

The Intellect

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Surah Maida – Part 4

Al Hadith
The Transitory World and
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The Awakening
Stay Hopeful! - Part 1

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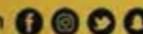
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Re-awakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life

The Intellect

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Editorial



Imam Al-Ghazali رحمته الله draws an absorbing analogy in *Ihya 'Ulum Al-Din*, in depicting the kinds of gratitude that people display in general:

A king who desires to make a journey, grants a man in his entourage a favor in the form of a horse. There can now be three reasons why the one to whom it is gifted feels happy:

- 1) It is a horse with monetary value. He can ride it; it is a valuable racer. He has no interest in the King. Had he found the horse in a desert, his joy would've been the same.
- 2) His happiness in gaining the horse is not because of the horse, but because it is a gift from the King; it shows the concern of the King for him. Had he found it in the desert, he wouldn't have felt so happy. It is not the horse that has a place in his heart but the fact that the King cares for him.
- 3) The man's real joy in riding the horse, in taking the pain of accompanying the King in his journey to serve him, is to obtain the nearness of the King. Even if the King granted him a ministry, his end and means of joy would not be the ministry itself but the chance of attaining the King's proximity.

In case one, Imam Ghazali رحمته الله concludes, there is no real thankfulness. The man is interested in the horse, not the one who gave it.

The second form of gratitude enters the definition of thankfulness: the man feels elated at the thought and care extended to him by the giver, (but not exactly because of the giver), and it encourages him to ask for favour in the future as well. This reflects the state of the righteous believers, who worship Allah رحمته الله and show gratitude to Him, fearing His punishment and expecting His rewards.

Perfect gratitude is in the third case only; where happiness in blessings is because they help him in attaining closeness to Allah رحمته الله. This man becomes upset at any blessing that may divert him from the remembrance of his Lord رحمته الله and his joy is not attached to the intrinsic pleasure of the blessing itself but how it serves as a stepping stone to the closeness and proximity of the Giver.

Hence, while it is common to equate gratitude with mere *Shukr bi'l-lisan* (gratitude expressed by the tongue), its true secrets lie in the deep recesses of *Shukr bi'l-qalb* (gratitude inside the heart). So though remaining positive and uncomplaining in the face of adversities is one of the signs of deeper gratitude (see our *Cover Story*), its essence is in recognizing that thankfulness is more like a visualization of the Giver, rather than elation at the blessing itself.

Allah رحمته الله lets us know in clear terms that whoever is appreciative, his gratitude is for his own benefit. Allah رحمته الله is in no need of our being thankful.

The majority of "educated" people in our country have never set foot inside a *Madrassa*. Not having seen for themselves the tranquility that a place echoing with the words of the Holy Qur'an and "*Qala Rusul Allah* رحمته الله..." offers and being constantly bombarded with prejudiced views aired on mainstream media, peppered with their own inability to cut through the walls of bias they erect and fortify around themselves, these people cannot be told what all they are missing out on! It is aptly said: seeing is believing. And feeling is knowing. Words fall short in expressing that overwhelming feeling of peace and exhilarating comfort that exudes from those airy rooms: where one hears so much yet absorbs with a quietness in one's heart; where one is transported, at every instant, to a tranquil world more than 1400 years ago...a world of brotherhood, sacrifice, mercy and blessings.

Having myself been closely associated with three different *Madaris* over a long period of time, I can safely vouch that had I not "experienced" them personally, I would never have known the treasures that lay within their confines.

"Madrassa Memories" in *Reflections* would give you a peep into this oft-undermined, largely indispensable institution.

In *Action Alerts*, the article featured this time gives us a deep insight into the rights that non-Muslims historically enjoyed in Muslim lands and, contrary to common propaganda and assertions, how Islam itself ensures and safeguards the freedoms and rights that minorities relish under a truly Islamic state.

In *Tell-a-Tale*, our younger readers can get to know about a young hero of Islam, who hoisted the flag of *Hub-ur-Rusul* رحمته الله in the subcontinent not too long ago and whose name got eternally etched as a *Shaheed*. *SubhanAllah!*

The Intellect magazine team makes *du'a* of health and safety for all our readers and the *Ummat-e-Muslimah* in these times of uncertainty and disease. May we all pass unscathed through this *Ibtala*, which is naught but the earning of our own hands, *Ameen*.

Wassalam,
Zawjah Farid



Surah Al Maida

Translation with Arabic Text

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُخْفِضُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ ۚ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَخَشَوُا اللَّهَ ۚ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

Surely We have sent down the Torah, in which there was guidance and light by which the prophets, who submitted themselves to Allah, used to judge for the Jews, and (so did) the Men of Allah and the Men of knowledge, because they were ordained to protect the Book of Allah, and they stood guard over it. So, (O Jews of today,) do not fear people. Fear Me, and do not take a paltry price for My verses. Those who do not judge according to what Allah has sent down are the disbelievers. [44]

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ ۚ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

We prescribed for them therein: A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear and a tooth for a tooth; and for wounds, an equal retaliation. Then, if one forgives it, that will be expiation for him. Those who do not judge according to what Allah has sent down, they are the unjust. [45]

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۚ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ۚ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

We sent Isa son of Maryam after those prophets, confirming the Torah that was (revealed) before him, and We gave him the Injil having guidance and light therein, and confirming the Torah that was (revealed) before it; a guidance and a lesson for the God-fearing. [46]

وَلِيَحْكُمُ أَهْلَ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ ۚ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

And the people of the Injil must judge according to what Allah has sent down therein. Those who do not judge according to what Allah has sent down, they are the sinners. [47]

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ ۚ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۚ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

We have sent down to you the Book with truth, confirming the Book before it, and a protector for it. So, judge between them according to what Allah has sent down, and do not follow their desires against the truth that has come to you. For each of you We have made a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made a single community of people, but (He did not), so that He may test you in what He has given to you. Strive, then, to excel each other in good deeds. To Allah is the return for all of you. Then Allah shall tell you about that in which you disputed. [48]

وَأَنِ احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرْهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ۚ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

We order you to judge between them according to what Allah has sent down. Do not follow their desires, and beware of them, lest they should turn you away from some of what Allah has sent down to you. If they turn away, be assured that Allah intends to make them suffer for some of their sins. Surely, many of the people are sinners. [49]

أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ ۚ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

Is it, then, the judgement of (the days of) Ignorance that they seek? Who is better in judgement than Allah, for a people who believe? [50]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians for intimate friends. They are friends to each other. Whoever takes them as intimate friends is one of them. Surely, Allah does not take the unjust people to the right path. [51]

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰ أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ ۚ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

Now, you see those who have disease in their hearts race towards them saying, .We apprehend that some misfortune may overtake us.. So, it is likely that Allah may bring victory or something else from His own side, whereupon they will become regretful over what they concealed in their hearts. [52]

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ ۚ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

Those who believe will say, .Are these the ones who swore their solemn oaths by Allah that they were with you?. Their deeds have gone to waste, and they became losers. [53]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

O you who believe, if anyone from you turns back from his Faith, then Allah will bring a people whom He loves and who love Him, humble toward the believers, hard on the disbelievers, who fight in the way of Allah and are not afraid of the reproach of any critic. That is a grace of Allah. He confers it on whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing [54]

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

Your only friend is Allah, then His Messenger and those who believe, who establish Salah and pay Zakah and bow before Allah. [55]

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

Whoever maintains friendship with Allah and His Messenger and those who believe (must know that) it is the (members of the) Party of Allah that are the triumphant. [56]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُؤًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

O you who believe, do not take those who have taken your Faith in jest and fun for friends from those who have been given the Book prior to you, and the disbelievers. Fear Allah, if you are believers. [57]

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُؤًا وَلَعِبًا ۚ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

When you call for Salah, they take it in jest and fun. That is because they are a people who do not understand [58]

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنقِمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَأَنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

Say, .O People of the Book, do you accuse us of anything else except that we have believed in Allah and in what has been sent down to us and what has been sent down earlier while most of you are sinners (and we do not follow you in your sins) [59]

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْفِرْدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٦٠﴾

Say, .Shall I tell you about the ones whose retribution with Allah is worse than that (which you deem bad)? They are those whom Allah has subjected to His curse and to His wrath; and He has turned some of them into apes and swine, those who worshipped Taghut (Satan, the Rebel).Those are worse in their situation, and far more astray from the straight path. [60]

Explanation

31) This verse refers to another incident in which the Jews intended to bring their case before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Banu Nadir and Banu Quraizah were two large Jewish tribes living around Madinah - The former were more wealthy and powerful than the latter on the basis of their wealth and power. Banu Nadir compelled Banu Quraizah to accept some conditions that were totally unjust. For instance if a man from the former killed a man from the latter, the murderer could not be killed in retaliation; he would be liable to pay blood money only, but in case a man from Quraizah were to kill someone from Banu Nadir, he would be subjected to the death penalty and would also have to pay double blood money. Moreover if the murder victim from Banu Nadir was a woman,

a man from Quraizah had to be killed, and if the victim was a man, two men were to be killed from Quraizah and so on. In the case alluded to in this verse, a man from Banu Nadir was killed and they demanded double blood money from Quraizah - the latter tribe refused and suggested that the case should be placed before the Holy Prophet ﷺ because they knew that he would not allow such an unjust demand; Banu Nadir were hesitant but before refusing the suggestion they sent some hypocrites to discover informally what would be the view of the Holy Prophet ﷺ (Baghawi). The verse says that the Torah, in which both tribes claimed to believe, had clear instructions for equal retaliation. Still they violated its injunctions.

32) This is the answer to a question that may arise here. The question is: When all the prophets were preachers of the same religious beliefs, why did they differ in subsidiary laws and modes of worship, and why did a later divine book abrogate several precepts propounded by the earlier ones? The answer given is that Allah could make all humans in all ages uniform even in minute details of the law, but His wisdom required that there should be some difference between people of different ages in such details. This difference was not only based on the circumstances prevailing in different ages, but it was also a test to distinguish the obedient from the disobedient. It should be clearly understood that no particular law or any particular mode of worship has any inherent sanctity. The sanctity is attached to it only because Allah has appointed it as a law or as a mode of worship. But some people after being used to a particular mode of worship or a particular method, take it as inherently sacrosanct, and if a new command comes from Allah, they become averse to it, while the correct attitude is to obey Him in all His Commands whether or not they accord to one's habits or desires. When a new prophet comes with a new Command the People are tested to see whether they will obey it or whether their love for the previous ways will prompt them to violate the new command.

33) See note on 3:28

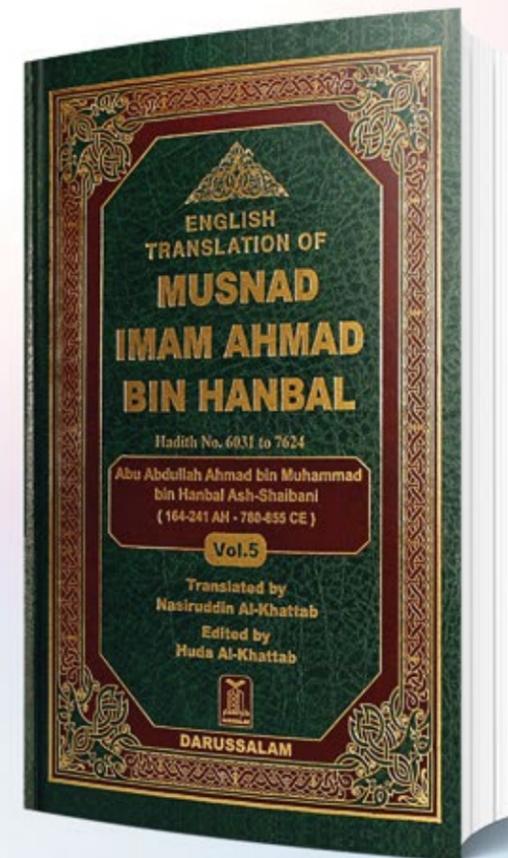
34) The Jewish tribes, despite having a treaty of mutual cooperation with the Muslims, conspired against them at the same time, they developed friendship with some Muslims in order to spy on them Verse 51, therefore forbade the Muslims from having close relations with the Jews and the Christians 'Abdullah Ibn Ubayy, the Chief of the hypocrites, refused to sever his relations with the Jews, on the pretext that it would be dangerous for Him. His real intention was that in case the Jews succeeded in their plans, those who had severed their relationship with them would face their anger. Verse 52 says that it is more likely that the Muslims will be victorious, and the hypocrites will regret what they did. What kind of relationship is allowed with Non-Muslims? For the answer to this question, please see note on 3:28.

35) 'something else from His own side' 7 probably refers to the disclosure made by Allah about the hypocrites and their designs.

36) This verse depicts the scene in which the Muslims, having come to know about the duplicity of the hypocrites, will talk about them exclaiming that they are the same people who declared their Islam on solemn oaths, but because of their hypocrisy all their deeds have now gone to waste. Their virtuous acts like *Salah*, *Zakah* etc were wasted as they were devoid of true faith. Likewise, their efforts to conspire against the Muslims too went to waste because they yielded no results.

The Transitory World and the Eternal Hereafter

By Maulana Manzoor Nomani ﷺ



the Hereafter the object of his desire, which is eternal. The material world, at best, is a nine days' wonder.

A Veritable Curse

It is related by Abu Hurayrah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The world is accursed and what it contains is accursed, except the remembrance of Allah and what He likes and the teachers and the taught."

(Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

Commentary: This world, which makes many a man forget Allah ﷻ and the Hereafter when he becomes absorbed in it, is so hateful in its nature and outcome that there is no place of it even in the boundless benevolence of the Lord. The mercy of Allah ﷻ, in the present world, indeed, is upon His remembrance and upon the things that are associated with Him, particularly upon those who possess the knowledge of Faith or seek it.

It denotes that only such things are deserving of Divine Grace that are connected with the Lord, directly or indirectly, or His Faith. Deeds that have nothing to do with Him or His Faith, [and the 'world' mean just that] are simply detestable.

Hence, if a man's life is devoid of devotion to Allah ﷻ and His remembrance and bereft of the knowledge or study of Faith, it is worthy not of divine Benevolence but of anger.

(169/29) It is related by Abu Moosa ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever loves the world shall damage his Hereafter, and whoever loves his Hereafter shall damage his world. Thus, [when between the world and the Hereafter the choice of one is sure to lead to the loss of the other] you should prefer what is lasting to what is transitory.

(Musnad Ahmad and Baihaqi)

Commentary: When a person will make the world the exclusive aim of his life, he will live for it and all his endeavours will be directed towards the realisation of material aims and interests and the Hereafter will get into the background; he will not care much for it, and eventually, it will lead to the loss of the world to come.

Similarly when a person will set his heart on the Hereafter he will strive for it to the best of his ability, and his worldly interests will suffer in the outcome. Hence, a truthful Believer should make

Conveying the Reward of Actions in this World to the Dead

By Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalawi
Translated by Mawlana Ismaeel Nakhuda

(Translator's Note: Below is an insightful passage from Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalawi's *Fada'il-i-Sadaqat* in which the author, while commenting on a hadith, mentions some insightful references and comments regarding sending reward for pious actions to those who have passed away. Noticing the brilliant way the shaykh has discussed this topic here and how people nowadays often consider isolated views on this subject as the mainstream view, I felt it apt to translate this passage and share with our readers for their benefit.)

[18] Sayyiduna Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) asked, "Oh Messenger of Allah ﷺ, my mother has passed away. Which form of charity [for sending her reward] is most superior?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "Water is the most superior." At this, Sayyiduna Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) had a well excavated for the reward of his mother (Narrated by Malik, Abu Dawud and al-Nasa'i).

Commentary: The reason why the Prophet ﷺ mentioned that water was most superior was because it was very much needed in Madinah. Firstly, water is particularly needed everywhere in hot countries and there was

scarcity of water in Madinah Munawwarah at that time. Aside from this, there is a general benefit in water and the need was also general.

It is mentioned in one hadith that the person who starts a system of supplying water from which humans, jinns and birds drink will continue receiving its rewards even after death until the Day of Reckoning. A person came to Sayyiduna 'Abdullah bin Mubarak (may Allah be pleased with him) and said, "There is a wound on my knee that has been there for seven years. I have tried every type of medicine and cure and nothing has benefitted me. I have also visited renowned physicians." Sayyiduna 'Abdullah bin Mubarak (may Allah be pleased with him) replied, "Have a well dug at a place where there is a scarcity of water. I have hope in Allah that when water comes out from there, then the bleeding on your knee shall stop." The person did as suggested and the wound healed.

The famous hadith scholar, Abu 'Abdullah Hakim (may Allah have mercy on him) had some wounds on his face. He tried all sorts of treatment, none of which were useful. He spent a year like this. Once he asked his teacher, Abu 'Uthman Sabuni (may Allah

have mercy on him), to supplicate for him. It was a Friday and he supplicated for a long time. The congregation said *amin*. The next Friday, a woman arrived and presented a chit on which it was written, "When I returned home the previous Friday, I continued diligently supplicating for Hakim. In a dream I saw the Prophet ﷺ who said, 'Tell Hakim to make water abundantly available for the Muslims.' Having heard this, Hakim had a public fountain established on his door in which arrangements were made for it to be replenished with water and ice. A week passed and all of the wounds on his face healed and his face had become even more handsome than before.

It is mentioned in a hadith that Sayyiduna Sa'd (may Allah be pleased with him) said, "Oh Messenger of Allah ﷺ, when she was alive my mother used to perform Hajj with my wealth. She used to give in charity with my wealth, maintain ties and support people. Now she has died and if we were to carry out all of these works on her behalf, then would she benefit?" The Prophet ﷺ replied that they would reach her.

It is mentioned in a hadith that a woman asked the Prophet ﷺ, "My mother has suddenly passed away. If she had not passed away suddenly then she would have given some charity etc. If I were to give some charity on her behalf, then would it be from her?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, give charity on her behalf."

One should diligently perform acts

of righteousness (*isal al-thawab*) on behalf of one's parents, spouses, siblings, children and other relatives, particularly those whose wealth may have reached us after their death or they had carried out special acts of kindness to us, such as teachers and shaykhs. It would be grossly void of honour for one to benefit from their wealth and also their kindness while they were alive, and then to ignore them when they are in need of our gifts and favour. When a person dies, all his actions stop except if he has left behind a continuous act of charity (*sadaqah jariyah*) or carried out another action that meets the criteria of a continuous act of charity which shall be mentioned later on. After death, people are in need and awaiting the reward (*isal al-thawab*) and supplications etc. of others.

It is mentioned in one hadith that the dead person in his grave is like the person who is drowning in water and desires aid from a helper from all sides. He awaits for a father, brother, friend, etc. whose supplication and help (in the least) may reach him. And when help reaches him, then this becomes more dearer to him than the entire world. Bishr bin Mansur (may Allah have mercy on him) says that in the days of plague there was a man who used to frequently attend funeral prayers and would, in the evening, stand by the gates of the cemetery supplicating: "May Allah exchange the trouble you experience from being lonely into pleasure, shed mercy on your being alone, overlook your mistakes and accept your righteous actions." He

would return home after making this supplication. One day, by chance, he did not make this supplication and returned home just like that. He saw a dream in which there was a large crowd of people who came to him. He asked them, "Who are you? Why have you come?" They replied that they were the inhabitants of the cemetery. "You have made us habituated to receive every day in the evening some gifts from yourself." He asked what those gifts were. They responded, "The supplication you make every evening is gifted to us." The person narrates, "I henceforth never abandoned this supplication."

Bashshar bin Ghalib Najrani (may Allah have mercy on him) says, "I used to supplicate a lot for Rabi'ah Basriyyah and once saw her in a dream. She said, 'Bashshar, your gifts reach me in trays of light (*nur*) which are covered in silk.' I asked her what this was at which she replied, 'Those supplications done by Muslims for the deceased and that are accepted are then presented to the deceased in trays of light and covered in silk and it is said that such a person has sent this to you.'" Similar stories of this type will be mentioned in the commentary of the hadith that follows. Imam Nawawi has mentioned in the commentary of Sahih Muslim that there is no disagreement among the Muslims regarding whether the reward of charity reaches the deceased. This is the correct way (*madhhab*) and that which some people have written that the deceased does not receive any reward after their death is totally false and an obvious mistake. It is against the Qur'an, the hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ and the consensus of the Ummah (*ijma'*), and it is because of this that this view is definitely not worthy of attention.

Shaykh Taqiyyuddin (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions that the person who thinks that a person only receives the reward of his

deeds is going against the consensus of the Ummah because the Ummah is agreed that a person benefits from the supplication of the other, which is benefitting from the actions of others. In addition to this, the Prophet ﷺ will intercede on the Day of Reckoning, as will other prophets and the pious—this is benefitting from the actions of others. In addition to this, the angels supplicate for the believers and also seek forgiveness for them (as is mentioned in the first *ruku'* of Surah al-Mu'min); this is an example of benefitting from the actions of another person. Further to this, Allah Most High will forgive many people simply because of His mercy and this is an example of benefitting from something apart from one's effort and actions. In addition to this, the children of believers shall enter into paradise with their children (as is mentioned in the first *ruku'* of Surah al-Tur); this is an example of benefiting from the actions of others. Also, the obligation of Hajj can be fulfilled through a substitute (*Hajj Badl*), which is an example of benefitting from the action of another. In sum, there are many things that act as proofs and evidence for this, the summarising of which is difficult.

A pious man said, "My brother passed away, I saw him in a dream and asked him what happened to you after you were placed in the grave. He replied, 'At that time, a flame came to me. However, at the same moment, the supplication of a person reached me. If it had not come to me, then the flame would have touched me.'"

'Ali bin Musa Haddad (may Allah have mercy on him) mentions, "I was with Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) at a funeral. Muhammad bin Qudamah Jawhari (may Allah have mercy on him) was with us. When the body had been buried, a blind person came, sat down by the grave and began reciting Qur'an. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) said,

'Reciting the Qur'an while sitting by the grave is an innovation (*bid'ah*).' When we began to return from that place, Muhammad bin Qudamah asked Imam Ahmad on the road, 'What do you think of Mubashshir bin Isma'il Halabi?' Imam Ahmad replied, 'He is a reliable individual.' Ibn Qudamah asked, 'Did you seek any knowledge from him?' He replied, 'Yes, I took hadith from him.' Ibn Qudamah said, 'Mubashshir narrated to me that 'Abdur-Rahman bin 'Ala bin Lajlaj narrated from his father that when he was about to die he willed that the beginning and end of Surah al-Baqarah be recited by his head side and that he said, "I heard 'Abdullah bin 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) mentioning this in his will.'" Having heard this story, Imam Ahmad said to Ibn Qudamah to return to the cemetery and to tell the blind man to recite the Qur'an."

Muhammad bin Ahmad Marwazi (may Allah be pleased with him) says that I heard Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (may Allah have mercy on him) saying, "When you visit the cemetery, then recite Surahs al-Fatiha, al-Ikhlās, al-Falaq and al-Nas, and convey the reward to the people of the cemetery. The reward

shall reach them. The author of Al-Mughni, which is a very reliable book on Hanbali fiqh, has also narrated this story and other narrations relating to this topic. It has been mentioned in Badhl al-Majhud from Bahr that the person who fasts or performs *salah*, or gives charity, and conveys the reward to another person, regardless of whether the person is alive or dead, then its reward shall reach them—there is no difference if the person who is being awarded the reward is alive or dead.

The saying of Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) has been narrated in Sunan Abu Dawud, "Is there anyone who will take the responsibility to offer two or four *rak'ahs* of prayer at Masjid 'Ithar (close to Basra) and say that [the reward of] this prayer is for Abu Hurayrah." A lot of diligence should be expended on sending reward to one's beloved deceased people. Aside from fulfilling their rights, one shall soon meet with them after death. What shame would there be if one were not to remember their rights, their favours and also themselves when spending their wealth on one's self?

- Courtesy: ilmgate.org





The Value of Time

By Shaykh Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah
Translated by Yusra al-Ghannouchi
Reviewed by Bint Akram

The intelligent one is the one who is conscious of his time, and if he loses it he would have lost all interests, for all interests derive from time, and whenever time is lost it can never be regained. – Imam ibn al-Qayyim

In the contemporary world, characterised by the culture of speed, who is not pressed for time? Observe and you will find almost every other person complaining of not having enough time. Time, it appears, has become a common problem for all. Surprisingly, the present day world is also a world of machines. To write these lines, all I had to do was to switch on my laptop and start typing; no sharpening of pencils, no fetching for inkpots, no fumbling with stacks of papers. Ideally, machines should have spared us more time as compared to the people of the past who used to do everything by themselves. This, however, is not the case. The more the speed of the gadgets, which have become an inextricable part of our lives, the lesser the amount of time we seem to have at our disposal.

A leading traditionist (*muhaddith*) of the

Twentieth Century, Shaykh Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah's *The Value of Time*, is a small book that deals with the subject of time and its importance in human life. The book, in particular, emphasizes the need for time management in the lives of the people of knowledge. In general, however, it is a valuable resource for anyone who considers time as an invaluable blessing of Allah ﷻ and wishes to make use of it in the best of ways. It recounts the real life examples of exemplary time management of people – the scholars of Islam, the pious predecessors – who benefitted the Muslim *Ummah* with the vast knowledge they acquired and disseminated. "The Shaykh," writes Muhammad Akram Nadwi in his foreword to this work, "reminds us how the pious predecessors and early scholars, who are for us a role model of all good deeds and an example of every virtue, valued this immense gift

(time), and how every moment of their lives was calculated to be spent in the pursuit of knowledge."

In his preface to his book, the Shaykh describes time as an "immense blessing" which can "give rise to amazing wonders, if one knew how to benefit from it, if one managed one's time well, and avoided falling into the excessiveness in speech, food, gatherings and meetings." It is amazing how Islam sees all the facets of the human personality in a unified manner. Falling into any of the aforementioned excesses would not just lead one to wasting their time, but would ultimately affect one's entire life.

Time, the Shaykh points out at the outset, is valued differently by different kinds of people belonging to various walks of life. For example, a philosopher's estimation of time would be different from that of a merchant; a soldier's sense of valuing time would differ from that of a politician, and so on. This book, Shaykh emphasizes, deals particularly with the value of time in the lives of the people of knowledge. The book is written "in the hope that this will spur on the spirits of our young students of knowledge in these days, where the resolve of students has weakened, and the industrious students have become negligent, and where it has become rare to find a student burning with desire to acquire knowledge."

The book is not divided into chapters but the sections are very neatly arranged under various subheadings. The discussion begins by looking at time in the Qur'anic context. The Shaykh discusses instances from the Qur'an where Allah ﷻ has mentioned this blessing which mankind has been bestowed with. There are verses in the Qur'an that clearly mention the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the day and the night – characteristics of time and space – as the signs for the people of reflection. Similarly, the disbelievers are reproved for wasting their lives by not utilizing their life spans to reflect into the signs of Allah and rejecting the Truth that the Messengers ﷺ of Allah ﷻ brought to them. Further, time is one of those

things that Allah ﷻ has vowed by in the Qur'an. The "two very important matters," that Allah ﷻ swears by, are "the reassurance of the Prophet ﷺ that he had not been abandoned by Allah as claimed by the polytheists, and in asserting that all mankind is in loss except those who believe and do righteous deeds." The fact that Allah ﷻ has chosen time to vow by it is proof enough for its importance in a man's life. The *Sunnah* makes this importance more explicit, because the Prophet ﷺ said that, "There are two blessings which many people lose: Health and free time for doing good." The Shaykh explains that this *hadith* implies that "only a minority benefit from it (time), while the majority are wasters and losers."

From elaborating on the importance of time as found in the Qur'an and Sunnah, the Shaykh moves on to the discussion of the value of time in the lives of the pious. The real life examples and quotations he cites from the *Salaf* are moving enough to make the reader contemplate on the lives of these elders, and instill in him a very strong desire to at least aspire to be like them! It is indeed heart-warming to read about people from our own history who considered time as a sword, which if not slain, would slay you. These were the people who thought life to be only that "portion of one's time" which was spent in Allah's ﷻ remembrance, "while the rest is not counted as part of one's life even if one lived long, for one was living the life of animals." The *Salaf* were those who always remained keen to gain time so they could increase in their good deeds. "They raced against the hours, and used every instant, being very careful with their time..." They regretted the day when the sun set without their good deeds having been increased. They were those "who were more protective of their time than (one is of) *dirhams* and *dinaars*" for they believed that with every passing day, a part of one "departs with it." They considered their mealtimes burdensome, for the time spent in eating consumed the precious moments in which they could have otherwise acquired or imparted knowledge. In short, their lives were all about conserving time and not wasting any moment of it in useless activities. It was this

regard for time and its preservation that gave birth to prolific writings from which the Ummah is still benefitting and will continue to do so in times to come.

The section on the awe-inspiring stories from the lives of the pious gives way to the concluding part of the book, which contains valuable advice on how to manage one's time. It explains in detail how one needs to prioritise one's activities in accordance with a timetable. The best times and places for memorization are also described along with practical advice on how to overcome boredom and laziness. The book closes with an

inspiring excerpt from an article, *Time is Life*, by Hasan al-Banna, followed by a short invocation to Allah ﷻ by the author that may He "guide us ... to conserve time and fill it with pious actions and beneficial knowledge..."

In brief, this book may be small in size but carried great weight in terms of the content it contains. The inspiring narrations from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the lives of the pious predecessors act as a breeze of fresh air in times when everyone seems to be running out of breath in their quest for vanquishing time, or life. A highly recommended read for the students of *deen* or otherwise.

Du'a

Allah Most High says in the Qur'an:

"And your Lord says: 'Call on me; I will answer your prayer' (Quran, 40:60)"

Du'a is a direct link to our Creator and is an act of worship that can be done at anytime and anywhere. It is a means by which we can pour our hearts out and rest assured that our affairs will be taken care of by the King of kings. It is stated in a *hadith* that when Allah Most High sees the hands of the slave lifted up to him He feels shame that He should leave that person's hands unfilled (*Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi*). We should therefore keep making du'a with a firm conviction that Allah Most High will most definitely answer it. We must never be despondent and complain that Allah is not answering our du'as. When we ask Him, either Allah gives us exactly what we want, or He doesn't and instead stores something better for us in the hereafter or He removes some calamity of this life by means of that du'a. Thus, making du'a is a "win-win" situation.

- Shaykh Tameem Ahmadi



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Stay Hopeful!

Translation by Zawja Asim

The Obligation of *tawbah* (Repentance)

The first step of *islaah* (rectification) is the completion of *tawbah*. Just like the obligation of fasting, the obligation of *zakat* on the financially well-off, the obligation of *Hajj* on the capable ones, the obligation of lawful earning, *tawbah* is an obligation for Muslims;

“O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance.” (Surah Tehreem: 8)

As long as this obligation is not fulfilled the *islaah* rectification does not resume.

Significance of *tawbah* for self purification

If the bottom of the water tank is hollow, the holes are not closed, and water continues to pour from above, the water tank will never fill. Similarly, in a bottomless glass if milk is being poured continuously the glass will never fill; whether it is the collection of milk in a glass or water in the water tank, the holes must be closed. Only then the drops of water will collect in the tank, *tawbah*

works in the same way. *Noor* does not reside in the heart if there is no *tawbah*; all struggle goes vain; therefore, the first step in this path is “*tawbatun Nusoohan*” (sincere repentance); if this step is taken, then even if you proceed slowly you will reach the destination. You may get a bit late but you will get there, and if the step is not taken then you will not reach the destination all your life. The first step is sincere repentance which is an obligation in the way of rectification.

How to seek *Tawbah*?

There is a beginning and an end of *tawbah*. The beginning of *tawbah* is that whatever sins are done one should feel the destruction they have caused in his heart; think that my life and hereafter are damaged because of this sin and my life will be doomed. This is the beginning of *tawbah* and the end lies in leaving it with remorse while being ashamed and inclined to Allah ﷻ, thinking whatever sin I was doing till now was purely damaging. If the heart doesn't feel this, then even if *tawbah* is sought, the obligation of *tawbah* would remain undone. They would

merely be the words of *astaghfar* without *tawbah*. The beginning of *tawbah* is the realisation of the damage caused by the sin.

The norm of societal sins and their ignorance

Today because the obligation of *tawbah* is not fulfilled, the *islaah* is merely verbal; in fact, there is no *islaah*, if there's no remorse and shame on sins. That is also why *islaah* does not influence a man's practical life as many sins have become a norm in our lives and there is hardly any realisation of the harm they inflict on one's spiritual state.

Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ said:

‘Spreading of hearsay information is proof enough for someone to be a liar’ (*Kitab az zuhd wa riqaaq*).

Now tell, does anyone seek *tawbah* on this when he doesn't consider it a sin thus does not seek *tawbah* and thus the first step of *islaah* is not taken. Today our society is such that whenever there comes a news we forward it without research. Such sins are now a part of our lives. Drunken we seek *tawbah*, on unoffered prayers

we seek *tawbah*, we steal something and seek *tawbah*, but there's no way we seek *tawbah* on telling lies. Telling lies is also *haram* (unlawful); just because it is widely spread doesn't mean it is *halal* (lawful), seeking *tawbah* for this is also a *fardh*.

How is *islaah* possible?

If you cannot take the first step then how is it possible to seek *islaah*? Although the obligation of repentance is such that if someone has not fulfilled any other obligation but this one even then he can enter *jannah* straightaway. One man who has sought *tawbah* from *kufr*, has not offered any prayer, nor performed *Hajj*, has not observed any fast, has not given any *zakat*, only sought forgiveness and died is a *jannati*. On the other hand, if someone fulfilled all obligations but never sought *tawbah*, he would become a *jahanummi*, because thousands of good virtues cannot be compared to that one *fardh*; *tawbah* is the first step of *islaah* - the realisation of destruction from whatever sins have been committed.

- Continued, inshaAllah

Qualities of the Muttaqin

1. They have firm faith in everything that the Prophet ﷺ taught us
2. They are steadfast in *Salah*
3. They spend in the way of Allah
4. They believe in what is revealed in the Quran and the previous scriptures
5. They have firm conviction in the hereafter

Last Seen Today at 5:00

By Zawjah Farid



She got off the bus at Toba Tek Singh. Fully veiled, no one recognized her in her native village. She headed straight for the *Darbaar* (shrine), knowing well that that was one place she won't be turned away from. Once there, she supplicated for the *buzurg* and sat quietly at the edge of the well; waiting...waiting for an appropriate time to make her move. At first, no one really noticed her, but as the hours went by, the custodian's wife asked her who she was. Her reply was a measured one: *I am here to pay my respects*. Many a sad, troubled women had treaded through these gates, thought the custodian's wife and she nodded, satisfied. After a while, she put a plate of *daal* (lentils) from the big *daig* (pot) in front of her. She managed to partake a morsel or two, but could hardly swallow it, knowing the enormity of the task ahead of her. Soon it was daytime. She knew he would come

out to the tube-well with the cattle now. Like a silent shadow she crept out of the *darbaar* and headed straight to the village tube-well. She sat down conspicuously, hiding herself in an expanse of sugarcane fields. In a few minutes she could hear the clink clank of the approaching cattle. Keen, her eyes caught sight of his little existence and drew in her breath. This was it. She had to act now. In a flash she grabbed hold of the child and started running in between the tall sugarcane plants. Lest he screamed, she lifted her veil and the surprised child loosened his tight grip on her gown. *Alhamdulillah*, he had recognized her; *Alhamdulillah*, he didn't protest. Now she had to quickly make her way back to the bus stand to get on to a vehicle for Karachi; BEFORE they noticed his absence. She quickened her pace. The sugarcane plants were a good cover, but to reach to the bus stand she had to cross miles in the

fields; the flight bruised her arms and her face, but she couldn't slow down. She held the child in a way that he was safe but she had to keep changing his position to protect him from getting scratched. Losing strength in her arms and legs, she thought she will give up at each step she took but still went on. After crossing what seemed like acres of fields, she finally caught sight of the colorful buses and heaved a sigh of relief. All her tiredness vanished in the return journey as she took great pleasure in cradling her son in her arms.

Back in the village, everyone concluded that he had accidentally drowned in the canal next to the tube-well.

Once safely home in Karachi, her eyes brimmed with tears of relief, thankfulness and deep deep gratitude: *Ya Allah, tera shukar! Ya Allah tera shukar*. Her beloved Tayyab was with her again.

She called her mother to relate to her the amazing feat Allah ﷻ had helped her accomplish.

This story is based on a true account. But it doesn't end here.

During Covid-19, her father became unwell in the village and she went along with her two children to see him. It had been barely two, three days since her arrival that the Nation-wide lockdown was announced and buses stopped plying from Toba Tek Singh to Karachi. What was to be a quick and secretive trip of just a few days, became a full-fledged nightmare:

She had stepped out of the house with her mother to see an unwell neighbor, and taking advantage of her short absence, a relative came to their hut and coaxed Tayyab into tagging along...

Gone! They had taken him again!

To understand the plight of this lady, we need to go back to the beginning of her story.

She had been happily married with two children

when her husband's sister, became her brother's wife, in a common rural arrangement called a "watasata". Her brother and his wife didn't get along from the beginning and things went from bad to worse. Eventually he divorced her and now the pressure began to build upon her husband from her in-laws to divorce her as well. It didn't take long for him to accede to their cruel demand. Divorced, with no fault of hers, with two little children to fend for, she had to remain at her parent's house. Soon, her other sister in-laws found her to be a burden. While her ex-husband went off to Libya in search of work, (then onward to Italy, and was never heard from again), she decided to go to Karachi in search of domestic work (as one of her sisters was settled there). But not before sustaining another shock: her ex in-laws forcefully took away her son from her! With no one brave or concerned enough to take a stand for her against her rowdy in-laws, she had no choice but to catch the bus to Karachi with her daughter only. Inwards she was in extreme pain; outwards, you could never guess...deep in her heart she vowed to get Tayyab back, (and hence her mad race in the sugar-cane fields), but only for him to be snatched back again, with no amount of pleading, begging or crying softening the hearts of her in-laws.

So here she is, back in Karachi, after the lockdown was lifted. Smiling, graceful, not a word of complaint; grateful to Allah ﷻ for His blessings, praying five times a day, (and secretly making another plan to get her Tayyab back!)

With her pleasant disposition, you could never ever guess that she hid a sea of grief inside her heart. *Alhamdulillah e a'ala kuli haal*.

It was only when amazement was expressed at her always talking about her daughter ('my daughter did this, my daughter did that') and rarely mentioning her son, did she recount and share her sordid adventure. (May Allah ﷻ grant her *ajr* for her *raza bil qaza* and *sabr* and reunite her with the apple of her eyes, *Ameen*).

The sound of the Hadith resonated in Tasneem's bejeweled ears: *more women in hell-fire...not thankful to husbands...*

"Alhamdulillah! I am a thankful wife; Alhamdulillah, I am not of those addressed in this premonition. I am always 'thanking' Idrees for his benevolence", Tasneem thought smugly.

Idrees returned home after a tiring day in office. He was greeted at the door by Danial, their only child, and Tasneem, with a broad smile. Something clicked in his mind...that smile...déjà vu ...

At the dinner table, Idrees's favourite chicken stew and piping hot beef steak awaited him. The conversation drifted here and there until Tasneem and Danial exchanged a meaningful glance.

"Can we have a party for Danial's friends this month?" popped the question Idrees knew was coming. *"We know our finances are a bit tight this month but...all his friends have had one, and it doesn't look nice if we never invite"*.

"Papa please!" Danial chipped in.

Cornered, Idrees had no choice but to accede. Deep inside his heart though, he felt a deep hole

grow out of nowhere. *"I would surely need to borrow from Shumail for this extravaganza."*

Come party day and things seemed to be going smoothly. Idrees joined the crowd with a huge box in his arms and delivered it to the kitchen counter. Tasneem quickly removed the tape, only to open the box with a shriek: *"Oh my God! Idrees! We had asked you for Strawberry Cheese cake, not Marble cake. Strawberry Cheese cake is Danial's favourite. What do we do now?!"*

It had barely been a fortnight since the party that Tasneem found herself facing a shocking development. Covid 19 had caught up with her family. Stable in the morning, Idrees had suddenly deteriorated. Nurses in PPE moved here and there like looming shadows. The video screen showed all the pipes and tubes that went in and out of Idrees's body. His Whatsapp timeline ominously announced: *last seen today at 5:00 a.m.*

She returned home broken. It was their anniversary.

A cold phone call from a tired nurse sealed her fate.

No goodbyes. No closure. No chance to ask or confirm: *"Was I a thankful wife?"*

On Being Contented

"I am pleased with Allah as my Lord, with Islam as my religion, and with Muhammad as my Prophet" (Allah bless him and give him peace) [Abu Dawud].

"O Allah, make me content with what you have provided me, send blessings for me therein, and replace for me every absent thing with something better" [Bukhari].

"O Allah, I seek refuge with You from knowledge which does not bring benefit and from a heart which is not fearful and from a self which is not content and from a supplication which is not answered" [Muslim].

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Two Weeks in the West & The Spread of Islam in Western Countries

Excerpted from Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb's *دُنْيَا مَرَايِ آغَايِ* travelogue "Dunya Meray Aagay"
Translation: Zawjah Zia

It is a common notion (read myth) that the western females enjoy being cogs in the wheel of the work-force machine just like men and that they'd not give-up on this 'right' of theirs for anything. The reverted ladies in the Britain whom we spoke about denied this notion plainly. In fact, they reiterated that a huge attraction for them in Islam was that it is very sensitive to feminism in the true sense of the concept and the way it devises the male and female duties and circles of influence is amazingly apt.

In contrast, they said, the western concept of feminism was in reality pitched against women, not in their favor. The famous 'Freedom-for-women-movement' was in their opinion nothing but a drive professing the idea of: "Women copying men, an exercise in which womanhood has no intrinsic value".

Nooria, a 36 year old Scottish revert lady had found a few verses of Quran Majeed which had been dumped into a garbage can (Allah Forbid). She took them out from there, read them, and that's what filled her heart with *Iman* instantly. Reflecting upon the western female's general manner, Nooria said:

"Most of the women in this country are traitors to their gender. It's almost as if we have been de-feminized".

She said that till this day, the West is demonizing the issue of women rights in Islam while we receive amazingly humane and empowering rights through this *Deen*. She mentioned the examples of the right to property, inheritance and child custody, etc. She added that the way things were going, she saw no encouraging future for women in Britain. In her own words:

"Scratch any new man here and you find an old man trying to get out; men will always be the same. Women are changing much faster, but they

are not getting what they want. Everything that the feminist movement is aiming for, except abortion and lesbianism, we already have it in Islam."

These women emphasized that the western 'women rights movement' was actually doubling the burden for women.

"The status of women in Islam is in a clear contrast to the dismal plight of women in the West. Here women work out of financial necessity, while remaining limbered with housework and childcare. It is a highly deluding version of emancipation".

The space here doesn't allow me to quote all of these women who were interviewed. However, despite the length, I feel that it's appropriate to quote a portion of the editorial that went with these interviews:

"As an investigation in the Times on women in Islam has shown, the intellectual clarity and moral certainty of this 1400 years-old faith is proving attractive to many western women disillusioned with the moral degeneration of their own culture. Though some are converting to Islam after marrying Pakistani or Bangladeshi men, others are making the leap of faith as an independent act of spiritual self-improvement.

In spite of the outrageous indignities which many women suffer in Muslim countries, the principles outlined in the Qur'an are generally sympathetic to their interests, promising them "rights over men similar to those of men over women".

The separate spheres marked out for the two sexes by Islam certainly bear little relationship to

the notions of gender which have been ushered in by the feminist revolution. But what matters is that many of the women in the West who have taken this unexpected path have done so out of choice rather than familial duty or historic obligation. They have been positively attracted by the sense of sisterhood and community they discover in Islam.

This tentative process of spiritual change suggests that increasing numbers of people are questioning the value system of their own culture. It raises important questions about the state of the Western moral tradition and how it may be fortified. Yet, the effect of this (still modest) phenomenon is likely to be positive. The presence of Muslim converts in British Society – many of them highly educated – can also assist the process of mutual understanding between the two cultures which the Prince of Wales reiterated last month. Only those who have crossed the divide can truly understand what lies on either side."

So this was their side of the story.

The most amazing point to ponder upon is that all of these refreshing winds of change are blowing despite the fact that there are hardly any highly organized *dawah* efforts by the Muslims going on in the West as yet. Moreover, the religious and moral state of the majority of Muslims masses themselves, in no way seems to be serving this change rather it can be a deterrent (to say the least) for the onlooking non-believers. Adding to the mess, the western media is fueling fire against the Muslims with full throttle. In this context,

these increasing numbers of people being attracted and converting to Islam seems miraculous indeed. It also shows how ripe are the times in the West for proper Dawah efforts and how fruitful they can be *inshaAllah* if so much good is showing up even in their absence.

This goes without saying that, in the absence of these organized Dawah and rehabilitation efforts, two of the biggest challenges that these new Muslims face are social isolation and education and brought up of their children. Letting their children attend the local educational institutions, where hatred against Muslims and Islam is rampant, is only putting them and their iman in sheer danger.

Though there are a few scattered Islamic schools catering to this need and providing a mix of religious and conventional education, they are of course not enough. So the majority of the Muslim population resorts to after school mini *madrassahs* arranged in local *masajid* (mosques) or the weekly Sunday school in the *masjid*. Having their children attend these, among their busy social routines, is a task in itself. Yet parents who have this sense of responsibility are trying to manage it against all odds. These kinds of parents are then going a step further and trying to provide a religiously fulfilling atmosphere to their children at home too and trying to provide them with a distinct sense of Muslim identity.

It was a pleasant experience for me to see the children of these families being conscious of the sanctity of religious symbols and so steadfast about their daily Sunnah routines and *adhkaar* etc. The extraordinary religious thought process of these children can be noted through the

amazingly intellectual and deep questions they sometimes tend to ask you out of the blue.

Another milestone in this regard is the establishment of *Darululoom* Buffalo in the state of New York by our dear friend Dr. Ismail Sahib. This aims to nurture religious thought and producing local scholars that can uphold this responsibility of religious grooming of the new Muslim generation there.

Catering to the same population, has given room to the economic demand of establishing *Halaal* meat and grocery shops and *Halaal* restaurants. So much so that a few neighborhoods now do not even seem to belong in the western society but give an air of a Muslim country instead.

On my way back, my last stop over was at Barbados; an island among the West Indies. I had gone there especially upon the request of some of the local Muslims whom I had met in the US or Canada. The Muslim population there is scarce, yet it is worth mentioning how they are striving to preserve their religious identity and are worried about the upbringing of their children.

Upon their request, I spoke to the local Muslims; men, women, children a number of times during my short stay there. One could not help but appreciate the two grand *masjids* of Bridgetown; they even have their *Adhaans* called out on the loudspeakers. There too, the after-school and Sunday school *madrassahs* are mushrooming as per need.

Yes, the place is far off, yet, Allah's ﷻ deen has not only reached there but flourishing too; all with the help and plan of Allah ﷻ.

A peep into the Sacred Chamber: Resting place of the Prophet ﷺ

The Outer Chamber

It mostly comprises of the house of Sayyidah Fatima رضي الله عنها. Those given access to this area can touch the cloth that hangs on this wall but can't go beyond it. Only certain individuals, like dignitaries, people who change the cloth and cleaners are allowed into this area.

The Inner Chamber

It contains the blessed grave of the Prophet ﷺ and his two Companions رضي الله عنهم. This sacred room, which was once the house of Prophet's ﷺ wife Sayyidah Ayesha رضي الله عنها, is surrounded by three sets of walls.

The first set of walls was built with the house shortly after the Prophet's ﷺ migration to Madinah. These walls were replaced in 91 AH by Umar Abdul Aziz رضي الله عنه with stones similar to the black stones of the Ka'aba.

The second set of walls was also built by Umar Abdul Aziz رضي الله عنه and purposely made pentagonal in shape - so that it wouldn't resemble the Kaaba (to deter people from praying towards it).

The third set of walls, from where the *ghilaf* (cloth) hangs, was built in 886 AH by Sultan Al-Ahsraf

Qaitbay to fortify the pentagonal structure after it was damaged in a fire. It is this wall that visitors see when looking through the viewing holes in *Mawajah Sharif*.

The inner chamber has neither doors nor windows, making it completely inaccessible to anyone. The last person reported to have entered the inner chamber and set eyes on the blessed graves of Prophet ﷺ and his Companions رضي الله عنهم was Ali Ibn Ahmed al-Samhudi رحمته الله, a renowned scholar, who was tasked with cleaning up the site of the graves after a major fire broke out in *Masjid-e-Nabvi* ﷺ. This took place more than 500 years ago!

(Excerpted from: *Hajjumrahplanner.com*)

The New Menace and Its Answer

By Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمته الله

I say again that it is this Apostasy which is nowadays engulfing the Islamic World from one end to another. It has made its onslaught from house to house, family to family. The schools, the college, the Universities have all been overrun by it. There will hardly be a family fortunate enough not to include a follower of this creed among its members; approach any Muslim family, talk to its members in confidence, question, scratch them under the surface and you are sure to find someone who will not be believing in God or the Quran as a Divine, eternal message and a complete code of life. Or, he will just say that he has given no thought to these questions because he does not attach any great importance to them. And his will be a lucky case.

A Forsaken Issue

This, indeed, is apostasy but it has managed to evade the notice of the Muslims. The reason is that its victim does not go to the church or the synagogue, nor does he proclaim his conversion. The society consequently remains blissfully blind to it. It does not take exception to the Apostate. It neither criticizes him nor punishes him nor does it enforce the other social sanctions. The Apostate retains his place and rights in the society and even gets a chance to dominate it.

It is here that the most vital issue confronting the Muslim World lies. It is an issue that affects the entire

Islamic Millet. A fast spreading Apostatic wave is



sweeping over the Muslims society and yet no one cares. Even the Ulema and the religious leaders feel no anxiety about it. In the past when critical question faced the theologians they used to cry out in desperation, "An issue and no Abul Hasan! (That is an issue of vital importance to the Millet has cropped up and there is no one with the wisdom of Hazrat Ali to solve it)." Now I say, "An issue and no Abu Bakr! (Apostasy is consuming the Muslim Millet like wild fire and there is no one with the faith and fortitude of Hazrat Abu Bakr to put

it down)." But remember that war is no solution of the problem, nor will it be wise to inflame public opinion over it.

The problem cannot be solved by anger or by the use of force. Islam is not acquainted with the holy Inquisition. It also does not allow for vindictiveness and violence. The matter calls for patience, perseverance, sagacity and resolution. We will need immense study, thought and wisdom to deal with it successfully.

The Secret of the Worldwide Success of Irreligiousness

But how did this new faith infiltrate into the Islamic World? How did it come to acquire the strength to engulf the Muslims within their homes; what can explain the mighty hold it enjoys over the hearts and minds of men? All these questions require careful examination.

In the 19th Century Islam had begun to show signs of fatigue and decay. In matters of faith, religious endeavour, knowledge and learning it had indeed touched the lowest point. Islam, in fact, knows no old age and no decline. Like the sun, it is ever young, ever new. It was Muslims who had fallen a prey to senility and degeneration. They had become narrow of outlook, their thinking had become stereotyped - it had lost originality - their minds had grown fossilized, they had lost enthusiasm for religion, and - exceptions apart - the ability to present it in an effective manner.

In addition to this, no attempt was made to establish contact with the young educated classes and to influence their minds although the future belonged to them. It occurred to no one to impress upon them the basic truths that Islam was an eternal, evergreen, faith, the faith of humanity, that the Quran was a miracle of a Book, permanent, unchanging, deathless, whose wonders knew no limit and treasures were boundless, that the Holy Prophet was the prophet for all times and the leader of all men, that the Islamic Shariat was a marvel of legislation, endowed with the ability to march hand in hand with life and answer all the demands it may make upon jurisprudence. Faith and morality and the spiritual values were the only foundations on which a civilised, enlightened society could be built. The modern civilization had only the means and the channels. The ends and the real springheads were contained in the teachings of the Prophets. And a healthy and balanced system of civilisation could come only when there was harmony between the ends and the means.

This was the time and the situation when the West made its assault on the Islamic World with

its whole

armoury of thoughts and ideal) that had been designed and hammered into shape in the minds of the foremost thinkers and philosophers of their time and garbed in such philosophical phraseology (that they gave the impression of being the very essence of human wisdom and learning, although quite a good deal in them were purely empirical and had no basis in fact. The Western thinkers had taken a lot for granted and drawn conclusions that were in a measure just hypothetical. The systems of thought they had built up were an amalgamation of fact and fiction, of knowledge and ignorance and of firm reality and poetic imagination - yes, poetry for you must not imagine that poetry is confined only to verse and rhyme; it is practiced also in the realms of philosophy and social sciences.

These ideologies came under the shadow of the political conquest by the West, and the people of the East bowed down before them emotionally and intellectually too. The eastern intellectuals welcomed them with open arms. Some of them of course accepted them intelligently and consciously, but their number was few. With the majority it was a case of unthinking acceptance, dazzled as they were by the material superiority of the alien rulers. They saw and they surrendered. Their minds were hypnotised and belief in the Western ideas became synonymous with progress and enlightenment and the most important criterion of learning and wisdom.

Thus it was that this new Apostasy spread its wings over the Muslim East without hitch or opposition. Neither the father objected to the downfall of the son, nor the teacher to that of the student. The religious leaders also felt no qualms about it. It was a silent revolution. The Apostates did not wend their way to any church or temple: they did not prostrate themselves before any idol nor made sacrificial offerings at any polytheistic altar - signs which in the past gave an indication of the spiritual metamorphosis.

- Continued, inshaAllah.

The Beggar's Patience

From the *Bostan* of Sa'adi رحمته الله

An old man begged at the door of a mosque. Someone said to him, "This is not the place to beg; stand not here with impudence."

"What house is this," the man inquired, "from which no pity comes upon the condition of the poor?"

"Silence!" Was the reply. "What foolish words are these! This is the house of our Master!"

The beggar raised a cry, "Alas," he said, "that I should be disappointed at this door. I have not gone hopeless from any street; why should I go thus from the door of God? Here, I will stretch forth my hand of want, for I know that I shall not depart empty-handed."

For a year he remained devoutly employed in the mosque. One night, through weakness, his heart began to palpitate, and at daybreak his last breath flickered like a morning lamp. Thus did he exclaim with joy; "And whoever knocked at the door of the Bounteous One, it opened."

He who seeks God should be patient and enduring; I have not heard of an alchemist being sad. Much gold he reduces to ashes so that he may one day turn copper into gold. Gold is good with which to buy - and what could you wish to buy better than the face of your Friend?

Ar-Riya: The Curse of Ostentation

By Abu Zahra

Some years ago, a controversy surrounding the finalists of 'Miss Belgium 2013' beauty contest involved a photo shoot inside the courtyard of the famous *Hassan II Masjid*, in Morocco, had enraged Muslims in the Mediterranean country. The incident kick-started a heated debate; one segment of society blamed the authorities for their negligence by allowing this to happen inside the premises of the *masjid*, while another section was of the view that the incident did not surprise them, as the Casablanca landmark built in 1994 was never meant to be a *masjid* in the true sense of it, but was primarily built as a royal tribute by the Moroccan monarchy to their late king. The landmark, in reality, attracts more tourists than faithful to offer their prayers!

It helped me recall another similar incident, which occurred last year when a Middle East "Sheikhdom" also inaugurated a Grand *Masjid* in one of its oil-rich states. It was later learnt that guided tours are now scheduled six-days a week for Western as well as Muslim 'tourists' to enlighten them about its intricate designs and the historical Muslim architecture in order to promote "greater heritage and cross-cultural religious understanding." At its inauguration, one of the directors of the local tourism authority joyfully explained that, "The tours also demonstrate 'his State's' (name withheld) inclusive approach to

becoming a global tourism destination with true universal appeal."

In today's world, where consumerism has affected all societies, there is no doubt that Muslim societies have also unfortunately plagued themselves with the curse of extravagance to a point where it has become difficult to find even the core Islamic values in practice; and whatever is in practice seems to be done at the expense of Islam.

This *fitnah* is so pervasive that it has now afflicted our societies at every level, from the rulers to the masses, and inflicts upon our present spiritual state of affairs an incalculable injury. The aforementioned incidents were some glaring examples occasionally found through 'news', but actually are reflective of a sickness, which has seeped through our conscious mind as we experience it in our daily lives, be it our homes, offices, educational and business institutions, marriages or even death!

Known as *Ash-Shirk al-Asghar* (minor shirk), *riya* is derived from the word *ruyah* which means 'to be seen'. In English, the term can be best explained by the word 'ostentation', a noun which refers to a boastful or conspicuous behavior, or a gaudy outward display. *Ar-riya* would thus mean a pretentious display of our acts with the intention

to impress people. By its nature it has the tendency to invalidate all our good deeds as it is a sign of arrogance, which could eventually lead to Ash-Shirk al-Akbar (the major shirk).

The intent to flaunt one's acts has also become a major reason for people to resort to illegal methods in order to satiate false pride, as *riya* is often accompanied with other serious moral vices. There is no doubt that simplicity in a person's character shows his strong, deep-rooted yet modest, profound values and thoughts, while extravagance is its complete opposite. Rasulullaah's ﷺ *uswa e hasana* (exemplary character) is a guiding light for us, who suggested a simple way of living and in him ﷺ we have the best role model to guide us through all times.

On several occasions, Rasulullaah ﷺ has warned us of this *fitnah*. Faqeeh Abu Lais Samarqandi, in his famous work, *Tambihul Ghafileen (Admonition to the Neglectful)* writes:

"Rasulullaah ﷺ has mentioned, "I greatly fear minor polytheism for you." When the Sahabah ﷺ asked what 'minor polytheism' was, Rasulullaah ﷺ replied, "Ostentation." On the Day of Judgment, those who were ostentatious will be told, "Go to those for whom you had carried out your actions in the world. Collect the rewards for your actions from them if they are able to give you anything!""

Today, we can easily witness that how ostentation has become a norm for us, not just that we put such a person on a high pedestal in our societies,

but his arrogance becomes a source of admiration and inspiration as it affects the society in general. We quite unconsciously assume the role of a gossip-monger, and thus, the talk of the town usually revolves around someone's palatial villa, a new car, the wedding arrangement or someone's show of doing charity works. We cocoon ourselves in a small sphere of imagination, where all our discussions revolve around ostentatious events and personalities. In doing so, however, we unknowingly allow *riya* to enter into our own hearts and our desire to be appreciated and admired becomes so strong that it leads us to hypocrisy when we resort to do similar things that draw people's attention and admiration.

Apart from the examples quoted above regarding the construction of fancy masjids, which eventually turn into tourist spots, we can also find the example of seminars that are conducted by various charity organizations. All you get to hear in the speeches of the donors is nothing but sheer display of either highhandedness or fake modesty. The idea is to make a show of what is being given in charity. Samarqandi ﷺ, in his same work, quotes a wise man who gave the "the similitude of a person who performs actions to show others as that person who fills his purse with stones instead of money. These will not help him at all. It will only make the purse seem heavy to others, who will think that he is wealthy. In a similar manner, the ostentatious person will appear to be pious to others, but he will receive no reward for his

actions from Allah."

Pretending virtuousness is indeed the worst form of *riya*. At a number of places in the Quran that person is severely condemned, who makes a display of his religious knowledge, high religious status, prayers, preaching, fasts, devotion and other religious practices, in order to please people and gain respect in their hearts, instead of seeking reward from Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ says in *Surah al-Baqara*:

"O you who believe, do not nullify your acts of charity by boasting about (doing people a) favour and by causing (them) hurt, like the one who spends his wealth to show off before people and does not believe in Allah and in the Last Day. So, his example is like a rock on which there is dust, then a heavy rain came over it and left it barren. They have no ability to gain anything out of what they have done, and Allah does not give guidance to the people who disbelieve." [Al-Qur'an 2:264]

Similarly, in *Surah-e Ma'uun*:

"So, woe to those performers of Salah. Who are neglectful of their Salah. who (do good only to) show off." [Al-Qur'an 107:4-6]

Narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri ﷺ that Rasulullaah ﷺ said:

"Shall I not inform you of what I fear for you more than the Masih ad-Dajjal? It is the hidden shirk. It is when a man stands up for prayer, then

beautifies his prayer for another to look at" (Ibn Majah).

At another instance in *tanmbih ul ghafileen*, it is said that sincerity should be learnt from the example of a shepherd. "When the shepherd performs his *salaah* while tending to his goats," writes the author, "the thought never crosses his mind that the goats will praise him. In this manner, a person should carry out his acts of worship, being undeterred by the praises and insults of people."

There is no harm in dressing nicely or prolonging one's prayers or giving huge amounts of charity, but we have to check our intention: whether the good deed is for the sake of Allah ﷻ or is it just done to get noticed by people. Amirul Mu'minin Hadhrat Umar bin al-Khattab ﷺ narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Deeds are [a result] only of the intentions [of the actor], and an individual is [rewarded] only according to that which he intends."

Quite evidently, this hadith very clearly articulates the point of *ikhlas* ('sincerity', a concept in direct opposition to *riya*) in one's prayers and deeds. Therefore, in all our righteous manners, a Muslim should always seek the pleasure of Allah ﷻ. Also, the virtues of simplicity are far too many for us to fall for the few temporary moments of happiness gained through ostentation to satisfy our false pride, a disease which has led to many tribulations encountered by the Muslim societies today.

La Tahzan

By Zawja Asim

We grieve ,
 When trials hit
 And forget
 The ground He provides
 For the chosen ones,
 We grieve when He takes an *amanah*, and forget
 The gift of *sabr* He provides for the chosen ones,
 We grieve
 When misery befalls
 And forget
 The fortune of *iman*
 He bestows
 For the chosen ones
 And when the door is closed
 We squeak in the darkness
 And become blind
 To the peeping light
 That enters the cracked holes
 And our wounded soul
 Brighten with *sabr*
 And gratitude
 For it knows the promise by His lord;
 "...on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve "



Love Lost

By Syed Hassan Shah

In the loving memory of my *stepmother*

A woman whose name was Love,
 Is lost... is lost.

Her saintly charm,
 Her sublime beauty,
 Is lost.

Her face, ethereal,
 Her warmth, like God's embrace,
 Her smile made the flowers bloom,
 Her gait like a setting sun soon,
 She is lost...

Tall as an evergreen cypress,
 Frail as a smouldering ember,
 She knew what the eyes spoke.
 She is lost

A woman whose name was Love,
 Is lost.

Yeh Ghazi Yeh Teray Purisarar Bandy

By Zawjah Farid

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was his appeal lawyer. Allama Muhammad Iqbal cried while placing his body in the grave. His funeral was one of the biggest Lahore had ever seen: some place the numbers at 200,000, others at 600,000 and yet others insist it was a whopping half a million!

Ghazi IIm Deen Shaheed (1908-29), a young carpenter, had murdered a Hindu book publisher, Mahashe Rajpal, in undivided India, for publishing a despicable and blasphemous book.

On April 6, 1929, he made his way to the bazaar and purchased a dagger for one rupee. He hid it and awaited Rajpal's arrival outside his shop. He did not recognize him so he made an effort to find out through people that were around.

When Rajpal arrived and entered the shop, IIm Deen did not notice him. But soon someone informed him that the person he sought was inside. The young man entered the shop and lunged at Rajpal, stabbing him in the chest. He fell to the ground and died instantly. The police arrested IIm Deen and took him to the Lahori Gate Police Station. Later, he was moved to Central Jail Mianwali.

When witnesses from the prosecution claimed that he was guilty, Muhammad Ali Jinnah

appealed on the grounds of extenuating circumstances, citing IIm Deen's young age and pleaded for the death sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment. The court rejected the appeal. (This is said to be the only case that Jinnah lost).

Ghazi IIm Deen Shaheed was thus given the death penalty according to the Indian Penal Code and subsequently executed on 31st October 1929.

Since he had been buried by the jail authorities in Mianwali without funeral prayers, Allama Iqbal requested the British authorities for a proper funeral for IIm Deen and the return of his body to Lahore. He was only granted permission when he assured them that no riots would erupt.

When the body was exhumed from the grave, it was completely intact; even the colour of the shroud had not changed!

The funeral took place on 14th November, 1929 and is said to be the largest in Lahore in a hundred years!

When Allama Iqbal was placing Ghazi IIm Deen Shaheed's body inside his new grave, he had reportedly remarked, teary-eyed: *we only kept talking, the carpenter's son surpassed us in upholding the glory of the religion.*

COVID DIARIES

By Dr Anum Fatima

They say trauma needs debriefing or it comes out in different ways. And yes, it's true. It has affected me and I think I shall never be the same again. I now want to share, truly without any defences and camouflage, my experience of duties in a COVID ward.

If I'm asked to summarize my experience in three words, I would say deaths, helplessness and emotional pain!

People bringing their loved ones on stretchers, refused by all hospitals for admission, begging to let them stay and to save the life of their patient. How fortunate they would be and how contented we doctors would be if we had beds and oxygen available for them. No one with an alive conscience would let a patient die in such a helpless state. Still we had no option but to give them the grim news and refer them to another hospital. Many would die while being shifted. Many would make it to the other hospital and die there.

The fortunate ones, for whom we would find beds in ICU, sometimes would die on the ICU entrance. I still remember the two of them. A young gentleman in his early thirties for whom we arranged a bed after hours of struggle. He was shifted in the ambulance and he expired on reaching ICU.

Second was a middle aged man accompanied by his daughter; he was shifted to COVID ICU and almost an hour later we got the news that he collapsed and couldn't make it.

I cannot forget the sight of the patient who arrived in an ambulance. His attendants were extremely anxious and entreated the doctors to save him (and it is only Allah who gives life and death!). But from the very sight we knew that he wasn't alive. How hard it was for us to console them and make them realise that there was nothing we could do.

There are many untold stories. People gasping in wards, wanting to see and talk to their family only once and dying alone with no one by their bedside to hold their hand and say calm words.

May Allah ﷻ bless everyone for whatever pain and misery they faced. May Allah ﷻ bless the dead ones with highest ranks in Jannah. May He ﷻ protect everyone and grant *aafiyah* to all.

- Written by a postgraduate resident at a hospital in Rawalpindi, Pakistan

The Shariah, Non-Muslim and the Rights

By Khalid Baig

Islam's treatment of non-Muslims in its midst has been a favorite topic of discussion for the Orientalists and other pundits who make careers out of denigrating Islam. They have been singing essentially the same song for centuries now, but over time their tunes have changed. It is instructive to take a brief look at this change.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Reverend Malcolm MacColl wrote at length on this pet topic of his. His 1896 book "The Sultan and the Powers" was an urgent call for the Western powers to take action against the Ottoman khalifah to save the Christians in the Muslim world. Its chapter "Islam as a Ruling System" is a searing indictment of not the Sultan but Islam itself. Realizing that his extreme views and recommendations would betray his fanaticism against Islam, he claimed that he was an advocate of religious freedom. However "My toleration ceases when the religious doctrines of one man invade the aboriginal rights of another, as they do, and have ever done, in every State, without exception, where Islam ruled supreme." He claimed that under the Shariah a non-Muslim's evidence could not be received in a court of law against a Muslim; non-Muslim places of worship were in danger; their women were at the mercy of Muslim males; and they were taxed so heavily with *jizya* and *kharaj* that more than 67% of the produce of their soil was taken in special taxes, not to mention other taxes. He combined these fabrications and distortions with a crude and extremely derogatory language for Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam. And in his self-righteous rage this worthy blatantly advocated the use of force by European powers to remedy the situation.

A similar article by him in the Times of London published in January 1895 so excited the Christian missionaries in India that they distributed an Urdu translation with a challenge for anyone to answer the charges. They were confident that the stunning evidence in the article would silence the Muslims for good. (A fitting response was given by Allama Shibli Nomani in two historic papers.)

No Inquisitions

A century later the language has changed. In a widely quoted article among the Western academicians, P. R. Kumaraswamy begins by admitting: "Systematic persecution of minorities was unheard of in Islamic history. There are no Islamic parallels to the Inquisition or the Holocaust. Even contemporary anti-Semitism in various Islamic countries in the region and elsewhere was primarily a contribution of the Christian missionaries who were active in the Islamic Middle East."(1)

Nice words. But they do not go very far. He then goes on to assert that, nonetheless, the Islamic treatment of non-Muslims was bad. Because dhimmis were not equal to Muslims in law or practice.

After castigating the past he moves on to declare his total dissatisfaction with the present where constitutions of Muslim countries declare that all subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim, are equal under the law. This is so because these constitutions declare Islam as the official religion and Islamic Shariah as the source of law. He complains: "Most of the Arab and Islamic states have declared Islam to be the official Religion... Furthermore, a number of countries have recognized *sharia* (Islamic religious law) as a

major source of jurisprudence." He recognizes that Muslims want Shariah and to oppose it "would be authoritarian and dictatorial." Yet that is precisely what he wants to do because implementation of Shariah "evokes apprehension among non-Muslims of legalized discrimination."

So is Islam the problem after all? No. He says: "For a dhimmi or a non-Muslim, the problem has never been what Islamic scriptures say but how they are practiced by rulers who were the followers of Islam." In his words the problem is not theology but history and not theory but practice. Yet the solution lies in disbanding the theology and overriding the Shariah.

How far one will have to go to appease him? Very far. His utopia will not be achieved until he is given the charge of deciding who is a Muslim. He demands: "It is imperative that the Alawis, Ahmadiyahs, and others are recognized as Muslims. Only then could they secure any meaningful role for themselves."

Unlike MacColl, Kumaraswamy does not use any derogatory words for the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, and has even inserted a few words of praise for Islam. But what this smooth talking academic is asking for today is much more than the fanatic reverend had asked for a century ago. The language has been refined, but the goal posts have been moved much further while the blinders to Islamic Shariah and history remain constant.

Kumaraswamy admits: "Unlike Europe, the Islamic Middle East never resorted to systematic persecution of its minority population." The crucial question is why. What made the Muslims behave differently than the other powers before and after in their dealing with the other in their midst? That investigation is central to the discussion but he does not probe it at all.

What Made the Muslim Rule Different?

To get an answer we can visit the court of Harun al-Rasheed (d. 809) who was a contemporary of Charlemagne (d. 814), the father of Europe. Charlemagne had forcibly converted the Saxons to Roman Catholicism. There was no forced conversion in the powerful empire of Harun al-Rasheed, in which Christians enjoyed full

freedom and even high positions in the court.

Not that there was never a temptation to do otherwise. When Byzantine emperor Nicephorous insulted Harun al-Rasheed and repeatedly defied him, he did get irritated. As a result he felt like taking it out on his Christian subjects. So what did he do? He asked his Chief Justice, the great Imam Abu Yusuf, as to why the Churches had been left intact in lands conquered by Muslims and why Christians were allowed to take out crosses in their processions on their holidays. The query and its response have been recorded in the marvelous Kitab al-Kharaj of Imam Abu Yusuf. He wrote that Muslims had reached a treaty with the dhimmis which spelled out these protections and the treaty could not be violated. The treaty of Hira signed by Khalid ibn Waleed included these stipulations: "Churches will not be demolished. They will not be stopped from blowing their trumpets or bringing out crosses on their religious holidays." None of the Rashidun Khalifahs had objected to it so it represented *ijma* (consensus), a major source of Islamic Law or Shariah.

As the firm and unequivocal answer by the great scholar made it clear, the non-Muslim subjects were under the protection of the Shariah, which was not subject to change with the moods or calculations of the ruler (or of the manipulated masses as in modern democracies). It was this protection that made the Muslim rule different from all others --- before or since.

The Treaty of Najran

The concern for justice, which distinguishes Islamic rule from all others, can be seen in the preface to Kitab al-Kharaj where Abu Yusuf reminds the khalifah to make sure the officers he appointed displayed "justice for the dhimmis, fairness for the victim, sternness against the oppressor, and kindness for the people."

It was a result of the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who warned his followers, "Whoever wronged a *mustamin* (a non-Muslim under protection of a treaty) or burdened him beyond his capacity or took anything from him without the latter's will, I will be his accuser on the Day of Judgment."

Similarly the Treaty of Najran, which the Prophet, Sall-Alalhu alayhi wa sallam, concluded with the Christians of Najran in 8 AH was the prototype for all subsequent treaties. It included the following terms:

1. They will be defended against enemy attack.
2. They will not be intimidated to convert to Islam.
3. They will not have to go to the tax collector to pay their jizya; he will come to them.
4. Their lives, properties, businesses, and lands will be protected.
5. Their priests and clerics will not be removed from office.
6. Their crosses and statues will not be destroyed.

Such guarantees for personal and religious freedom were unthinkable in the tribal pre-Islamic Jahiliya society. Once introduced by Islam, they were so internalized by its followers that they determined Islamic treatment of non-Muslims throughout its history as the following glimpses will show.

The Islamic Record

Equality

It is one thing to make pious pronouncements about equality. It is another to really consider everyone's life to be of equal worth and take the difficult decisions that may be dictated by this principle. It is in the latter test where Islamic record rises above that of others. During the time of Sayyidna Umar ibn al-Khattab, Radi-Allahu unhu, when a Muslim from the Bakr tribe killed a Christian of Hira, his verdict was that the killer be handed over to the heir of the deceased who could either accept blood money or kill him. The heir decided to take his revenge and the Muslim was killed. Obviously because of the deterrence such incidents were rare. However when a similar incident happened in the time of Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, the fate of the killer was the same. The unequivocal legal Islamic verdict was that the life of a dhimmi was equal to the life of a Muslim and so was his blood money. Sayyidna Ali spelled out this principle: "Whoever has accepted our protection (*dhimma*) his blood is like our blood and his blood money is like our blood money."

This was not a sound bite meant for the media. It was the law of the land.

The same is true about equality in the court of law, MacColl's claims notwithstanding. A Jew or a Christian could bring out a law suit against any Muslim, even the highest office in the land and his testimony was as admissible as that of anyone else. When a Jew filed a claim for the coat of mail of Sayyidna Ali ؑ, who was the khalifa at that time, Sayyidna Ali ؑ, appeared before the qadi as an ordinary defendant. Similarly, when a Christian filed a property claim against Hisham ibn Abdul Malik (who later became a khalifah) in the court of Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, the latter ordered Hisham to appear personally in the court. Based on the evidence the case was decided against Hisham.

Property Rights

It was the same with land and property rights, which were always respected. When Abu Jafar Abdullah al-Mansur (d. 775) decided to build the new capital city of Baghdad, he did not just appropriate the land. He purchased it from the dhimmis who owned it.

Not only land, but Muslims even paid for the debris taken from non-Muslim properties. It happened during the construction of the Masjid in Kufa in the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab. The Masjid used debris from the long ago abandoned palaces and mansions of Hira. There was no legal heir to these palaces. Yet a compensation was credited to the account of the Christians living there.

Again the verdict of the Shariah was clear. Imam Abu Yusuf wrote: "The khalifah has no authority to appropriate the land of the dhimmis. It belongs to them. They will continue to transfer it through inheritance and sale."

Religious Rights

The guarantees for religious freedom were written in the treaties Muslims signed with the non-Muslims. Obviously this included rights to their places of worship. This was enforced like anything else in the Shariah. We see this in the presence of a large number of churches from old times in the Muslim world, whether Iraq or Syria

or Egypt. We also see this in the restoration of the right when occasionally someone violated it. In one incident, some churches in Egypt were destroyed by khalifah al-Hadi. They were rebuilt at government expense by Musa ibn Isa, the governor of Harun al-Rasheed, following a fatwa of Laith ibn Sa'd, the leading scholar of his time.

The story of the Church of John in Damascus, next to the famous Jami Masjid is quite instructive. Successive khalifas wanted to purchase the church to expand the Masjid. Amir Muawiya tried but the church leaders refused and he kept quiet. When Abdul Malik ibn Marwan pressured them to sell the church, the priests threatened him that anyone who destroyed the church would be afflicted with dementia or leprosy. Aggravated by that Abdul Malik did accept the challenge and the church was annexed to the Masjid. While their dire predictions did not materialize, it was nonetheless a violation of their rights as provided by the Shariah. So when Umar ibn Abdul Aziz became khalifah the Christians petitioned him and he decreed that the annexed part must be returned to them. Muslims ended up offering many properties to the Christians to win a deal that would leave the Masjid intact.

The extreme care to ensure the protection of their places of worship can be seen in the actions of Sayyidna Umar ibn al-Khattab. It is well known that during his trip to Jerusalem, the asr prayer time came when he was visiting a church. But he refused to pray inside the church despite the offer of the patriarch. Instead he prayed on the stairs. He was concerned that if he prayed inside it might lead some later Muslims to try to take the church. To further preempt any possibility of a future misappropriation, he on his own accord, gave the church authorities a written proclamation that Muslims could not offer prayer in congregation even on the stairs. Nor could they call the adhan from it.

Rights and Security

An important issue in discussion of rights is how they are to be balanced against security concerns. What happened in Cyprus during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods shows us the

Islamic outlook on this perennial question. After Cyprus was conquered in 29/650, the treaty called for the neutrality of its people in the wars between Muslims and the Romans. But three years later they violated the treaty and openly helped the Romans in their war on Muslims. Amir Muawiya conquered the city again and left them on renewal of the previous agreement. The pattern of signing a treaty and violating it happened a couple of times. Finally under suspicion of yet another breach of treaty, Walid ibn Yazeed expelled a group of suspects. But it was only a suspicion; there was no hard evidence. So the scholars gave a verdict that it was not permissible under Shariah to expel them and they were allowed to come back.

Things did not stop here. Their attitude of defiance and helping the enemy continued even during the Abbasid period. Ultimately governor Abdul Malik ibn Salih turned to the leading scholars of his time including Imam Malik, Laith ibn Sa'd, Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, and others to get guidance from the Shariah in dealing with them. The answers ranged from no action, to a one year notice for them to change their behavior, to expulsion after paying double the value of their possessions. Of course, in a modern Western democracy the solution would have been much easier; the people could have been vilified and tried in the media and then punished by some executive order, not to mention tortured to get intelligence to protect the homeland against the real Roman threat.

Employment

Another indication of Muslim attitude about the others is seen in the makeup of their courts. Right from the beginning non-Muslims were welcome there. In the Umayyad period tax and accounting departments were headed by Christians and Zoroastrians. The katib (Chief Secretary) of Abdul Malik ibn Marwan was ibn Sarjan, a Christian. This pattern has been there throughout history. Even the much maligned Aurangzeb Alamgir had many Hindus holding leading positions in his court.

What about Jizya?

Much has been made of the jizya, a tax payable by the able-bodied men between the ages of 20

and 50 as a token of their submission to the Muslim rule and as a compensation for the military services that the Muslims provided for their protection and from which they were exempt. (That women were exempt from jizya was certainly another act of "discrimination against women" that the modern world probably would not tolerate).

The word itself is an Arabicized form of the Persian giza which was a similar tax imposed by the pre-Islamic Persian king Noshervan for the purpose of supporting the army. It was not a Muslim invention; both Persian and Byzantine empires were used to collecting it. But like anything else Muslims brought their extreme concern for justice in its administration and use.

Its purpose and nature is clear from the words of the treaty between Khalid ibn Waleed and the Christian Salooba ibn Nastoora. "I reached a treaty with you and your people on the basis of payment of jizya and provision of security. It is your responsibility to pay the jizya as long as we are protecting you and not if we do not."

The last part of the above sentence was not meant for decoration. What it really meant was brought to life when in 15/635 Muslims faced the second battle at Ajnadeen in a last ditch effort by Heraclius (d. 641 CE) to remove the Muslims from Syria. He had gathered a very large army and in order to face it Muslims had to mobilize all their forces from Hims and Damascus. This meant that they would no longer be able to provide the protection they had promised to these areas. While facing the new threat was on their minds, the Muslim commander Sayyidna Abu Ubaydah did not forget the treaty with the Christians of the area. He ordered all of the jizya that had been taken from these areas to be returned to the people, which was done before the army left. Understandably the grateful Christians noted that had it been the Romans, then instead of returning any money, they would have taken whatever they could before leaving.

That jizya was a payment for military services is further shown by the fact that when the people provided military services, jizya was waived. There are reports of such waivers during the time of Sayyidna Umar ibn al-Khattab (Armenia and Bab

in Iran) and Sayyidna Uthman ibn Affan (Jarjimah).

The exorbitant amount of jizya is another myth that the Orientalists have created. As detailed in Kitab al-Kharaj, there were three rates of jizya based on a person's financial condition. These were 12, 24, or 48 dirhams or silver coins per year. To put these numbers in perspective, it should be noted that anyone having less than 200 dirhams was considered to be below the poverty line and was exempted from payment.

Kharaj or tax on agricultural produce was also levied on them. It was a substitute for the *ushr* (a 10% levy) that the Muslims had to pay and from which the non-Muslims were exempt.

Role of Shariah

What has been presented above are just some of the glimpses from the Muslim record in treating the other during their period of power. It is a record of justice, fairness, and religious freedom that is unmatched by anything before or since. That is why Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah who lived a life of exile in Paris (after his native Hyderabad had been taken over militarily by India) and knew first hand Europe's treatment of Muslims, said: "If Muslim residents in non-Muslim countries receive the same treatment as dhimmis did in the Islamic system, they would be more than satisfied; they would be grateful."

And contrary to the common perceptions created by a dedicated propaganda campaign that has gone on for a very long period, the real reason for this unprecedented treatment was the Shariah.

The Shariah assured the rule of law. It could not be changed or ignored. And whenever some one showed any lapses--- and indeed there were--- it was there to provide the needed correction. When the Companion Saeed ibn Zaid saw some non-Muslims made to stand in the sun for failure to pay jizya, he immediately went to the governor of the area to admonish him against this action. He said, "I heard the Prophet of Allah say, Allah will punish those who torture the people in this world."

Their torture was nothing compared to the tortures being meted out today in torture chambers around the world. But there is no one today who can remind the torturers of this

warning. This warning comes, not from the universal declarations of the UN that have no sacred value for the signatories, but from the Shariah that controlled a Muslim's thoughts and actions. It was the reason that "Unlike Europe, the Islamic Middle East never resorted to systematic persecution of its minority population."

"Not Good Enough"

The position taken by many Orientalists today is that Shariah was good for the past. We can appreciate its achievements in the dark ages. Not any more. This medicine came with an expiration date and it is no longer safe or effective. The gold standard for all human endeavors has been set by modernity and everyone must follow it. The proof: the very concept of a dhimmi is anathema to the modern mind which does not accept any division of us versus them, while it was the hallmark of the Islamic system.

It sounds great --- until you start to think about it. Have we truly achieved a common homogenized mass where there is no division on any basis between people? Religions do certainly divide people between believers and non-believers. But so does secularism. It does not look kindly at those who question it.

The differences being there, the real question is how you handle them. There is a fundamental difference between Islamic and Western approaches to this issue. The Western solution is just to eliminate the other through a rigorous project of assimilation. When that is not possible then the Western solution has been to create apartheid states as in South Africa and Israel, or create reservations as done for the Indians in the US. Minorities in the West are constantly reminded, often by their own leaders, that unless they assimilate they will end up on reservations.

To eliminate the problem of multiple categories by removing the offending categories is one approach. That is how the West "solved" the problem of the inequities between men and women; it forced the women to enter the men's world to be treated as equal. Islam, on the other hand, gave women rights without denying their femininity. It emphasized their essential humanity and considered them equally responsible in their spheres of action. But it never forced or enticed a

woman to leave her home and compete with the men to get her rights. It did not give her one right while taking back another; the right to be a woman. For that it is constantly rebuked.

In dealing with the other in the society, the same pattern has been repeated. Islam certainly did not call for assimilation of the non-Muslims; rather it assured the unique identity of each and gave them rights while maintaining that identity. It recognized their essential humanity and the equality of their life in ways that cannot be imagined in the Western societies. Here again it did not give the non-Muslim one right while taking back another; the right to be a practicing Jew or Christian or whatever, with full religious freedom even for practices that were anathema to Islam. For that also it is being rebuked.

Do Muslims Have a Right to Live by Islam

What it all boils down to is this simple question. Do Muslims have a right to live by Islam? The answer we are hearing from the pundits is no. Not in France, not in Algeria. Not in Europe, not in the Muslim world. Muslim women have no right to wear hijab in France and no right to be governed by the Shariah in Algeria. In the former they must respect the majority because it becomes uncomfortable with the sight of hijab. In the latter they must respect the minority, because it becomes uncomfortable with the talk of Shariah.

Despite the great achievements the West has undeniably made in recognizing universal human rights, it still has a long way to go. While Muslims always gave the right to non-Muslims to be governed by their personal law (like marriage, divorce, family issues, inheritance, and so on), it is enthusiastically denied to Muslims in the West. While they let the church bells ring, the adhan or Muslim call to prayer does not enjoy that freedom here. While they decided that no action against minorities could be taken based on suspicions, the Western achievement has been in passing anti-terrorism laws and Patriot Acts.

And pundits are glad to inform us that it is the Islamic Shariah that needs to be reformed. Sure.

1. P. R. Kumaraswamy, "Islam and Minorities: Need for a Liberal Framework", *Mediterranean Quarterly* 18:3 summer 2007, 94-109, 97.

Umm Salama

By Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha

How can mere words do justice to a woman of her exalted stature?

Her father was one of the renowned nobles from the aristocratic tribe of Makhzoom. He was a man whose legendary generosity had earned him the title of "The Traveller's Provision". For any travellers that he hosted were abundantly cared for and required no further sustenance.

Her husband, 'Abdullah bin 'Abdil Asad  was one of the first ten Muslims. Only Abu Bakr As-Siddiq  and a mere handful accepted Islam before him.

Her real name was Hind but she was known to all as Umm Salama . Umm Salama  accepted Islam along with her husband, so she ranks among the female Muslim pioneers.

Quraish was enraged by the couple's conversion. And they opposed this conversion with a ferocity that would have weakened anyone of lesser resolve. However, Umm Salama  and her husband bore this opposition with dignified fortitude.

When the persecution grew unendurable, the Blessed Prophet  permitted his companions to emigrate to Ethiopia, and Abu Salama  and Umm Salama  were in the forefront of the emigrants.

Umm Salama  travelled to an unknown land, leaving behind her luxurious home and social prestige in Mecca. Willingly, she sacrificed all these comforts for the sake of Allah . Her only motive was to seek His reward and persevere in the path of His Divine pleasure.

Despite the protection granted to the young couple by the Negus, may Allah  grant him the bliss of Paradise, they still longed to return to Mecca, the city of Divine Revelation, and were consumed by an intense yearning for the Messenger of Allah .

From time to time, news from Mecca would reach them. Soon they heard that the Meccan Muslims had increased in number and the conversion of Hamza bin 'Abdul Muttalib and 'Umar bin Al-Khattab  had significantly strengthened the Muslims. According to rumors, the persecution of Quraish had diminished.

Upon receiving the news, a group of them, compelled by their fervent longing for the Messenger of Allah , resolved to return to Mecca. Umm Salama and her husband  eagerly joined them.

All too soon, it became painfully apparent that the rumours had been false. For in actual fact, the conversion of Hamza and 'Umar  had provoked the Quraish to greater hostility than before. They now seized every opportunity of torturing the Muslims.

At this juncture, the Blessed Prophet  permitted his Companions to migrate to Madina. Once more, Umm Salama and her husband  decided to escape from the persecution of the Quraish for the sake of preserving their religion.

However, the emigration of Umm Salama and her husband  was not smooth sailing, as they had imagined. In fact, a terrible tragedy befell them en route.

Let us hear the poignant account of Umm

Salama  in her own moving words.

"When Abu Salama resolved to depart from Madina, he arranged from a camel and after seating me, he placed our child in my lap and began leading the camel forward.

But, before we could reach Mecca, we were spotted by men from my tribe, Bani Makhzoom who came forward in fierce opposition, saying to Abu Salama. "You may have managed to escape us but what of this woman of yours? She is our daughter, why should we allow you to take her on your travels?"

They pounced on us and wrenched me away. When my husband's tribe, Banu 'Abdil Asad saw my clan seizing me and my child, they flared up in fury and shouted, "By Allah, we will never leave the child with this woman after you have forcibly snatched her away from our brother, for he is our son, and we have a greater right over him."

Then both tribes began a tug of war for my child, Salama, while I looked on helplessly, until Banu 'Abdil Asad snatched him by the hand and took him away.

Thus, in the space in the space of just a few moments, I found myself bereft and abandoned. My husband left for Madina in order to save himself and his faith while my child was torn from me by Banu 'Abdil Asad. I was left behind, devastated and heartbroken.

I was compelled to return to my people, Bani Makhzoom, who kept me with them. In one faithful hour, I had been forcibly separated from my husband and son. After that day, I would go out every morning to the valley and sit down in the same spot where the calamity had taken place. I would relive those agonising moments when my husband and son had been torn from me, and I would weep unceasingly until the shades of night fell.

I did this for almost a year, until my first cousin passed by me and took pity on me. Out of compassion, he rebuked my people, "Why don't

you free this poor woman? You have separated her from her husband and her child." He pleaded my cause until finally they said, "Go and join your husband, if you wish."

But how could I join my husband in Madina, and leave the apple of my eyes with Banu 'Abdil Asad? How could my grief ever be assuaged if I were to immigrate, leaving behind my small son in Mecca without any news of him?

Eventually some people took pity on my grief and their hearts softened towards me so they interceded with Banu 'Abdil Asad on my behalf. At last, my child Salama was restored to me.

I had no desire to linger in Mecca, waiting for a fellow traveller. So I quickly made the arrangements and prepared my camel. Placing my child in my lap, I set out for Madina, all alone, but determined to find my husband.

When I reached Tan'eem, I met 'Uthman bin Talha , who asked, "Where are you going, O daughter of the Traveller's Provision?"

I replied, "I am going to join my husband in Madina."

He asked, "Is none with you?"

I replied, "None but Allah and my little child."

He responded, "By Allah, I shall not leave you until you reach Madina." And he grasped the reins of the camel and began to walk along, leading it.

By Allah, I have never met a nobler or more honourable Arab, whenever he reached a resting place, he would make my camel kneel down, then he would withdraw some distance, while I dismounted. Only then would he draw near the camel, remove the litter and lead it to a tree to be tied. Afterwards, he would withdraw to another tree and rest in its shade. Once the rest was over, he would prepare my camel once more, and retreat to a distance. Once I was astride, he would approach and lead the camel forward.

Such was his daily routine, until we reached

Madina. When we saw the homes of Banu 'Amr Bin 'Awf in Quba, he said, "Your husband is in this dwelling, enter it with the blessing of Allah." Then he departed from Mecca."

At long last, the couple had been reunited after an agonizing and prolonged separation. Both husband and wife had a blissful reunion. However, this idyllic state of affairs was not destined to last for long.

War upon war ensued in rapid succession.

First came Badr, in which Abu Salama RAO fought and returned with the Muslims, having won a mighty victory for Islam.

Then came Uhud. Once more, he was tested and once more he passed with flying colours. At Uhud, he received a fatal wound for which he was treated but to no avail. Soon it became inflamed and swollen, causing him to become bedridden.

During his convalescence, Abu Salama RAO told his wife, "Umm Salama, I heard the messenger of Allah ﷺ say: "When someone is afflicted with any misfortune, and he says, "Inna lillahe wa inna illaihi rajioon, Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Allah shall we return," and he also says, "O Allah I seek the reward for this affection from You. O Allah ﷻ, grant me something better in return," Allah ﷻ will definitely grant him that."

Abu Salama RAO remained in his sickbed for many days. Each morning, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would come to spend time with him and he continued to come until Abu Salama RAO passed away from this world.

Then the Blessed Prophet ﷺ closed the eyes of his companion with his noble hands, and raising his gaze towards the sky, he said,

"O Allah ﷻ, forgive Abu Salama RAO and elevate his rank among those brought near to You. Provide for his family and those he left behind, forgive us, and forgive him, O lord of the worlds, and extend his grave and fill it with light."

Umm Salama RAO remembered Abu Salama's RAO words about the saying of the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ so she prayed, "O Allah ﷻ I seek the reward of my affection from You."

At first she could not bear to say, "O Allah ﷻ grant me that which is better in return." For she thought to herself, who can be better than Abu Salama RAO? Eventually she completed the invocation.

The Muslims were overwhelmed with the grief at the affliction of Umm Salama RAO. In fact, they named her, "Widow of the Arabs", for she had no one of her own in Madina, other than a defenceless child.

The Muhajireen and Ansaar were very conscious of the rights of Umm Salama RAO upon them. First Abu Bakr RAO proposed to her but she declined. Then, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab RAO proposed her, but she refused him as well.

Finally, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ proposed to her. Nervously, she told him, "I have three faults. I am a jealous woman and I fear lest some behaviour of mine might anger you, for which Allah ﷻ will punish me. I am advanced in years, and lastly, I have children."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied, "Regarding the jealousy, which you mention, I shall pray to Allah ﷻ to remove it from you. As for your advanced years, I am too in the same position, and as for the children to which you allude, your children will be my children."

So the Messenger of Allah ﷺ married Umm Salama RAO and Allah ﷻ answered her prayer and granted her someone better than Abu Salama RAO. From that day onwards, she was no longer known as the mother of only Salama, for she now became Umm ul Momineen, the mother of all believers.

May Allah ﷻ be pleased with Umm Salama RAO and grant her the radiance of paradise.

- Excerpted with permission from 'Stories from the Lives of the Sahaba' (Vol 1); Trans. by Umm Husain



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Madrassa Memories

By Zainab Wasay

The years I spent in madrasa have a very deep impact on me. Just like there are all sorts of schools, there are all sorts of madrasas. But unfortunately most people only know what they've heard from different sources and really have no clue about how beautiful the environment of a good quality madrasa can be.

Alhamdulillah, I've done a 6-year *Aalimah* course from a well-known madrasa for girls. We would start our day at 7:55 a.m. by first marking attendance. Then from 8:00 - 8:15 a.m. the *hafidhat* would go to revise their *hifz* while the rest of the students would exercise, do cleaning or recite *tasbeehat*. Days were specified for each. Cleaning duties were also divided amongst the students. If there was time before or after, some girls would pray *Ishraq* as well. There were prayer mats in each classroom.

Regarding the cleaning, I honestly learnt most of my house management skills from the madrasa. Other than the routine cleaning we would thoroughly clean the madrasa twice a year in which we would, clean all the fans and windows,

dust all the lights, dust each book in the library separately, wash the prayer mats and carpets, etc. My favourite was cleaning the fans.

From 8:15 - 10:45 a.m. there would be three classes. Here I'd like to add a disclaimer: there was NO screaming, shouting or use of foul language, let alone corporal punishment in our madrasa. Yes we would be told off at times, but we respected our teachers a lot. Gossiping about them or making memes of them was unimaginable. And one of the reasons for our respect for them was their unique relationship with us.

I remember how on Saturdays I would often go to the main *baji* incharge during break and just talk to her and she would listen with a smile. I was just a teenager then. She was known for her sweet smile and composed posture. Most students were afraid of her because as a teacher, she was very keen on discipline, but outside the classroom, she was a very sweet person.

I remember once when I went to her I had

suddenly developed a huge cold nodule in my throat. I had been very ill for many months. I told her about the nodule, showed it to her and said that if Allah ﷻ isn't angry with me it doesn't matter to me, but His *aafiyah* is easier for me. Then I burst into tears. Seeing me cry, she too began to silently cry. Then she told me about how sometimes Allah ﷻ loves a person and wants him/her to reach a certain rank. But their good deeds aren't enough to get them there, so He puts them through trials to purify them. Then, because of their patience they are able to attain those ranks. Thus she encouraged me to be patient. I was most touched by her crying for me and later told my parents as well. (*Alhamdulillah* I got completely cured within a month after that.)

Now as I recall both my words and hers and the pure environment of the madrasa, I think to myself how that specific event will always be a life lesson for me, *inshaAllah*.

From 10:45 - 11:00 a.m. we would have a 15 minute lunch break. There was a canteen in madrasah as well where they would sell items at retail price. The canteen wasn't for profit but for the need of the students. I think one of the reasons for it being non-profit was that students came from all sorts of economic backgrounds and the madrasa wanted to keep things affordable for them.

By going to the madrasa, I learnt a lot about how different people live. When I was in the third year, one of my friend's father became very sick so he invested most of his savings in a business. For a year everything went well but then the business suddenly collapsed and a lot of people lost their money. Her family was suddenly in a very difficult situation and she wasn't able to pay the madrasa fees anymore but the madrasa told her not to worry about it (I know this because she told me herself).

She told me that once she was sitting and worrying about their financial conditions. Her father passed by her and saw her looking upset. He then sat next to her and told her that the difficulties of this world pass but those of the hereafter last. And since they hadn't done anything which could sabotage their *aakhirah*,

she need not worry. She wasn't able to complete her studies and eventually had to leave, but her words always stuck to me.

In break-time, some girls would also pray *chaasht* (*dhuha*). I was first introduced to *ishraq* and *chaasht* in madrasa. There was a lot of emphasis on *tahajjud* as well. I remember once when I was in the fourth year, some of us were sitting together and talking about tips on how to wake up for *tahajjud*. One girl expressed her regret at not being able to wake up and I first heard Allama Iqbal's following couplet from her:

کس قدر تم پگراں صبح کی بیداری ہے

ہم سے کب پیار ہے؟ ہاں نینقہیں پیاری ہے

We all were under twenty then. The truth is that the environment in the madrasa was one of innocence and sincerity. It wasn't perfect, as nothing in this world is. But the good it offered was invaluable and, to be honest, while I was there I took many things for granted. Only when I left did I realize its true value.

During break time, it was common for girls to bring something they had made themselves and share it with the whole class. Especially on occasions, like if someone's sibling got married or they had a new niece or nephew. In madrasa we would sit on the floor in the shape of a "U" with our wooden floor desks in front of us. So either the lunchbox of the specific student would be rotated round the classroom, or we would all sit in the middle and eat together. I wasn't a very good cook then, but whenever I would make something special (like when I first made *biryani*) I would still take it and everyone would graciously eat it.

After break there would be three more classes. Then from 1:15 - 1:30 p.m. we would do *wudu*, pray *Zuhr* and go home. In the first three years we would get hours of homework on a daily basis, but the last three years were lighter.

It's worth mentioning that throughout the six years, our teachers would make pairs of a stronger student and a weaker student so that the former could help the latter with her studies.

These pairs were called "joriyan" and each girl would sit with her "jori". But at the same time, we were also taught the following *Hadith*:

"Truly you are given help and provisions because of the weak amongst you." (Ahmad)

In the light of this hadith, we were told that most likely the girls who work hard but don't get to see the fruit of their labour the way other students do, are the ones because of whom our class is running. The girls who make long and exhausting journeys to reach madrasa every day are probably the ones who attract Allah's ﷻ mercy the most.

There was actually a very strong feeling of mutual care and compassion in madrasa. One of our teachers, who was a Tunisian Arab, was having some issues with his visa. We all prayed *salat-ul-hajat* for him and the class junior to us even decided a certain day in which they all fasted for him. Then the very next week he got his visa alhamdulillah. If any student got sick our teachers would encourage us to ask about her to get the reward of visiting the sick.

Our teachers told us that you all are like sisters to each other. So you may fight as sisters do fight sometimes, but then you will apologise and forgive each other. And that's exactly what we would do. If we ever had any disagreements we'd later say "Afwan" (Arabic for "sorry"), forgive each other and then move on. There was no politics among us.

As for the dress code: the madrasa uniform was a light orange *qamees*, white *shalwar* and white *dupatta* which we would wrap on our heads. We would come to madrasa in full *hijab*, but take our *abayas* off inside as no male would ever come in. Our male teachers taught us from behind curtains and wouldn't call us by our names but by "bint-e-so-and-so".

Fridays were half days as is the norm in Pakistani educational institutes. Classes would end at 10:15 a.m. then till 11:00 a.m. we would either read Surah *Kahf* and pray *Salat ut-Tasbeeh* or there would be a motivational lecture (*bayan*) after which we'd go home.

I remember how in one of the Friday lectures *Ustadh Sahib* became emotional as he narrated

the hadith of Ibn-e-Abbas ﷺ in which the Prophet ﷺ gave him seven pieces of advice, all of which were on connecting with Allah ﷻ. In madrasa there was a lot of emphasis on developing a strong relationship with Allah ﷻ. Before writing this series, I messaged my ex-classmates asking them what positive change madrasa brought in them. Many of them said that their connection with Allah ﷻ grew much stronger as did the realization that everything happens through Him only.

Our teachers would tell us to specify a time every day to just talk to Allah ﷻ. They would tell us that whenever any joy or sorrow approaches, let Him be the first one you tell. Whenever you need anything first pray *salat-ul-hajat* and every morning refresh your intention that today I'm going to do everything for Him and Him alone.

My love for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ also grew immensely in madrasa. I heard countless heart-touching stories on the love of the Prophet ﷺ from both teachers and friends, and how he loved us so much without even ever seeing us. Often as a class, every week we would decide a new *Sunnah* to implement in an effort to emulate the Prophet ﷺ.

There was a girl in our class who had been very sick for most of the six years. She dearly desired to see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in her dream as according to the hadith whoever sees him in their dream has truly seen him (Bukhari, Muslim). One night she really did see him and he was just as described in the *ahadith*. She asked him to say something to her so he said, "May Allah have mercy on you." When she woke up she was overjoyed and immediately messaged me.

In madrasa the joys and grief of the students were very different. There was a girl who had memorized thirteen *juz* from the Quran but wasn't able to complete her *hifz*. Once during *tafseer* we read the hadith on how the parents of a *hafidh* will be given crowns to wear on the Day of Judgment. She asked *baji* whether this is only for a complete *hafidh* or also for a partial *hafidh*. Not realizing why she was asking, *baji* thought for a moment then said that it's for a complete *hafidh*.

After *baji* left, the dear girl began to cry. We

began consoling her and telling her that even being a partial *hafidh* is a big thing and there's probably a separate reward for her. Another girl who also wanted to complete her *hifdh* suggested that they both memorize some of the Quran together in the summer vacations. And that's exactly what they did, they memorized two and a half *juz* over the phone during their holidays.

Madrasa was six days a week and the year would revolve around Ramadan. Vacations would start a couple of weeks before Ramadan and end a couple of weeks after *Eid*.

There were two semesters in a madrasa year with exams at the end of each. We'd have both written and oral exams depending on the subject. We would usually have free time in between oral exams in which we would sit and talk. Some girls would also recite different *nasheeds* in that time. I first heard "The Mountains of Makkah" when I was in the first year of madrasa from a friend who had come from the UK. I also remember how one girl soulfully read the following *naat*:

کسی غم گسار کی محنتوں کا
یہ خوب میں نے صلہ دیا
کہ جو میرے غم میں گھلا گیا
اسے میں نے دل سے بھلا دیا

We talked about many different things in our spare time: from stories of Muslims across the globe to jokes, stories of *jinn*s (etc.) and family issues. The last included personal experiences and also stories that girls had read and heard on how issues can be solved by turning to Allah ﷻ, higher moral values and patience rather than fighting. I learnt a lot about practical living from those stories. Even now when I want solid and practical advice and empathy rather than pity and sympathy, I usually turn to my madrasa friends.

As for the knowledge we were given - in brief, in the six year *aalimah* course in our madrasa we:

- mastered classical Arabic (spoken, written and grammar)
- studied the *tafseer* of the entire Quran along

with *Usul-ut-tafseer* (principles of *tafseer*)

- studied the *Sihah-Sitta* along with other books of hadith and *Usul ul-hadith* (principles of the knowledge of ahadith) and also memorized numerous ahadith
- studied the *Seerah* of the Prophet ﷺ and the *khilafat* of the four rightly guided *khulafaa*
- studied *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and *Usul ul-Fiqh* along with their *naqli* (revealed) and *aqli* (rational) evidences
- learnt the division of inheritance
- learnt calligraphy (*khat-un-naskh*)
- learnt proper *tajweed* and memorized particular *surahs*

- learnt basic cooking and sewing in the fifth year

The six years ended with a *Khatm-e-Bukhari* ceremony. *Khatm-e-Bukhari* is like a graduation ceremony in madaris and a time of mixed sentiments of joy, honor, gratitude and also sadness. *Sahih Bukhari* is always taught in the last year of the *aalim/aalimah* program and the last hadith is taught in front of all the teachers, students and families of the graduating students.

The special thing about how ahadith are taught in madaris is that in the end we get the complete chain of links (*sanad*) between ourselves and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Our teachers would tell us their *sanads* until the author of the book, for example Imam Bukhari. So our Shaikh ul Hadith studied *Sahih Bukhari* from his teacher, and he studied it from his teacher, all the way till Imam Bukhari. And then the chain of narrators between Imam Bukhari and *Rasul Allah* ﷺ is listed in *Sahih Bukhari*.

The impact of my years in madrasa will forever be engraved in my heart and soul. We were always encouraged to keep our intentions pure, our hearts clean, our gaze protected and our talk ethical. We all have our ups and downs in our lives and during them, my madrasa experiences will always be something I can turn to *inshaAllah*.

Re-enchanting The World

By Dr. Asad Zaman

Max Weber wrote that “The fate of our times is characterised by rationalisation and intellectualisation, and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world’. Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life ...” The disenchantment of the world leads to the modern view of the heart as merely a pump for circulation of blood. The ancients had deeper understanding; as Pascal said, “The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know. We feel it in a thousand things. It is the heart which experiences God, and not the reason. This, then, is faith: God felt by the heart, not by the reason.” Elevation of the head above the heart has led to a loss of wonder at the myriad mysteries of creation which surround us, and also caused deep damage to human lives in many dimensions. As our poet laureate Allama Iqbal emphasised: “At the dawn of Judgment, Gabriel told me, never accept hearts which are enslaved

by the mind.”

To make the best of the few moments that we are granted on this amazing planet, we must learn to appreciate the multiple paradoxes of this precious gift of life. On the one hand, “All we are is dust in the wind” — within the grandeur of the universe, and as just one among billions of people currently alive, my life is an insignificant speck. On the other hand, my life is all that matters to me, and the entire universe is contained within, and created by my imagination. This simultaneous awareness of both truths diametrically opposed to each other is not accessible to reason. However, poets have no difficulty with it; as Rumi said, “You are not a drop in the ocean, you are the entire ocean, contained within a drop.”

When the heart and soul are removed from the picture, reason reduces man to a material object, just a drop in the ocean. Then it becomes

possible to say that the value of a man’s life is the sum of his lifetime earnings. Initial statements to this effect by secular and materialistic philosophers like Hume caused shock and horror. Nowadays, it has become widely accepted. The effects of this reduction have been profound in all dimensions of human life. Instead of recoiling with horror, we eagerly accept as the latest wisdom the idea of the ‘human resource’. Economists discuss human beings as inputs into the production process. The goal of the economic system is seen as the production of wealth, and the worth of a human being is calculated according to his ability to contribute to this goal. This comes from looking at only one side of the picture, the insignificance of a human life.

The other side of the picture is to realise that human lives are infinitely precious. Each human being is unique, with experiences and history like no one else. Each moment in our lives is new — no such moment has even existed before, and no such moment will ever arise in the future. Every moment presents us with unique opportunities to progress towards the infinite potential for growth planted within our souls. If we can grasp these opportunities, we can reach to heights that have never been scaled before in human history.

Consider the miracle of the seed, which defies all logic. The tiny seed has no arms, legs, eyes or moving parts. Buried within the ground, it seeks out, and extracts from the soil, the hundreds of different chemicals required to manufacture roots, trunks, leaves, fruits, etc. It unerringly sends roots downwards towards water, and the shoots upwards towards the sun, though it has no mechanisms to perceive directions. Within the seed, the Creator has implanted not just the design, but the full capabilities to manufacture not just a tree, but a forest. The potential planted within a human being is far greater. Those who realise it can achieve marvels. With training and discipline, humans can walk barefoot on fire, slow life processes down to survive being buried, break bricks with bare hands, accomplish

incredible athletic acts, write literature and poetry of enduring excellence which inspires millions, and even greater spiritual feats which cannot be witnessed by others. To put it in more prosaic and less poetic terms, the purpose of wealth is to provide the opportunity for all human beings to fulfil this potential, which cannot be measured in monetary terms. This reversal of the ‘human resource’ idea is the central contribution of the capabilities approach to development, which emerged from the emphasis on human development pioneered by Mahbubul Haq. This focus on the intangibles of human experience, which lead to the development of capabilities, is precisely what has gone missing from economic cost-benefit calculations.

Disenchantment, as reflected in the banishment of the ultimate and sublime values from the public domain, has resulted in impoverishment of human lives in many dimensions. We have learned the false and misleading lessons that our lives should be devoted to careers, production of wealth and the pursuit of pleasures. Recent research shows that while we are attracted by material possession and short-term gratification, long-run happiness comes from seeking enriching experiences, and emphasising experiences over possession and consumption. Bringing back the magic into our lives requires paying heed to the wisdom of the ancients. Most important to our personal happiness is investing time on the social threads with which the fabric of our lives is woven. Generosity, acts of kindness, service to others, even at personal cost, contribute more to long-run happiness than selfish maximisation of short-run pleasure. It is a central lesson of Ramazan that abstaining from desires, as well as other vices, and striving to do virtuous deeds, leads to spiritual growth, which is the core component of the development of character and capabilities. Let us use this opportunity to make a commitment to improving ourselves as human beings, as this is the most effective way of making the world a better place for all.

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani

ترجمہ اور تالیف
Umm Abdullah Zubairi

When Pakistan was created, the assets that came in Pakistan's share as a result of the partition of India were already of a small proportion. Additionally, many assets were left behind in India, the dispute for reclaiming which continued for a long time. Thus, the Government of Pakistan began its operations with extremely limited resources. At that time, Karachi was the capital, and the Secretariat of Ministries used to operate from a room made of tin sheets. In place of paper weights, stones were used and thorns would be used to bind sheets of paper instead of pins. At the same time, the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan formed an 'Islamic Education Board', which also made its office beside the Assembly in a room with a potsherd roof. Hazrat 'Allamah Sayyad Sulaiman Nadwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was invited to be the president of the board, and our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was also made a member. The purpose of this board was to draft proposals to incorporate Islamic teachings into the Constitution, which was still being developed at that time. In this capacity, our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ was provided with a quarter for rent in Jacob Line. On the other side, our eldest sister,

(late) respected Naeema Khatoon Sahiba came from India to Karachi with her husband and children. Thus, after staying in 'King's Court' for almost one year, our respected father temporarily gave this flat to our sister and moved to the quarter in Jacob Line.

Now the Madrasa at Jacob Line which was established by Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and my elder brothers were already studying there, became close to our new house, and I was considered old enough to study in this Madrasa. However, our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, perhaps looking at my fragile and skinny figure and slim body, in contrast to my four brothers, did not enroll me for *hifz* (memorization) of the Quran, and made me start learning a mix of Urdu and Farsi which began with "*Hamd-e-Baari*" (the praise of the Creator). This is a book written by Maulana Abdus Samee' Bedil Sahab رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in which the meanings of various words are described in *Mathnavi* (a form of poetry). Maulana Abdus Samee' Sahab رحمۃ اللہ علیہ belonged to the Barelvi school of thought, but since this book was considered beneficial for helping children memorise the meanings of words, the scholars of Deoband did

not let any sectarian bigotry come in the way of benefitting from it, and thus this book was taught in all Madaris. I began studying this book and '*Risalah Nadir*', which is a book teaching conjugation of Persian words, and was written by our respected paternal grandfather Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaseen Sahab رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, with Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in the Madrasa at Jacob Line. However, due to my young age, this study was quite disorganised; I would study whenever I liked and would take leave whenever I wanted. Also, I would study one chapter with one teacher and another with some other teacher. Among the sons of Hazrat Maulana Ihtisham ul Haq Sahab Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ Maulana Ihtiram ul Haq Sahab was a little older than me and Maulana I'tisam ul Haq Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect them both) was around the same age as myself. After finishing my haphazard lessons, most of my time would be spent with them, and sometimes in sitting in the gatherings which took place at the house of Hazrat Maulana Ihtisham ul Haq Sahab Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Another reason for my lessons being disorganised was that in those days I suffered from typhoid several times due to which I had to spend many months bedridden. On the other hand, our brother (respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ shifted to Lahore at that time and had established a bookstore there called *Idara-e-Islamiyat*. The birth of his first child was being expected in his house (who was named Muhammad Mas'ood Ghawwas and passed away few days after his birth), for which our respected mother travelled to Lahore. Since I was her darling child she would not travel without me. Honourable brother, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafee' Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, who in the informal atmosphere of the house I call "Brother Rafee", and for the sake of brevity and to express frankness I will continue to do so in this biography, accompanied our respected mother as her Mahram. We had to stay there with our respected mother for around two months. Since my respected brother was memorising the Quran at that time, he continued his memorisation with a teacher at Jamia Ashrafiya. My education was already haphazard so there was no question of finding a proper replacement for me. However,

whenever our respected mother رحمۃ اللہ علیہ got some free time, she would teach me from *Bahishti Gohar* and *Seerat-e-Khatamul Anbiya*. The remaining time would be spent in visiting places and leisure walks.

I cannot forget one event of those leisure walks. It was a time of extreme cold. Bhai Rafee' would often visit "Gulshan-e-Fatima" of Lawrence Garden in the evening, along with (late) Muhammad Mu'een Sahab who was the son of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab. It used to be an exceptionally beautiful garden at that time. I would also go along sometimes. There was a beautiful pond right in the middle of the garden. At one instance, while the two of them were busy talking, I began practicing to walk on the thin edge of the pond. The practice was successful for a while, but then suddenly my foot slipped from the wet edge and I plunged into the pond with a splash, and started drowning. In the extreme cold of December and the freezing cold pond, I could see death within a moment. The pond was not too deep, but it was deep enough for a child like me to drown in it. Brother Rafee' and Brother Mu'een, with much difficulty, took me out of the pond in a state of semi-consciousness. However, my entire body was shivering and my teeth were chattering due to wet clothes. There was no way to change clothes there. Brother Rafee' had been wearing a Sherwani for protection against the cold. May Allah Ta'ala keep showering His mercies on brother Rafee' in this world and the Hereafter; he took off his Sherwani, wrapped me in it, somehow brought me home, and made me sit in front of a heater. Only then did I feel life coming back to my senses. Thus I got the lesson that very day in which the leader of both worlds Rasulullah ﷺ has said:

"Whoever grazes his animals near a prohibited place is likely to get into it at any moment."

Alas! I wish I had been able to practice upon this lesson in my actions and character too!

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