, and thus, plainly incapable of winning salvation for himself, far from being in a position to help his followers. But, if he was below the mark, then, the implied suggestion was, the Shaykh al-Shuyukh (the chief of the Shuyukh, or the grand-master), dead by a few centuries, to whom the murids were connected through the present day Sheikh, is the all-powerful who is capable of getting your material needs granted by Allah. Thus, arose the need to include the tombs, where the Shaykh al-Shuyukh resided, yet the need to have a contemporary Sheikh, as a means, despite his questionable qualifications and suspicious activities.

But of course, the connecting line could not be stopped at the Shaykh al-Shuyukh of the 5th, 6th or 7th centuries. The murids demanded higher climbs, and hence, the chain had to be taken to the Prophet himself – peace be upon him.

How relevant is the system today and how reliable the peers? (Many of them are honest enough to refer to themselves not as Sheikhs,

but as peers: acknowledging a lower position for themselves). We might answer in short that where the Sheikh is truly a Sheikh (nobody seems to have seen one recently), the system is still valid. To make room for an honest one, we might say that if a Shaykh of today accepts the pledge at his hand, of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and then guides his murids on, by teaching them the Qur'an and Sunnah, or the Arabic language, or, putting them on to a course of study of the core texts, or monitor their 24-hour activities, then, a Muslim might enter into his bay'ah. But, if he adds anything else to his plan of action, such as, suggest adhkaar, or claim spiritual guidance, or suggest elevating his followers to higher spiritual stations through his own spiritual power, or connect him to a Sheikh of the past, or to the Prophet himself, or chase away the devil on him, or conduct halaqas of dhikr, or claim to prevent misfortunes falling onto his murids, or help them get children, or solve their economic problems through rosary and waza'if, or is primarily a dispenser of ta'weez (amulets) of various functions, or worse, promises connections with a dead Sheikh, or worst of all, declares participation in tomb affairs, celebrations, and functions as necessary for spiritual progress, then, he may be advised by the would be murids to earn his living through other honest means.

**Rasulullah (saws) cursed
the man who dressed like
a woman and the woman
who dressed like a man.**

(Abu Dawood)

Asma' al-Husna

Part 1:

Allah & al-Rabb

Amal al-Sibai

Allah, “It is You We Worship and You We Ask for Help”

As we open our ongoing series to illuminate the meanings of Asmâ' Al-Husna —conventionally translated the “Beautiful Names [of Allah]”— we focus here on our Creator’s personal name, Allah and on His most closely associated title of relationship to us, Al-Rabb (also seen written as “Ar-Rabb”). In Part 2 we begin to address the 99 attributive ‘Names.’

The practical purpose of this series is to bring us to a better understanding of Allah, which in turn translates into better obedience and worship of Allah, stronger reliance on Allah alone, and a more peaceful and content state of mind.

ALLAH

Simply put, Allah is the Arabic Personal Name[1] for the singular and unique God. Allah is the only deity rightfully to be worshipped, to be called upon for relieving affliction, and to be glorified. The name ‘Allah’ refers exclusively to God, to Him who is the only being who is perfect in every way.

The Name ‘Allah’ is the foremost among His 99 Beautiful Names; He is the Being to which all the other descriptions and Attributes apply. The qualities expressed in these Names, as we know them in our world, derive their existence from Allah. He is their source.

The personal name, Allah, carries with it a sense of the greatness, glory, and power to which other Names such as Al-Azeez, Al-Adheem, and Al-Qadir allude. This personal name of Deity also encompasses the beauty, mercy, and care which Allah shows towards His servants —indicated by

the Names such as Al-Raheem, Al-Ra’oof, Al-Hafeedh, Al-Wadood, and Al-Tawwab. The personal name, Allah, on its own, is to be understood as carrying all the meanings which are represented by each of His 99 Names, attributes of both might and mercy, power and love, dominion and protection, and elevation above all His creation, yet also nearness.

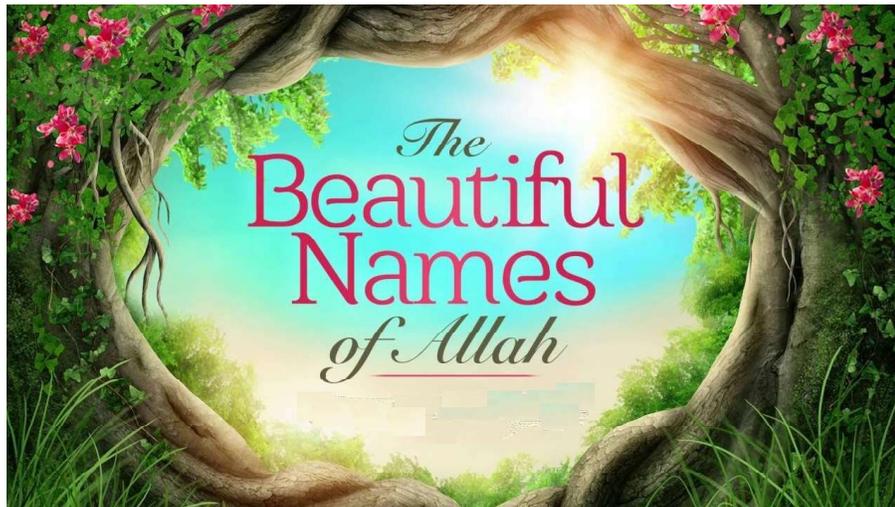
So, when you call out to Allah, your heart is filled with both fear and awe of Allah, yet also love and yearning. A well-balanced Muslim regrets falling into sin but also he hopes that his misdeeds can be rectified and that Allah will forgive the sin and accept one’s repentance.

No being or essence is worthy of worship except Allah. It is Allah alone who is the Creator, the All-Knowing, the Guardian, and the perfectly and truly Rich and Self-Sustaining.

Allah alone is worthy of worship because He has complete sovereignty over all that is in the

Heavens and the Earth. All people on Earth submit to Allah whether they are believers or non-believers—in the sense that they give way to Allah’s will and decree. There is no escape from the will and decree of Allah; illness, death, rainfall, gaining provisions and sustenance, the birth of a baby boy or girl, are all in the hands of Allah. And we all, with no exception, submit to this will of Allah, as He is the only true Sovereign.

Allah alone is worthy of worship because it is He alone who knows what is apparent and what is hidden, what has already happened and what is to come in the future. He knows our actions and what is in our hearts. Allah alone is worthy of worship because it is He alone who drives blessings, benefits, and sustenance to mankind. Allah alone



is worthy of worship because He alone is Self-Sustaining and needs none or nothing in creation, while everything in creation has needs in order to survive.

‘Allah’ among all of His Beautiful Names, is the most frequently mentioned designation in the Holy Qur’an. If we were to read through the Qur’an to its completion, we would come across the appellation ‘Allah’ more than 2,200 times, far more than any of His various Beautiful Names.

In the Qur’an, 33 verses begin with deity’s personal name, ‘Allah.’ Rereading a few of these verses gives us a better understanding of Allah, as He has

described Himself to us in His Holy Book.

Allah — there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of Existence.(Surah Âli `Imrân, 3:2)

Allah knows what every female carries and what the wombs lose [prematurely] or exceed. And everything with Him is by due measure. (Surah Al-Ra`d, 13:8)

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. (Surah Al-Nûr, 24:35)

Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is over all things, Disposer of affairs. (Surah Al-Zumar, 39:62)

Allah is Subtle [gentle] with His servants; He gives provision to whom He wills. And He is the Powerful, the Exalted in Might. (Surah Al-Shûrâ, 42:19)

Allah — there is no deity except Him. And upon Allah let the believers rely. (Surah Al-Taghâbun, 64:13)

In the Prophet’s traditions of supplication, seeking forgiveness, and remembrance of Allah, His personal name is used most often. Before eating, reading a book, drinking, or before setting out to do almost anything,

we say Bismillah, “In the Name of Allah.” Our five daily prayers are started by pronouncing this name aloud, Allahu Akbar, “Allah is great.” When we see someone beautiful and admirable, we say MashaAllah, meaning that Allah has willed it and may Allah maintain His blessings on this beautiful person.

AL-RABB

A second major designation, closely linked to Allah, is Al-Rabb, “the Lord and Master.” He is the master and caretaker who nurtures, sustains, and manages the affairs of everything in creation, from

the tiniest organism to the largest.

The term Al-Rabb points to more than one nuance of meaning. The first main meaning is “the lord, owner, or master.” The second main meaning relates to the verb, “to take care of, nourish, sustain, and provide for,” and the third meaning has the sense of “to raise or bring up.”

A main pillar of our faith as Muslims is to believe in the Oneness of Allah’s Lordship. Muslims have a firm conviction that it is Allah and Allah alone who creates, controls the affairs of the universe, provides sustenance to His creation, gives life and death, and sends down rain. Only Allah nourishes and sustains and no other being shares in Allah’s actions, power, and capabilities.

The designation, ‘Al-Rabb,’ is mentioned in the Qur’an more than 500 times. Among the verses which affirm that Allah is our Lord, Master, Sustainer, and Creator are the following:

Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds. (Surah Al-A`râf, 7:54)

Say, “Who is Lord of the heavens and earth?” Say, “Allah.” (Surah Al-Ra`d, 13:16)

Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. Never will we invoke besides Him any deity. (Surah Al-Kahf, 18:14)

Had there been within them [the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined. So exalted is Allah, Lord of the Throne, above what they describe. (Surah Al-Anbiyâ’, 21:22)

How can we draw nearer to Allah by understanding the meaning of His designation ‘Al-Rabb’? We can follow in the footsteps of the Prophets, and learn the supplications that they made to Allah. In the Holy Qur’an, we find various supplications of the Prophets, asking Allah to fulfill their du`â. Several times they call upon Allah saying, “My Lord” and “Our Lord,” again and again throughout the Qur’an.

When faced by the daunting task of preaching

to Pharaoh, calling him to believe in the one God, Prophet Musa asked his Lord for help:

[Moses] said, “My Lord, expand [relax] for me my breast [with assurance]. And ease for me my task.” (Surah Tâ Hâ, 20:25-26)

We learn another supplication in the same Surah for asking Allah to increase us in knowledge; again this supplication begins with “My Lord.”

And say, “My Lord, increase me in knowledge.” (Surah Tâ Hâ, 20:114)

When Prophet Zechariah and his wife yearned for a child, they did not despair even though they had reached old age, and they continued to pray to Allah.

And [mention] Zechariah, when he called to his Lord, “My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while You are the best of inheritors.” (Surah Al-Anbiyâ’, 21:89)

Every parent should learn the following supplication of Prophet Ibrâhîm and repeat it daily.

My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication. (Surah Ibrâhîm, 14:40)

Supplicate to Allah for all that is good in this world and in the Hereafter, and begin your supplication by saying, “My Lord, Rabbi.” Have trust in your Lord. Know that Al-Rabb takes care of you in all situations.

Using the Multiple Designations of Our Lord

As we understand more and more who Allah is, we will experience a drastic change in how we approach our obligatory acts of worship and religious rituals. This will change our outlook on life. It will change how we cope with the daily stresses of life and other major ordeals which we may face, because this life is not perfect and it is riddled with hardships along the way. As we call upon Allah, He will give us the strength to overcome.

[1] Jews and Christians use a similar form of this same word: Eloh or Elohim, in their scriptures to refer to the one and only God.

On Consciousness and Equality

Hasan Ahmad

All people alive on every continent, isthmus, and archipelago of earth today are one family, born of one father and one mother. So, there can be no argument that the divisions between us are “natural,” that they come about because of the “separate” origins of our creation, or the disparate beginnings of our lives, or some biological difference that makes our sociological inequalities not only logical but necessary.

So says the Quran, the Final Revelation from God to humankind, declaring our original human unity and explaining why our singular Creator addressed His definitive Heavenly guidance and commands to all people for all time. For, together, we human beings—the yellow, black, red,

brown, and white of us—have individually and collectively inherited the same human-race-defining psychological and spiritual characteristics. This is what makes every one of us worthy of the goodness and dignity that God has honored us with, and it is what qualifies us to bear the weighty responsibility of freedom and vicegerency that He has bestowed and burdened us with.

Allah says:

O humankind! Have a conscious fear of your Lord, the One who has created you from a single sole, and created from it its mate, and from them both spread abroad a multitude of men and women. [Surat Al-Nisa', 4:1]

And also:

O Children of Adam! Whenever there come to you messengers from among yourselves, conveying to you My messages, then as to all who [adhere to them, and who] have conscious fear of Me, and who work righteousness—there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. [Surat Al-A'raf, 7:35]



There are, in fact, numerous verses in the Noble Quran which state unequivocally and categorically that humanity stands equally blessed and burdened by its Lord, from our first father Adam to the very last man who shall be.

It is true that people are of diverse colors, tongues, riches and other acquired and congenital traits. This is no curse. Rather, it is a grace to be utterly humbled and thankful for, the adornment of the breathtaking beauty of the human race. We are a flower garden of dazzling color and enticing fragrance. The Quran is entirely positive about the glory of this diversity and submits it as “exhibit A” evidence that God is Great. God is Merciful. God is Wise. To deny this truth is a testimony to one’s inner hideousness and ignorance:

And of His (wondrous) signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variety of your tongues and your colors. Indeed, in this there are sure signs for a people of knowledge. [Surat Al-Rum, 30:22]

Our human diversity is a cause for coming together, not chauvinism.

O People! Behold! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most righteous. Behold! Allah is all-knowing, all-aware. [Surat Al-Hujurat, 49:13]

Prophet Muhammad emphasized these very things in his Farewell Address:

All of you are from Adam, and Adam is from dust! There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab. Nor is there superiority of a non-Arab over an Arab. There is no superiority of white over black, or black over white—save by taqwa [the conscious fear of God]. (Ahmad)

The only valid criterion for differentiating among people should be their response to God’s divine message, brought to them through the

ages by His prophets. All manmade criteria are but the reflections of the tyranny and injustice of some men over others, and signs of the most serious violation of God’s criterion—taqwa.

When the Prophet’s Companion ‘Amr ibn Al-‘Aas (d. 43 H) had surrounded the Mukawkis, the king of Copts in Egypt, the latter sued for peace. ‘Amr deputized 10 of his officers to treat with him, headed by a powerful Companion, ‘Ubadah ibn Al-Samit (d. 34 H), a dark-skinned Arab. The Mukawkis deemed the color of ‘Ubadah a personal affront and refused to talk to him. The envoys explained that ‘Ubadah was one of their most esteemed and capable leaders, and that ‘Amr had commissioned him personally to settle with the Copts. The Mukawkis was astonished to hear this and further astounded when they added that Muslims held the dark and fair in equal respect, that they judge a person by his character not his color.

This is the attitude of basic fairness and equality that prevailed in the Muslims’ lands, privately and publicly, for an extended stretch of time. But history shows that our communities have suffered deep and long lapses in which the practice of this Islamic principle was seriously mired by ignorance and deviation from Allah’s guidance.

As for our Muslim communities’ attitude toward diversity in the West today—that is a judgment I shall leave to you. But I shall say this: The fact of former President Barak Hussein Obama’s election as the first African-American to assume high office—against so protracted and unspeakably violent history of slavery and racism—is, in this sense, a cause for celebration.

But as to whether it is a real milestone in this land and the world, that will depend upon a higher criterion: The God-consciousness that animates the content of US presidents and this nation’s actions. Our own experience today as Muslims in the West exposes us to a culture-wide rejoicing in the assimilation of an equality and fairness that we have been presently segregated from wholeheartedly participating in.

The Society of Perfect Shariah

Muhammad Ali

The uniqueness of the Muslim society

The Muslim society as defined by Islam is a unique society that is unlike other societies known to mankind throughout history. This is because it is a society that was formed by the immortal shari'ah of Islam which Allah sent down in full as He says in His Book:

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

This shari'ah which Allah has enjoined upon His slaves was complete from the beginning. This is the shari'ah which formed this society on the foundations that Allah wants for His slaves, not on the foundations that some people may want for others. This society was established in the shade of this shari'ah, in contrast to what happened in the case of western societies which developed as a result of class conflict and dealing with ever-changing methods of production and conflicts of interests and ideas.

It is Islamic shari'ah which formed the Muslim society, not Muslim society that formed Islamic shari'ah. It is Islamic shari'ah that laid out its foundations, characteristics, principles, values and traditions. Shari'ah was not simply a response to human needs and requirements as is the case with worldly laws. Rather it is a

divine blueprint for all of mankind which encompasses everything in the lives of individuals and societies. It defined the relationship of the individual member of that society with his Lord, with his own self, and with his family, relatives, neighbours, brothers in Islam, friends and all the members of his society. It defined the relationship of the Islamic state with others both at times of peace and times of war. Hence Islamic fiqh covers acts of worship, interactions with others, family laws, jihad, treaties, halal and haram, Sunnahs, and etiquette. It has not omitted anything in the lives of individuals and societies, rather it has organized everything, starting with the etiquette of relieving oneself and ending with the establishment of the khilafah - the Caliph - and leadership of the ummah.

This is the way in which the Muslim society is unique and distinct from other societies: because the One Who created, established and formed it knows more about what is in the interests of mankind than any philosopher, thinker or social scientist who may be involved in laying the foundations of human societies.

As time goes by and human knowledge advances, people come closer to discovering and appreciating the values, systems and laws which were first established by Muslim societies

under the shade of Islamic shari'ah.

The immutability of the rulings of Islamic Shari 'ah

No matter what new needs arise in life, and no matter how much progress and development call for the promulgation of new laws to deal with the new developments, those efforts remain based on a fixed principle which Allah wants to remain in the Muslim society so that it continues to be unique and distinct from other societies.

Thus shari'ah is like a fence that permits the factors of development and progress to have their effect on the Muslim society, but within the limits of that fence which protects the authentic, unique and distinct nature of that society and prevents it from being assimilated or lost.

One may ask, is it a good thing for the development of society to remain attached to a fixed principle when life is constantly developing and its requirements and relationships are constantly changing, when it needs new laws and systems to address the ever changing needs of life?

In order to answer this question we need to have a deep knowledge of that fixed principle and the extent to which it encompasses the basic issues of life. We must also compare the basics of this fixed principle, which produced the Muslim society and the basics of other principles which produced other human societies, in a precise and objective manner. If it is understood that the fixed principles of Islam are established in such a way as to allow stability and ongoing development, and that they are still — after fifteen hundred years — superior to all the systems ever known to mankind, then the fixed nature of these principles will be seen as an advantage that guarantees ongoing progress and development far removed from the pursuit of whims and desires, and offers protection against being influenced by whims and desires, deviation and misguidance under the guise of pro-

gress and renewal.

Open to growth and development

This objective and precise comparison, governed by academic logic, between the social system in the true Muslim society and other social systems, will show us the great truth that this fixed basis on which Islamic shari'ah is founded is flexible and is more able to respond to the needs of new development in human life than all the new systems that mankind has invented and dubbed "progressive" but which, when compared with the holistic principles of Islam, appear to be backward in general, with many contradictions, shortcomings, irrational elements and features that go against human nature.

This Islamic shari'ah that shaped Muslim society has many features that enabled the Muslim society to grow and develop, and made it able to meet the ever-changing needs of mankind.

Some of the most important of these features are:

1. It is in accordance with the basic features of human nature, because it was created by Allah Who knows the nature of His creation and what is best suited to this nature.

2. It came in the form of universal holistic principles which can be implemented in detail with regard to ever-occurring minor issues and changing circumstances. So Zakah — for example — is a fixed and clearly-defined obligation, but the means of collecting it, calculating it and distributing it to those who are entitled to receive it are all things that are open to development in a manner that suits the time when it is collected and that best serves the interests of the poor.

Its pioneering comprehensiveness

The universal and holistic principles of shari'ah encompass all the basic aspects of hu-

man life. They encompass the life of the individual, the family and the society, the relationships of individuals with one another, the foundations on which the state rests, and the principles on which international relations are based. It set out the laws that govern civil, political, social and economic life, and it has not omitted any aspect of human life without setting guidelines. These laws are still ahead of the legislative theories that mankind has produced.

In this regard it is sufficient for us to quote one example to prove how Islam is far ahead of other systems: the system of inheritance in Islam, which this shari'ah brought fifteen hundred years ago, complete, fixed and comprehensive. It is just and fair to all the heirs, sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, wives and husbands, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, and all the relatives. We will appreciate the fact that Islamic shari'ah was far ahead of others with regard to this system when we realize that under the legislative system in Britain, as late as the end of the nineteenth century the oldest son still inherited everything and the rest of the heirs were at his mercy; if he wanted he would give them something, and if he wanted he would give them nothing.

Further proof of the way in which Islamic shari'ah is ahead of all the legislative systems invented by mankind is to be seen in the rulings that gave women all their rights for the first time in history and allowed them to enjoy full human rights centuries before the world had heard of human rights organizations or charters of human rights. At that early date, Islam proclaimed that women are the twin halves of men, as it says in the hadith narrated by Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, ad-Darimi and Ahmad. At that time when Christian societies were uncertain as to whether a woman was even human and were debating the nature of her soul, the Qur'an proclaimed:

So their Lord accepted of them [their supplication and answered them], 'Never will I allow to

be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female. You are [members] one of another. (3:195)

The Prophet accepted the bay'ah (oath of allegiance) from women on the basis that they would be Muslims and would hear and obey, just as he used to accept the bay'ah of men. The women's bay'ah was given independently of their menfolk and had nothing to do with them. All of this affirms the personal independence of the Muslim woman, and the fact that she is qualified to bear the responsibility of giving bay'ah, making a pledge and offering her loyalty to Allah and His Messenger. This happened centuries before the modern world gave women the right to express their opinions independently by means of elections. This is in addition to a great number of other rights such as the right to own wealth and possessions independently, the fact that she is not obliged to spend on anyone else even if she is rich and equality with men in terms of human worth, education, discipline and all other duties enjoined by shari'ah.

What Islam achieved with regard to women's position fifteen centuries ago in one fell swoop, no one in history has been able to achieve even in the twentieth century.

It is sufficient for us to note that the French Revolution, at the end of the eighteenth century, produced a document on human rights which was entitled "The Rights of Man". In the first paragraph of this document it says, "Man is born free and cannot be enslaved." There were many attempts to add the words "and woman", but these attempts were rebuffed and the first paragraph of the proclamation of the revolution remained limited to the words, "Man is born free and cannot be enslaved."

A century later, at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the great French scholar Gustave le Bon stated in his book *The Spirit of Society* that women have only been equal to men at periods of decline. These words came in his refutation of those who demanded that women be given

equal rights to vote along with men.

This is how things continued until the League of Nations was established after the First World War, and the United Nations after the Second World War. The campaigners for women's rights did not succeed in gaining a statement of women's equality with men until after a difficult struggle, because they were up against customs that had their roots in religion which stood as obstacles in their way, and they had no local or international texts of law that were fair to women which they could use as a means to overcome those obstacles of tradition that stood in the way of achieving women's liberation.

In contrast, the texts of Islam in the Qur'an and Sunnah brought a definitive statement fifteen hundred years ago of equality between men and women in terms of reward and punishment, responsibility and reward, worship, human worth and human rights.

The situation of women in ancient laws

was very bad, as the Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru says in his book *The Discovery of India*. He said that woman's situation in ancient India was better than in ancient Greece, or in ancient Rome, or during the early Christian period. Women had no identity, they had no freedom to dispose of their own affairs, they could not inherit and they enjoyed none of the human rights that men enjoyed.

Perfect and progressive

The basic principles of Islamic shari'ah were perfect and progressive from the outset; they did not start out imperfect and gradually make up for their shortcomings; they were not backward and then tried to address the problem and became progressive. Islamic shari'ah is still able to achieve this perfection and be progressive whenever it has the opportunity to be implemented properly.

GOOD COMPANY

Abu Musa Al-Ash`ari (ra) reported: I heard the Prophet (saws) saying, "The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell".

[Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Commentary: This Hadith enjoins that one should sit in the company of the pious persons and avoid the impious ones because the former has the quality of a perfume seller and the latter of a blacksmith. In the association of pious men, one stands to gain all the time and ultimately becomes like them. In bad company one is out-and-out a loser and can never hope to gain any benefit from them.

A Word on Divorce

Mufti Zubair Bayat

The alarming explosion of Talaqs in our present times is a cause for great concern. The mention of the word Talaq which was at one time taboo in our communities has now become such a common and cheap word that in some marriages every argument features this word; either the husband threatens with it or the wife demands it. Forgotten is the grave warning of our Rasul (saws) that Talaq causes the grand throne of Allah to shudder. This is an expression to convey the utter abhorrence of Talaq in Islam (unless it is extremely unavoidable).

Casual Attitude

The sanctity of Nikah and marriage has all but left the hearts of these people. Nikah has almost become like another of the hundreds of disposable commodities in the market – disposable plates, cups, towels, etc. A casual and cavalier attitude has almost developed towards the institution of Nikah, an attitude that says if it doesn't work out, it doesn't matter, we'll live on – maybe try again. Some people have gone through a number of divorces in their lives without a care in the world.

Factors

What has contributed towards this deplorable state of affairs? A number of factors could be responsible for this recent proliferation of talaqs

which has resulted in so many broken homes and shattered families. Lack of proper Islamic education is one big factor. Lack of fear of Allah is another. Selfishness, hard-heartedness, stubbornness, callousness, an uncompromising attitude is another factor. Never overlook the devastating effect of western culture and values in the home – it is poison for the Muslim marriage. Inability to handle the pressures of marriage and an escapist attitude is a major factor.

Anger is another dangerous factor. When a person loses control of his anger and flies into a towering rage, he can do the most drastic and foolish of things in the world. The fruits of anger are very bitter. Sayyidina Rasulullah (saws) has mentioned: “The beginning of anger is madness and the end result is sorrow and regret.” Whatever the cause may be, in order to gain some temporary, imaginary victory, or to score a few points in one's favour, an extremely short-sighted decision is taken and the long term implications are totally ignored.

In almost all instances the short-sightedness adopted in handling the situation by giving or demanding the Talaq results in much regret, misery, sorrow and heartache later on. Often the damage is too extensive to rescue or salvage the situation. At that time, a frantic effort is launched to obtain fatwas or rulings to reverse the devastating damage of Talaq, but to no avail. Even

if a fatwa is obtained under false pretenses or grounds, it cannot render lawful that which Allah has rendered unlawful and forbidden.

Parents' Attitude

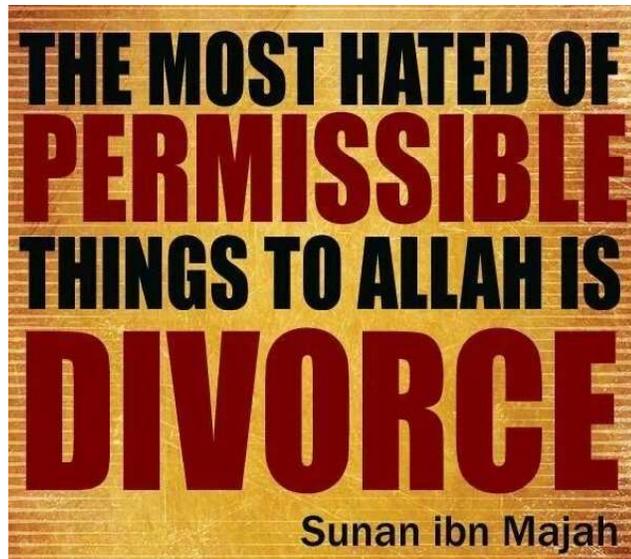
Nowadays, some parents and family elders too adopt an indifferent, casual attitude and hardly bring any pressure on the warring couple to pull together and resolve their differences. The sad reality is in some instances, they have actively promoted the process of disintegration of the marriage and encouraged the Talaq! At times, they simply shut the door on the any discussion or dialogue to address the problem. Sometimes, the pride of the parents or family comes even before the interest of the couple who inwardly are willing to reconcile but do not have much say because of family pressures.

Wider Community

Then there is the wider Muslim community that sits by as spectators, as if watching some fight. They are content to pass remarks and indulge in idle gossip on the sad state of affairs. This is a very dangerous attitude. The fire of divorces and marriage breakdown is spreading while people are watching idly. Heaven knows whose house will burn down next if the situation is not arrested in good time. The least that the general public can do on hearing about a marital dispute is to make fervent Dua that Allah must give Hidayat and understanding to the couple and save their marriage. To save marriages, Islam has actually permitted the speaking of "white" lies if that will bring about some degree of reconciliation in the couple. If the situation is left to spiral out of control, the fabric of our society will be rent asunder. Dozens of divorced women (and men) are not healthy for the well being of society. Something has to be done about the present situation.

Solutions

Just as the factors of Talaq are numerous, the solutions to the problem are also multi-faceted. Mass-scale educational programs on matrimo-



nial matters is an absolute imperative. Through the pulpit and various for a and Islamic media, both print and electronic, a sustained educational campaign is to be launched. Spiritual programs that contribute towards Allah-consciousness and fear of accountability are absolutely imperative and need to be increased many fold. Attitudes and outlooks need to be changed. Rectification of character and conduct – Islahe-Nafs – is a crying need. Marriage counseling with an Islamic orientation must be increased dramatically. Pre-marital educational programs should become compulsory for all prospective couples – boys and girls. A decadent lifestyle and western values have to be shunned and spurned if a marriage is to work and thrive. Islamic values based on simplicity and humility and a sunnah way of life is a guarantee for a happy married life. With these concerted efforts, the tide will slowly turn, Insha-Allah. The rot will be remedied and a solid and firm family structure will result. This in turn will become the bedrock of solid communities, giving rise to a mighty Ummah. For those who are experiencing marital problems, please don't simply throw the towel in and walk out. Please be patient, forgive, forget and overlook, make duas, seek help and guidance, make one more attempt to make it work – this time it might work out with Allah's help!

The Necessity of Dawah

I am filled with happiness by your reception. I would be most ungrateful if I do not respect your wishes and share my inner feelings. If I desire I could shower you with praises, for Almighty Allah has bestowed me with an abundance of vocabulary, but I would not be fulfilling the right of friendship.

Dawah in the seerah

As you are aware, the Prophet (saws), had a burning desire to invite humanity towards Islam. Despite 13 years of untiring effort in Makkatul-Mukarramah and 7 years in Madinatul-Munawwarah, there was no large scale movement of non-Muslims into Islam. Between 7 AH and 10 AH, which is the period after Fath-Makkah until the Prophet's demise, there was such an influx of people entering the ranks of Islam that was not witnessed in the preceding 20 years.

Imam Zuhri (ra), an eminent Muhaddith and Tabii, expressed surprise on this sea change, with so many people embracing Islam in a matter of just 3 years. Along with other distinguished Muhaddith he has commented that this was due to non-Muslims having had an opportunity for the

36 years later, this profound message is even more relevant and important.

Sheikh Abul Hasan Ali

Nadwi (ra) - speech delivered in Dewsbury, UK

in 1982 at the opening of the Dewsbury Markaz.

first time, to observe and intermingle with Muslims, witness their honesty, fair dealing, compassion and sole reliance on Almighty Allah. This left such a deep and profound impression on non-Muslims that thousands entered into the fold of Islam within a relatively short period of time.

Applying the lessons of seerah here and now

This incident also contains abundant lessons on how Muslims should live in this country. Their conduct should be sublime and captivating. Whosoever should see us should accept Islam. Whosoever sits with us should be inclined towards Islam.

There should be no need to convince anyone to accept the Truth.

Therefore, in this country if you wish to live peacefully and have an opportunity to present Islam to the host community, you will need to inculcate and manifest sterling qualities, not just inside the Mosques but also outside in the streets, in the markets, in your daily activities, and at home. A life of Taqwa will immediately attract non-Muslims towards Islam.

Dangers of living isolated and insulted

As an ordinary student of Islam it is my religious responsibility to warn you. If you do not lead an upright life, if you continue to live an insular lifestyle, and if you fail to manifest the beauty of Islam to non-Muslims, then you face some real dangers. In such a case, there is no reason for you to feel content and secure in this country.

If ever the fire of race, religion or nationalism rages here you will not be saved. In Spain there were Mosques a hundred times more beautiful than yours. So do not feel content and self-satisfied. As an ordinary student of religion I would wish to express my joy and happiness at this wonderful new Mosque. But what words shall I use to congratulate you?

Lessons from Spain

Others may not speak to you as plainly, but remember the glorious Masjid-e-Cordova. It still stands in Spain. Iqbal, Poet of the East, so eloquently reminisces the great legacy of Islamic Spain in his famous poem Masjid-e-Qurtaba. In Islamic Spain, there were such brilliant

Mosques, celebrated Madrasahs, famous scholars like Shaykh-ul-Akbar, Ibnu-Hazm, Qurtubi, Shatbi - and how many others shall I mention? However, when the flames of religious sectarianism raged then the Mosques and Madrasahs became deserted. Once, Islamic Spain boasted such magnificent structures, distinguished educational centres, refined culture and society. Regrettably, the Muslims, despite such a high standard of living, did not draw the non-Muslims of that country to see the Truth of Islam, to warn them of the dangers of disbelief, with the result that ensuing religious violence subsequently consumed them like a morsel. The Arabs with their glowing history, architectural splendour and vast oceans of knowledge, were displaced from the country. Today, unfortunately, the ears eagerly wait to hear the Azaan and the empty Mosques thirst for the Salah.

Earn your place in your country

My dear brothers, you must earn your recognition in this country. You should earn your place and leave an imprint on the host communi-



ty of your value and significance. You must show your exemplary conduct is far nobler than that of other people. You must impart on them the lessons of humanity. You should demonstrate such commitment and noble virtues that impress on people that there cannot be found more upright humans elsewhere besides you. You need to establish your worth, showing what blessing and mercy you are for the country.

If however you decide to live in an enclosed environment simply content with your Prayers and Fasting, apathetic to the people and society you live in, never introducing them to the high Islamic values and your own personal qualities, then beware lest any religious or sectarian violence flares up. In such a situation, you will not find safety or protection.

I pray to Almighty Allah my prediction is totally unfounded. But remember, you are guests here. Your Tabligh, Mosques, Madrasahs, Ibadah and religious sacrifices are all worthy of commendation. May Almighty Allah grant you Barakah. But do not forget to earn your place in this country. Gain proficiency of the national language and use it to effectively propagate Islam. Prepare writers and orators to convey the message of Islam. Although you will distance yourself from their religion, do not distance yourself from them. Establish your credibility to the extent that if you are entrusted with onerous responsibilities, as was Prophet Yusuf (alayhis-salam), you do not shirk but embrace all challenges wholeheartedly.

Your priority should be wealth and luxury

You will have to present a new pattern of life to this country. You will not earn recognition by exerting yourselves in the workplace. If you overwork you will be looked upon disparagingly and be likened to horses and bulls. In fact, you will be labelled as money-making machines. However, if you can show to the people here that you are worshippers of Almighty Allah and not wealth, you do not bow before power but only before virtue, you are humans and think like hu-

mans, you are concerned not only about yourselves but also about others; and you are compassionate about your own children as well as theirs, that you are earnestly concerned about the path of destruction they have chosen for themselves, you will then earn their respect. They will begin to respect Islam and become desirous of studying it. They will ask you for literature concerning Islamic beliefs and practices and an opportunity will arise here for you to promote Islam.

On the other hand, if you remain preoccupied in eating and working, engaged in Prayers, remaining indifferent to what is happening in the country, insulated within the Muslim community, totally apathetic to what is happening outside, which direction the country is taking - in such a situation if there is trouble you will not be able to save yourselves.

Strengthen your position

I have been meaning to convey and accentuate this message to you as I do not know whether I will be able to visit you again in the future. You gathered here with love and affection and therefore it was easy for me to convey. As a student of religion it would have been convenient for me to recommend the virtues of reciting various Zikr or prescribe certain Wazifahs but you may not have had an opportunity of listening to the message I have just conveyed from anyone else.

Please strengthen your position in this country. Earn your recognition. Do not be like a straw or crop that is uprooted by a mere breeze. You should be so firm that not even a hurricane is able to displace you. Display such noble character that you attract the hearts of the people. See then how these people will stand up to defend you. If there is the slightest hostility towards you, they will be the first ones to argue on your behalf and argue what a blessing you are for them.

May Almighty Allah grant us the ability to understand what is right; may He bless and protect you. Aameen.

To My Muslim Sisters

Joanna Francis—USA

Between the Israeli assault on Lebanon and the Zionist “war on terror,” the Muslimworld is now center stage in every American home. I see the carnage, death and destruction that have befallen Lebanon, but I also see something else: I see you. I can’t help but notice that almost every woman I see is carrying a baby or has children around her. I see that though they are dressed modestly, their beauty still shines through. But it’s not just outer beauty that I notice. I also notice that I feel something strange inside me: I feel envy. I feel terrible for the horrible experiences and war crimes that the Lebanese people have suffered, being targeted by our common enemy. But I can’t help but admire your strength, your beauty, your modesty, and most of all, your happiness. Yes, it’s strange, but it occurred to me that even under constant bombardment, you still seemed happier than we are, because you were still living the natural lives of women. The way women have always lived since the beginning of time. It used to be that way in the West until the 1960s, when we were bombarded by the same enemy. Only we were not bombarded with actual munitions, but with subtle trickery and moral corruption.

Through Temptation

They bombarded us Americans from Hollywood, instead of from fighter jets or with

our own American-made tanks. They would like to bomb you in this way too, after they’ve finished bombing the infrastructure of your countries. I do not want this to happen to you. You will feel degraded, just like we do. You can avoid this kind of bombing if you will kindly listen to those of us who have already suffered serious casualties from their evil influence. Because everything you see coming out of Hollywood is a pack of lies, a distortion of reality, smoke and mirrors. They present casual sex as harmless recreation because they aim to destroy the moral fabric of the societies into which they beam their poisonous programming. I beg you not to drink their poison. There is no antidote for it once you have consumed it. You may recover partially, but you will never be the same. Better to avoid the poison altogether than to try to heal from the damage it causes.

They will try to tempt you with their titillating movies and music videos, falsely portraying us American women as happy and satisfied, proud of dressing like prostitutes, and content without families. Most of us are not happy, trust me. Millions of us are on anti-depressant medication, hate our jobs, and cry at night over the men who told us they loved us, then greedily used us and walked away. They would like to destroy your families and convince you to have fewer children. They do this by presenting

marriage as a form of slavery, motherhood as a curse, and being modest and pure as old-fashioned. They want you to cheapen yourself and lose your faith. They are like the Serpent tempting Eve with the apple. Don't bite.

Self-Value

I see you as precious gems, pure gold, or the "pearl of great value" spoken of in the Bible (Matthew 13: 45). All women are pearls of great value, but some of us have been deceived into doubting the value of our purity. Jesus said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7: 6). Our pearls are priceless, but they convince us that they're cheap. But trust me; there is no substitute for being able to look in the mirror and seeing purity, innocence and self-respect staring back at you. The fashions coming out of the Western sewer are designed to make you believe that your most valuable asset is your sexuality. But your beautiful dresses and veils are actually sexier than any Western fashion, because they cloak you in mystery and show self-respect and confidence. A woman's sexuality should be guarded from unworthy eyes, since it should be your gift to the man who loves and respects you enough to marry you. And since your men are still manly warriors, they deserve no less than your best. Our men don't even want purity anymore. They don't recognize the pearl of great value, opting for the flashy rhinestone instead. Only to leave her too!

Your most valuable assets are your inner beauty, your innocence, and everything that makes you who you are. But I notice that some Muslim women push the limit and try to be as Western as possible, even while wearing a veil (with some of their hair showing). Why imitate women who already regret, or will soon regret, their lost virtue? There is no compensation for that loss. You are flawless diamonds. Don't let

them trick you into becoming rhinestones. Because everything you see in the fashion magazines and on Western television is a lie. It is Satan's trap. It is fool's gold.

A Woman's Heart

I'll let you in on a little secret, just in case you're curious: pre-marital sex is not even that great. We gave our bodies to the men we were in love with, believing that that was the way to make them love us and want to marry us, just as we had seen on television growing up. But without the security of marriage and the sure knowledge that he will always stay with us, it's not even enjoyable! That's the irony. It was just a waste. It leaves you in tears. Speaking as one woman to another, I believe that you understand that already. Because only a woman can truly understand what's in another woman's heart. We really are all alike. Our race, religion or nationalities do not matter. A woman's heart is the same everywhere. We love. That's what we do best. We nurture our families and give comfort and strength to the men we love. But we American women have been fooled into believing that we are happiest having careers, our own homes in which to live alone, and freedom to give our love away to whomever we choose. That is not freedom. And that is not love. Only in the safe haven of marriage can a woman's body and heart be safe to love. Don't settle for anything less. It's not worth it. You won't even like it and you'll like yourself even less afterwards. Then he'll leave you.

Self-Denial

Sin never pays. It always cheats you. Even though I have reclaimed my honor, there's still no substitute for having never been dishonored in the first place. We Western women have been brainwashed into thinking that you Muslim women are oppressed. But truly, we are the ones who are oppressed; slaves to fashions that

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Human Dignity

Khalid Baig

We are witnessing today a clash between two opposing views of human worth. The first holds that human beings have an inherent dignity conferred on them by the Creator. The other insists that human beings have no more claim to dignity than other animals, from which they differ only in the number and sequencing of DNA molecules. From tiny bacteria to human beings all are creations of accidental processes; therefore none of them can claim special status over others.

We cannot ignore it as a debate that is taking place in some obscure religion or philosophy class which should not interest the rest of us. Its vast implications affect every one of us wherever we happen to be: in our homes, businesses, schools, on the streets or at the airports. This is so because a society's treatment of other humans depends upon its perception of the status and value of humanity itself. If there is no inherent human dignity then there can be no inherent human rights. Then human rights are reduced to the level of a policy to be decided by the calculations of governments. If, on the other hand, we accept the first view then human rights become both serious and inalienable; they can-

not be taken away in the name of this or that expediency.

The first view is expounded by the Qur'an which declares in no uncertain terms: "Now, indeed, We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam" (17:70). This is brought out through the Story of Creation. For God created man "with My two Hands" (38:75). Further, He breathed into Adam from His Spirit (15:29). This was so because Man was created as God's vicegerent on earth (2:30).

Islam is not alone in asserting this dignity. All previous prophets had the same message. Thus both Judaism and Christianity affirmed it because man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This view was challenged by modern science. Resting on the twin pillars of Darwinism and Freudianism, its great "achievement" was in announcing that dignity and nobility of the human soul was a myth. Darwin claimed that man was not specially created. Freud added that he had no free will that would distinguish him from animals. Rather man was subject to instinctive drives, unconscious impulses, and emotions over which he had no control.

Back to the Story of Creation that gives us special insights about this particular aspect. It tells us that the prestigious status given to mankind had its jealous enemy right from the start. It was the devil himself who came up with a plan to show that Man did not deserve the honor bestowed on him. And so Satan's very first attack was on the most important reflection of this dignity. It was launched with subterfuge and its purpose was to produce nudity. When under Satanic persuasion Adam and Eve tasted of the forbidden tree, "their shameful parts were manifested to them, and they began to piece together onto themselves some of the leaves of the Garden" (Qur'an 7:22). This narrative reminds us that the uncorrupted human nature abhors nudity. That is why Adam and Eve frantically started to search for something to cover themselves at its first occurrence. This tendency distinguishes human beings from animals, for which nudity is natural. Hence the reminder from God: "Children of Adam! Let not Satan tempt you as he brought your parents out of the Garden, stripping them of their garments to show them their shameful parts" (7:27). The immediately preceding ayah also tells us that clothing is a gift from God and concealing the parts of the body that must be concealed is its primary purpose, while protection from elements and adornment are secondary objectives.

In fact that function is integral to a central value in Islam: Haya. Although normally translated as modesty for lack of a better word, haya encompasses much more than that. It is modesty, decency, moral propriety, and inhibition against all evil, with special emphasis on concealing parts of the body. Haya is the antithesis to nudity. As for its importance, Prophet Muhammad (Sall-Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said: "Every religion has a distinct call. For Islam it is haya." [Ibn Majah]. Another famous hadith says: "Haya is a branch of Iman (faith)" [Bukhari, Muslim]. It is the basic building block of Islamic morality. When it is lost everything is lost.

The concept does exist in other religions as well. In Judaism the closest term is Tzniut, which represents both a moral value and specific laws that govern the dress code, and interaction between the sexes. Rabbi Aron Moss of Australia explains: "The body is the holy creation of God. It is the sacred house of the soul. The way we maintain our respect for the body is by keeping it covered." Tzniut requires covering of the body, segregation of men and women during prayers (mechitzah), prohibition of shaking hands with a member of the opposite sex, and prohibition of being alone in a secluded place with them. For the most part these are subsets of the commands given by Islam. In Christianity the term used is modesty. One finds repeated references to Christian modesty in encyclicals and directives. One such directive instructs: "In general, clothes should hide the shape of the body rather than accentuate it. Only this kind of clothing can truly be called 'decent.'" Pope Pius XII said in the 1950s: "Vice necessarily follows upon public nudity."

Of course the pop culture, augmented by the tremendous firepower of Hollywood and other mass media---and intellectually supported by the new science in its (im)moral underpinnings---has been a constant challenger to haya and modesty. It is a familiar story. As the floodgates of immodesty were opened, the Jewish and Christian teachings were washed away from the lives of their followers to the lament of their religious leaders. More than three decades ago Rabbi Zalman Posner noted: "The prevalent culture has little patience with one of these values, and the Hebrew word [tzniut] is virtually unknown to the American Jew."

And the French Catholic leader Dom Bernard Marechaux lamented in alarming tones: "The cancer of Liberalism attacks everyone and we must be careful not to be infected ourselves. ... Women who go to church dress just the way women who do not go to church dress; ... It is a confusion of license and worldliness. As a result

... the Church is beginning to disappear in the world. Christianity is being lost.” Pope Benedict XV said, “One cannot sufficiently deplore the blindness of so many women of every age and station ...[who] do not see to what degree the indecency of their clothing shocks every honest man and offends God.” They condemned the summer attire, the swimming suits, and every form of nudity in a losing battle. Church leaders instructed the women to have their skirts at least eight inches below the knee when fashion designers persuaded them to go eight inches above. And everyone knows which direction they went.

The scene began to change with the arrival of Muslims. Muslims could recognize the nudity in the Western societies as the same abomination that had prevailed in the pre-Islamic Jahiliyya society of Arabia. They remembered that haya is part of faith and the mother of all virtues. Against all odds and pressures they upheld the banner of haya. They became the shining example of modesty in a society that had forgotten it.

In this background comes the most vicious attack ever on human dignity in the form of the new nude body scanners being installed at airports. They can take pictures of the nude body from head to toe and from all around. They are being forced on every one---men, women, and children. If they go unopposed it will be a major triumph of the idea that human beings are mere animals as Darwin and Freud would have us believe.

But haya is the call of the uncorrupted human nature, a universal value that should bring together all the people of conscience who value morality and decency. While some governments have rushed to introduce these machines, others have raised strong objections. Representing them, the new European Justice Commissioner, Viviane Reding, said, “we will not let anyone dictate to us rules that go against fundamental rights on anti-terrorism grounds .

... our need for security cannot justify any violation of privacy. We should never be driven by fear, but by values” (11 Jan. 2010, testimony before the European Union Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Legal affairs and Women’s committees).

Which values? That will be determined by the ongoing clash between the two views of human dignity. And the picture here is less than clear. The Rabbinical Center of Europe warned that scanners would violate the rights of religious Jewish women whose modesty would be compromised. Children rights groups warned that they violated child pornography law in Britain. But Muslims seem to have opted for their own disenfranchisement by choosing to remain silent. If they continue to do that then they will have no one but themselves to blame for the terrible consequences. For them and for the whole world.

Cont’d from page 8

name. The Holy Prophet (SAWS) was not aware of this situation; as a result he sometimes called them by one of these offensive names unwittingly. The noble Companions informed the Prophet (SAWS) that the name offends the bearer of that name. This verse was revealed on that occasion.” Sayyidna Ibn’Abbas (ra) says that prohibition of tanabuzoo bil-alqab means that if a person committed a sin or performed an evil deed from which he repented and mended his ways, it is unlawful for anyone to call him by denigrating names, such as thief, an adulterer, a drunkard or any such name. The Prophet (SAWS) is reported to have said: “Anyone who denigrates a Muslim who has committed a sin of which he has repented, Allah takes it upon Himself that He will get the person to commit the very same sin and expose him to embarrassment and humiliation in this world and in the Hereafter [Qurtubi].

*Mufti Muhammad Shafi Uthmani (ra)
Adapted from Ma’ariful Qur’an*

Are We Guilty of Racializing Islam?

Theresa Corbin

You will never be like them, no matter how hard you try. So a relative told me soon after I converted to Islam, thinking my conversion was an attempt to become an Arab.

You know you won't go to heaven. So a heritage Muslim wrote in an email to me, saying that because I am white that Jannah is not open to me.

Go back to your country. So a passerby shouts as I cross a street which generations of my family have crossed before me. Memes splashed across the internet extol the "hilarious differences" between Muslims and white people.

You are a trader [i.e., traitor] to your race – Anonymous. So the Twitter troll tweets at me. ("Anonymous" reads "coward," by the way.)

The message is clear. I can't be Muslim because I am White.

Why Don't We Know Better?

It's strange, though, how I have been reading Quran, praying, fasting Ramadan, saving for Hajj, and saying the shahadah daily since 2001. But I am precluded from Muslim-ness because I have French and English ancestors. It's strange indeed.

But in truth, racializing Islam is a gross forgery. The Prophet said in his final speech, a sermon in which he emphasized something which he knew his nation, a nation based on faith, would lose sight of:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also, a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah)

Islam is a brotherhood based on shared faith. It is a nation and an identity which teaches that we are all from the same source, that we are one race of people, from One God. The first Muslim community —men, women, and children; Roman, African, and Arab; converts from paganism, Christianity, and Judaism— when they fled their homes only for freedom of religion, to have the freedom to say that they believe in One God, then they became brothers and sisters to one another.

One God, one humanity, this is Islam. This is the revolution that Islam brought and continues to insist on. These are beliefs which all who call themselves Muslims should hold.

And yet many in our society, non-Muslims and even Muslims, still hold the false notion that Islam is a faith defined by ethnic, racial, and cultural barriers. This begs the question: Where did we get this kind of thinking, and why can't we think bigger than borders, dialect, and melanin?

The “Racism” of Islamophobia was the theme of a lecture I attended at an Islamophobia conference in Australia.[i] I sat quietly and took notes hoping the activist speaking at that particular time could give me some clarity on the issue of why Western people tend to think Islam is about race or culture.

The lecture ended and I was still not enlightened as to how hate and fear of Islam—a religion practiced in every country by indigenous peoples— could be considered a form of racism, and by extension how can Muslims be considered a race.

I approached the speaker after she concluded. Why racialize Islam? I asked. As a white, American Muslim who does not intend on disappearing her identity or heritage, how is it that I can experience the Islamophobia that I do and also be white if Islamophobia is just about racism? Obviously, most Islamophobes are white Westerners. So, why would they hate me if it were just about race? I continued to press the issue.

The activist answered, Because those who are Islamophobes see Muslims as a monolith, as dark people, as the “other” from strange and dangerous cultures. It’s because those who do hate Islam and Muslims see Muslims as being from a single race or ethnicity and inherently violent or culturally backward.

I understood: Those who hate always come from a place of ignorance. But Arabs are not inherently violent or backward. People of color are not “other” or inherently dangerous. What constitutes a “normal” culture is subjective. I protested: But we are one humanity from The One source.

Here’s where I really insisted: We do not and cannot let ignorance tell us who we are. Islam is not a race or ethnicity just because those who don’t know any better have defined it as such.

This conversation shed some light for me on the root of the issue. I realized that it is through the Islamophobes’ mistaken definition of Islam

that so many hold the false notion that a European/white identity cannot coexist with a Muslim identity. Thus the false notion that Muslim means Arab or African and cannot also mean European, Asian, Hispanic, or American; or the false notion that Islam is about culture and place rather than about a global and diverse religion.

How, Islamophobia?

UC Berkley’s Center for Race and Gender [ii] characterizes Islamophobia as:

A contrived fear or prejudice fomented by the existing Eurocentric and Orientalist global power structure. It is directed at a perceived or real Muslim threat through the maintenance and extension of existing disparities in economic, political, social and cultural relations, while rationalizing the necessity to deploy violence as a tool to achieve ‘civilizational rehab’ of the target communities (Muslim or otherwise). Islamophobia reintroduces and reaffirms a global racial structure through which resource distribution disparities are maintained and extended.

Plainly put, Islamophobia is based on an imaginary Islam that Orientalism [iii] invented to rationalize European colonization, oppression, and the theft of resources from the Middle East, Africa, and beyond. Islamophobia is based on a deception that racializes and demonizes Muslims and then is sold to the Western citizen in order to manufacture consent to colonize, oppress, and steal resources from innocent, defenseless peoples.

If you tell a lie long enough, you begin to believe it.

Islamophobes, Orientalists, and colonizers say that Islam and its adherents are always other, foreign, different, violent—in contrast to the white, Western, familiar, normal, benevolent Christianity and its adherents. Islamophobia, Orientalism, and Imperialism limit Islam to a place, a culture, and an ethnicity and then they distort and demonize its adherents and everything related.

Know the Real Score

Now here's the worst thing: This poison has manifested itself in the form of bigotry on both sides. If you are a targeted community, it is only natural to distance yourself from those who steal from you and tell you that you are inferior. If you are a typical Westerner, the widespread propaganda obscures your view of reality and may appeal to you because it tells you that you are superior.

All the while, those at the top get richer as they distract populations with hate.

As a person of European descent, a human being—and, yes, a Muslim—I am not responsible for the sins of my forefathers, just as humanity is not responsible for the sin of Adam and Eve. I cannot be held responsible for a system that does not hear my voice and is entrenched in corruption. I am utterly disgusted by the poisonous bigotry with which Imperialism has infected the world. I stand with those who reject the notion that any superiority is born into any one group of people. And I resent the notion that oppressors and bigots could be my teachers.

The Bottom Line

And why does it even matter if we—Muslims or non-Muslims—preclude people of European descent from Islam? After all, white people have benefited from the privilege this system has given them, right? It matters, not because it hurts anyone's feelings, but because it affirms the mendacity of Islamophobia, Imperialism, and Orientalism.

If we, as Muslims, begin to think that certain peoples cannot be Muslim because of whiteness or Western-ness or any other inborn identifier—even if we refuse to say that Islam is different, foreign, violent, or whatever—we have still let the version of Islam imagined by Orientalists, Colonizers, and Oppressors inform the public perception of our actual Islam. We have let the ignorant tell the public—and us—who we are.

Moreover, by continuing to allow this, we

perpetuate the lie that has convinced generations of people, — in both the East and West, whether Christian, Jew, Muslim, or other — that the other is dangerous, that we will never do anything but clash.

But, for our part, we know better. God has explained very clearly:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is all-knowing and all-aware. [Surat Al-Hujarat, 49:13]

When we say Muslims are like this and white people are like that, we affirm a false dichotomy set up only to propagate division and oppression. And when we do this as Muslims, we are guilty of affirming a lie about Islam! We misrepresent Islam itself, leading many to believe that Islam is not for all people and all times, that Islam is what the Islamophobes, Orientalists, and colonizers claim: foreign, hedonistic, unfamiliar. When in fact Islam is open to all, native, a middle path, and so utterly familiar to every soul.

[i] <http://www.ausconfislam.net/site/user-assets/docs/Conference%20Program.pdf>

[ii] <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia/defining-islamophobia>

[iii] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Said

**“Visit the graves, for
they will remind you
of the hereafter.”**

(Ibn Majah)

The Truthful One



Aid al-Qarni

Of all men who have ever walked the earth, none has been — nor will any ever be — as truthful as the Prophet (SAWS). How could anyone come close to him, when he never spoke a single lie in his entire life, not even one that was meant as a joke?

And while he held himself to a high standard of truthfulness, he ordered his followers to do the same. He said: “Verily, truthfulness leads to al-Birr (righteousness, piety), and al-Birr leads to Paradise. And a man continues to be truthful and to search out for the truth until, with Allah, he is written as a truthful person...”

The Prophet (SAWS) informed Muslims that, while a believer might be miserly or cowardly on occasion, he will never lie; furthermore, he forbade Muslims from lying even if they do so only as a joke, in order to make others laugh.

Enough of a testament to his truthfulness is the fact that Allah (SAWS) entrusted him with the job of conveying His message to both mankind and jinns. The Prophet (SAWS) then carried out that job with complete truthfulness and trustworthiness, accurately conveying the entire message he was entrusted with, without adding or removing even a single letter of that message.

The Prophet (SAWS) was truthful on

all occasions and in all situations — in times of war and times of peace; when he was happy and when he was angry; when he was serious and when he was joking; when he was engaged in normal conversation and when he issued legal rulings. And he was truthful with all people— with close acquaintances and strangers, with men and women, with friends and enemies. When buying and selling, when signing contracts or treaties, when delivering sermons or writing letters, when issuing legal rulings or telling stories — in these and all other situations, the Prophet (SAWS) was completely truthful. In fact, he couldn't lie, for Allah not only forbade him from lying, but also promoted him from it.

The Prophet (SAWS) was truthful not only in speech, but also with his gestures and signals. For instance, in certain situations, he considered the act of winking to be a lie, because it gave key information to some people, while leaving others in the dark. I am referring here to an incident that actually occurred during the Prophet's lifetime. During the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (SAWS) issued a universal pardon to his enemies, with the exception of a few men, men who had especially been cruel, evil, and brutal in the enmity they showed towards Muslims. Such men, the Prophet (SAWS)

announced, were to be killed, even if they were found clutching the covering of the Ka'bah. One of those men was 'Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi' as-Sarh.

'Abdullah ibn Sa'd knew he was a wanted man, so he went into hiding; he appealed to 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (RA) for help. Agreeing to help him, 'Uthman took him to the Prophet (SAWS), made him stand before the Prophet (SAWS) while others were pledging allegiance to him, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, accept the pledge of 'Abdullah." 'Abdullah offered his hand three times in order to pledge allegiance, and each time, the Prophet (SAWS) held back his hand and instead simply fixed his gaze on 'Abdullah. On 'Abdullah's fourth try, the Prophet (SAWS) finally extended his hand, thus accepting 'Abdullah's pledge to follow and obey him. The Prophet (SAWS) then went to his Companions and said, "Was there not a sensible man among you who, upon seeing me restrain my hand from accepting his pledge, could have killed him." They replied, "We did not know what you were thinking (when you held your hand back), O Messenger of Allah. Should you not have signaled to us (by winking your eye and by thus informing us that we should kill him)?" The Prophet (SAWS) replied:

"It is not befitting for a Prophet to have a treacherous eye (i.e., it is for this reason that I did not wink to you as a signal)?"

Allah said:

That He may ask the truthful ones [Allah's Messengers and His Prophets] about their truth (i.e., the conveyance of Allah's Message that which they were charged with). (33: 8)

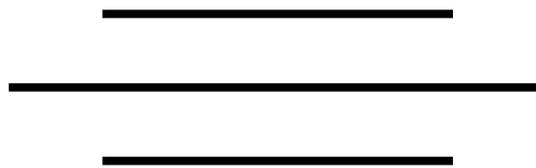
He also said:

O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true [in words and deeds]. (9: 119)

And in another verse, He said:

Then if they had been true to Allah, it would have been better for them. (47: 21)

The Prophet (SAWS) was truthful with Allah, truthful with himself, truthful with his family, truthful with his friends, truthful with people in general, and even truthful with his enemies. Had the truth been, an actual man, that man would have been Muhammad (SAWS). He was known as, "The Truthful, Trustworthy One" prior to the advent of Islam; imagine, then, how he became once he began to receive revelation from his Lord, once he became a Prophet (SAWS), once he became blessed with guidance and uprightness.



Cont'd from page 30

degrade us, obsessed with our weight, begging for love from men who do not want to grow up. Deep down inside, we know that we have been cheated. We secretly admire and envy you, although some of us will not admit it. Please do not look down on us or think that we like things the way they are. It's not our fault. Most of us did not have fathers to protect us when we were young because our families have been destroyed. You know who is behind this plot. Don't be fooled, my sisters. Don't let them get you too. Stay innocent and pure. We Christian women need to see what life is really supposed to be like for women. We need you to set the example for us, because we are lost. Hold onto your purity. Remember: you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube. So guard your "toothpaste" carefully!

I hope you receive this advice in the spirit in which it is intended: the spirit of friendship, respect, and admiration. From your Christian sister – with love...

Islam and Traffic Regulations

Justice Mufti Taqi Usmani

Several years ago I visited South Africa and it was my first visit to any developed country. Today, it is a liberated peaceful country and the issue of apartheid has become a history, but at that time it was ruled by Dutch whites and apartheid was at its climax. Owning a house in a big city was a right reserved to whites only, and people of other races were forced to live in separate colonies established at considerable distance outside big cities. Almost 30 KMs from Johannesburg a similar colony by the name of Azaadville was established which was inhabited mostly by the people of Indian origin. Since my host also resided in that colony so I had to stay there.

If in a vast area houses for a limited population are constructed in a systematic and organized manner, the spaciousness inside the area will be evidently visible, this is quite obvious in Azaadville. It is an extremely beautiful, visibly calm and exceptionally clean city. Though everyone there owned a vehicle still the roads were devoid of any congestion and just a person or two could be seen treading the footpath and that too in a civilized manner. Even on these deserted roads people would stop their cars at the black line drawn across the roads even at minor

ends, and they would proceed further only after taking a look right and left. The most surprising thing to me was that though these roads were clearly deserted to the farthest ends but still a driver even if in hurry or engaged in a conversation would stop at these lines, and swing his neck right and left in an automatic fashion as if it was a remotely controlled machine. Initially I thought that it might be due to some doubt that our driver stops now and then but when it happened again and again I asked for the reason. My companions informed me that as per the traffic rules of South Africa it is mandatory for a driver to stop at such lines and take a look right and left before proceeding further. 'We have become so habitual to it that our foot automatically applies the brake at such junctures and our necks swing right and left' they said. Until the time I stayed in Azaadville I was unable to locate a single person breaking this rule even though there were no policemen on the roads to enforce the law nor any speed breakers similar to that in our country.

Since it was the first time that I saw a scene like this which surprised me. Later, when I witnessed such an organized system in a number of developed countries across East and West,

it seemed to me a normal scenario. But when I see the traffic conditions of my own country, it appears that the situation is worsening day by day rather than improving. I won't go into the details as everybody is well aware of it.

Though the lackadaisical approach of government machinery and lack of proper training and knowledge of traffic rules is a fact, but one of the major causes of errant traffic conditions in our part of the world is that we have rendered such issues as something alien to religion. We have programmed our minds in such a way that limits our application of Islam only to a Masjid and a Madrassa. Our worldly affairs, including the correct traffic sense seem to have, God forbid, no connection with Islam.

The result of this wrong notion is that even the thought of possible commission of a sin by violating traffic rules never occurs to a person. Further, it is an irony that breaking the rules is considered a sort of bravery nowadays. As much as a person is 'master' in breaking the rules that much brave he considers himself. Even good and religious people - who usually remain quite concerned with prohibitions and permissions - least care about the traffic rules, and neither does their conscience feel burdened nor do they consider such kind of an action wrong or sinful. Driving on a wrong track, jumping the red light, overtaking at wrong places, have become a norm. Not only do these fall under the category of unruliness, but they are sins as per the religious commandments.

Firstly, because all kinds of traffic rules are framed for the benefit of general masses, and all the rules which a government frames for the common good are obligatorily required to be

followed from the Islamic point of view. The Qur'an says:

O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. (4:59)

The meaning of this obedience is to adhere to the rules which the authorities frame keeping in view the public interest, as long as they do not go against the Islamic Shariah. The decree of following these rules has been mentioned alongside the obedience to Allah and His Messenger (saws), which means that Islam mandates following of such rules.

Secondly, when a person acquires a license to drive, he is promising the authorities - verbally, written or at least practically - to follow the traffic rules while driving. If at the time of acquiring the license he mentions before the authorities that he will not be able to conform to the traffic rules, will he be issued the license? So, a license is issued on the basis of this agreement. Therefore, if later on he breaks a rule, he com-



mits the sin of - breach of trust.

Thirdly, breaking such rules is equal to causing trouble to people and at times the basic cause of death, injury or at least some sort of mental injury to innocent people. I have mentioned in these lines that to cause trouble to a person is such a grave sin which is not even forgivable by Tawbah (repentance only) until the victim himself forgives the offender.

Almost in every book on Islamic Jurisprudence, the principle that - a person is allowed to tread or run his means of conveyance on a highway on the condition that he guarantees the security of others i.e., he must refrain from all such activities which may cause trouble or danger to others - is mentioned clearly. Without this cautiousness it is not allowed to make use of a road which is the collective property of people. And if due to carelessness a person suffers any kind of physical or material loss then, as per the Islamic Shariah, whole ransom is to be paid by the person making careless use of road.

Now, if a person jumping a red light overtakes a vehicle at a point where it is not allowed, it may apparently seem a minor unruliness but in essence four grave sins converge in this 'minor' fault:

- Violation of law, and disobedience to authorities.
- Breach of trust.
- Ensnare a fellow human being.
- Illegal use of road.

We commit these sins day and night without any qualms and remain complacent of having done nothing wrong.

Sometimes hundreds get stranded due to a single person's unruliness, e.g., if due to certain reason traffic gets halted on one lane, some hasty people not tolerating a brief interruption, ply their vehicles on the lane meant for the traffic in opposite direction thus impeding the route of those approaching in that direction, which results in traffic jam for hours together. This kind of unruliness falls under the definition of 'Fasad

fil Arz'. The sin of putting hundreds of people in distress and trouble falls on the person who drives his vehicle in wrong direction.

Not only has our beautiful religion taught us these things but it has also provided us the detailed guidance about them. It has clearly laid bare its evergreen and everlasting teachings before us, but it is we who instead of understanding, learning and acting have kept these teachings restricted within the four walls of our Mosques and Madrassas. Other communities have at least corrected their esoteric system by acting on these golden principles, but we, by leaving them, are not only ruining our Aakhirat but also turning our worldly abode into a place of difficulties and uneasiness. We also distort the beautiful face of Islam with our evil doings.

The solution of these problems does not lie in commenting or lecturing about them but can be obtained only when every single person stirs up his conscience and, without paying heed to what people around do, at least save himself from sinning and make a resolve to act on these golden Islamic principles.

Change is always engendered through individual endeavor which gradually take shape of a nationwide temperament.

This article appeared in Urdu in 1994.

Translated into English by: S. Husain

Darul Uloom Ilahiya

**Taking Pains
to remove the pains
of others is
the true essence
of Generosity
Sayyidna Abu Bakr (ra)**

MUADH BIN JABAL (RA)

Muadh ibn Jabal (ra) was a young man growing up in Yathrib as the light of guidance and truth began to spread over the Arabian peninsula. He was a handsome and imposing character with black eyes and curly hair and immediately impressed whoever he met. He was already distinguished for the sharpness of his intelligence among young men of his own age. The young Muadh became a Muslim at the hands of Musiab ibn Umayr RA, the Da'iy (missionary) whom the Prophet (saws) had sent to Yathrib before the Hijrah.

Muadh was among the seventy-two Yathribites who journeyed to Makkah, one year before the Hijrah, and met the Prophet (saws) at his house and later again in the valley of Mina, outside Makkah, at Aqabah. Here the famous second Aqabah Pledge was made at which the new Muslims of Yathrib, including some women, vowed to support and defend the Prophet (saws) at any cost. Muadh (ra) was among those who enthusiastically clasped the hands of the blessed Prophet (saws) then and pledged allegiance to him. As soon as Muadh (ra) returned to Madinah from Makkah, he and a few others of his age formed a group to remove and destroy idols from the houses of the Mushrikeen in Yathrib. One of the effects of this campaign was that a prominent man of the city, Amr ibn al-Jumuh, became a Muslim.

When the noble Prophet (saws) reached

Madinah, Muadh ibn Jabal (ra) stayed in his company as much as possible. He studied the Qur'an and the laws of Islam until he became one of the most well-versed of all the companions in the religion of Islam. Wherever Muadh (ra) went, people would refer to him for legal judgements on matters over which they differed. This is not strange since he was brought up in the school of the Prophet (saws) himself and learnt as much as he could from him. He was the best pupil of the best teacher. His knowledge bore the stamp of authenticity. The best certificate that he could have received came from the Prophet (saws) himself when he said: "The most knowledgeable of my ummah in matters of Halal and Haram is Muadh ibn Jabal."

One of the greatest of Muadh's contributions to the Ummah of Muhammad (saws) was that he was one of the group of six who collected the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. Whenever a group of companions met and Muadh (ra) was among them, they would look at him with awe and respect on account of his knowledge. The Prophet (saws) and his two Khalifahs after him placed this unique gift and power in the service of Islam.

After the liberation of Makkah, the Quraysh became Muslims en masse. The Prophet (saws) immediately saw the need of the new Muslims for teachers to instruct them in the fundamentals of Islam and to make them truly understand

the spirit and letter of its laws. He appointed Attab ibn Usay as his deputy in Makkah and he asked Muadh ibn Jabal (ra) to stay with him and teach people the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion. Sometime after the Prophet (saws) had returned to Madinah, messengers of the kings of Yemen came to him announcing that they and the people of Yemen had become Muslims. They requested that some teachers should be with them to teach Islam to the people. For this task the Prophet (saws) commissioned a group of competent Du'at (missionaries) and made Muadh ibn Jabal (ra) their amir.

He then put the following question to Muadh RA: "According to what will you judge?" "According to the Book of Allah," replied Muadh. "And if you find nothing therein?" "According to the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah." "And if you find nothing therein?" "Then I will exert myself (exercise ijtehad) to form own judgement." The Prophet (saws) was pleased with this reply and said: "Praise be to Allah Who has guided the messenger of the Prophet to that which pleases the Prophet."

The Prophet (saws) personally bade farewell to this mission of guidance and light and walked for some distance alongside Muadh (ra) as he rode out of the city. Finally he said to him: "O Muadh, perhaps you shall not meet me again after this year. Perhaps when you return you shall see only my mosque and my grave." Muadh (ra) wept. Those with him wept too. A feeling of sadness and desolation overtook him as he parted from his beloved Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him.

The Prophet's (saws) premonition was correct. The eyes of Muadh (ra) never beheld the Prophet (saws) after that moment. The Prophet (saws) passed away before Muadh (ra) returned from the Yemen. There is no doubt that Muadh wept when he returned to Madinah and found there was no longer the blessed company of the Prophet (saws).

During the caliphate of Umar RA, Muadh (ra) was sent to the Banu Kilab to apportion their stipends and to distribute the Sadaqah of their richer folk among the poor. Also during the caliphate of Umar RA, the governor of Syria, Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan sent a message saying: "O Amir al-Mu'mineen! The people of Syria are many. They fill the towns. They need people to teach them the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion." Umar (ra) thereupon summoned five persons who had collected the Qur'an in the lifetime of the Prophet, peace be upon him. They were Muadh ibn Jabal, 'Ubadah ibn asSamit, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Abu adDardaa. He said to them: "Your brothers in Syria have asked me to help them by sending those who can teach them the Qur'an and instruct them in the religion. Please appoint three among you for this task and may Allah bless you. I can select three of you myself if you do not want to put the matter to the vote." "Why should we vote?" they asked. "Abu Ayyub is quite old and Ubayy is a sick man. That leaves three of us." "All three of you go to Homs first of all. If you are satisfied with the condition of the people there, one of you should stay there, another should go to Damascus and the other to Palestine."

So it was that 'Ubadah ibn as-Samit was left at Homs, Abu ad-Dardaa went to Damascus and Muadh (ra) went to Palestine. There Muadh (ra) fell ill with an infectious disease. As he was near to death, he turned in the direction of the Ka'bah and repeated this refrain: "Welcome Death, Welcome. A visitor has come after a long absence . . ." And looking up to heaven, he said: "O Lord, You know that I did not desire the world and to prolong my stay in it ...O Lord, accept my soul with goodness as you would accept a believing soul..." He then passed away, far from his family and his clan, a Da'iy in the service of Allah and a MuhajEr in His path.

The Spirit of Marriage

Irshad Hussain

The Prophet was once asked, "What is more important than prayer?" He replied, "The spirit of prayer" - the spirit that animates the prayer. He was asked what is more important than fasting - he replied, the spirit of fasting. For each question concerning an Islamic practice the answer was the same - because the spirit brings the action to life and unfolds its potentials. Without this animating spirit, the prayer is only movement, and the fasting only hunger. But when spirit enters, when a pure and concentrated intention enters, the action is transformed - the prayer gains the potential to become a miraj (an elevating spiritual journey), and the one fasting approaches towards the potential to witness laylatul qadr (the night of destiny - a night when blessings from the spiritual world descend to this world).

So what is more important than marriage? It is the spirit of marriage, the intention which underlies it, the treasures which it contains hidden within it but which must be brought out and realized by the married couple themselves.

The Qur'an provides the signposts and waymarks for learning about this potential. It says:

"It is He who created you from a single soul, And made its mate of like nature in order that you might dwell with her in love...." (7:189)

So the male and female complete each other - together they make a single self and this is how they must strive to make their lives together - as

if they are one being, one person, one spirit.

The Qur'an says:

"Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them." (2:187)

So a husband and wife complete each other - each one takes on a new aspect of their humanity, a new facet and depth to their personality by entering into marriage and this is symbolized in this verse. Garments also conceal the body and protect the wearer so that a husband and wife are each other's protectors and helpers and each of them safeguards their partner's honor shaping the state of marriage into a haven and a sanctuary where each should feel safe and secure, sheltered in one another's care and guardianship.

The Qur'an also says

"And of everything we created a pair, that happily you may remember." (51:49)

The word for spouse, "zawj", (this is the word that is used in the marriage ceremony, the Nikkah ceremony) - the word zawj literally means one part of a pair - and when the pair come together and act in concert with one another, then concealed potentials within them, potentials that were impossible to realize while they were apart make themselves evident. This is true throughout creation. And human marriage in the Qur'an is considered a reflection of a nature and tendency that exists at all levels of creation. When something is created as one part of a pair

it is clearly incomplete without the other - as the Qur'an states,

**"He himself created the pair, male and female."
(53:45)**

The term nikkah which is used for marriage is also used figuratively to describe the coming together of various aspects of creation. For example it says, in the Qur'an, that "the rain married the soil" and then it describes how, from this intimate mingling, something new springs forth - that the earth brings forth flowers and herbage, it opens to new creations, new life, new potentials. So the act of marriage, the mingling through nikah, according to Islam, courses through all things, through all of creation. Each pair of the marriage brings something necessary and something unique to the marriage. The pairs are not identical but complimentary to one another and their unique qualities when they are mingled together produce that which neither one alone could produce.

So each individual of the pair undergoes change and transformation when they come together in marriage because marriage is an intimate mingling of the selves, the souls, the personalities and the beings of two individuals.

In human marriage the change takes place at many levels - from a change in lifestyle, to changes in behavior, to changes in the very soul of the person. And there must be that willingness, on the part of both individuals, to allow this unifying transformation to take place. To accept the self the way it is, is to lock oneself into stagnation and narrowness and to remain an individual - not part of an intimately joined pair. It is to limit and lock up the potential, the beauty and strength that is capable of emerging from the intimate unity made possible through marriage.

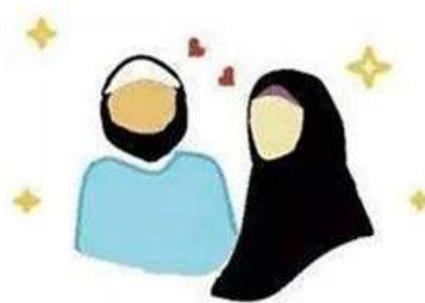
Since "God created everything in pairs", as it states in the Qur'an, and since He "created the male and the female from a single nature, from a single self", it is God that is the point of reference for the married pair. "He has set up the balance..." of all things, so He is to be looked for to set all things in the right equilibrium. If the two partners of a marriage set themselves in correct relation to God then certainly a perfect balance will be realized within their lives together.

Love is a movement towards unity, towards oneness, and since God is One, "the closer the heart is to Oneness, the stronger the power of love is within it."

Love is a movement towards unity, towards oneness. "God made their hearts familiar" (Qur'an 8:63) through the light of Oneness that yields spiritual love and familiarity in the heart. For love is the shadow of Oneness, familiarity the shadow of love, and balance the shadow of familiarity."

Let married couples be helpers and protectors of one another, let them be a refuge and a comfort to one another, let them be beautiful garments for one another, and let them together experience the many treasures and beauties of marriage.

**A righteous husband/wife
to help you with your worldly
and religious affairs is the best
treasure anyone could have.**



Appeal

'Radiant Reality' is the only Islamic monthly in English published from Srinagar since almost two decades now. It is only by the Grace of Almighty Allah and the blessed supplications of our esteemed readers that it continues to remain in print without fail. Apart from its regular subscribers, the magazine is distributed among the student community in and outside the state free of charge, whose cost is borne by some dedicated individuals. With unprecedented escalation in the cost of paper and printing, it is becoming somewhat difficult for us to meet the expences incurred. The esteemed readers are, therefore, requested to subscribe for the magazine and also encourage others for the purpose. Besides, those who would like to join us in spreading the message of Islam far and wide, may contribute by way of voluntary donation starting from at least Rs.100/- per month.

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