

The Intellect

Al Quran
Surah Maida – Part 6

Al Hadith
Conveying the Reward of
Actions in this World to the Dead

The Awakening
Stay Hopeful! - Part 3

Tahajjud: In Pursuit of Peace

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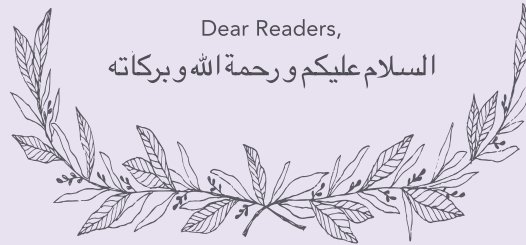
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Editorial



Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

In *Ahya ul Uloom*, Imam Ghazali relates: *Abu Yazeed says that if the thought of superiority over others crosses one's mind, it is a sign of arrogance.*

When extrapolated into an entire nation, it becomes lethal.

So, we see that not only did the Pharaoh look down upon Bani Israel, but also did his entire Coptic nation. He crushed, degraded and persecuted the Bani Israel.

It is indeed ironic then, that the same nation, persecuted and exiled, even in recent history, now persecutes and oppresses another nation (which had nothing to do with the holocaust) - evicting them from their ancestral homes, occupying their olive groves and treating them as worse than animals.

To be impartial, it is imperative to distinguish between Jews per se, the followers of Judaism, and Zionists, those who believe in a "settler colonialism" ideology vis-a-vis Israel. A number of unbiased Jews and many orthodox ones, do not believe in Zionism and do not support the state of Israel and its apartheid policies. In fact, many of the latter do not even think Israel should exist because, as per their interpretation of the Torah, the Jews are not to settle in the Promised Land until the arrival of the "Messiah".

Professor Norman Finkelstein, a prominent American Jew, while explaining the fact that his own parents perished at concentration camps, insists that the historical suffering of the Jews cannot be used to justify the current persecution of the Palestinians; that crocodile tears can't wash away the cruelty extended to an innocent nation, (based on claims dating back to thousands of years).

Similarly, Noam Chomsky's now iconic words remind us of the extreme injustice meted out to the Palestinians:

"You take my water, burn my olive trees, destroy my house, take my job, steal my house, imprison my father, kill my mother, bombard my country, starve us all, humiliate us all but I am to blame: I shot a rocket back."

Israel's ideology of settler colonialism – gradual annexation of land to drive out the native inhabitants – is getting exposed by the day; case in point: this viral conversation (video clip) between an Israeli settler and a Palestinian woman:

"Jacob, you know this is not your house".

"Yes, but if I go, you don't go back. So, what's the problem?"

"You are stealing my house".

"If I don't steal it someone else is going to steal it!"

It is natural thus, to draw parallels between Palestine and the South African apartheid – the existence of Israel is entrenched in the very ideology of a 'pure, exclusive' Jewish state. We can see it physically epitomized through the huge concrete barrier wall that separates the Palestinians from the Israelis in many parts of the country. The West eulogizes and rightly hails the heroes who fought against the South African apartheid but grossly fails to do so in the case of the Palestinians – on the contrary, it actually



helps strengthen, militarily and economically, the expansion of a truly racist state. Despite resolutions at the UN, the annexations and settlements in Palestine go on. Whoever has seen that green shrinking map of Palestine (constantly dwindling through forced Israeli evictions), would have no choice but to agree.

Ahad Ha'am, a prominent Zionist thinker, once said (*Truth from Palestine*):

"[The Jewish settlers] treat the Arabs with hostility and cruelty, trespass unjustly, beat them shamelessly for no sufficient reason, and even take pride in doing so."

But he also warns:

"We are used to thinking of the Arabs as primitive men of the desert... a nation that neither sees nor understands what is going around it. But this is a great error...Should time come when the life of our people in Palestine imposes to a smaller or greater extent on the natives, they will not easily step aside".

With leaders of Muslim nations practically mum with regards forming a force of resistance in support of the Palestinians, it was truly heart-breaking to see, in a counter-protest to a pro-Palestine rally, an Israeli carrying a placard that read: "Khybar was your last chance!"

To add salt to our wounds, Israel officially used verses from "Surah Fil" to taunt us – proclaiming that just as Abraha was punished by Allah ﷻ in his advance against the Ka'aba, so will be the Muslims in their advance against Israel! What misguided hubris, what arrogant nerve.

One word of caution to the government of Israel though: our time shall come, *In sha Allah*, our time WILL come and we will have the last laugh.

In our quest for peace of mind and heart, we knock on a number of doors; but do we knock on the RIGHT door?

Our Cover Story divulges a precious secret to lasting bliss...

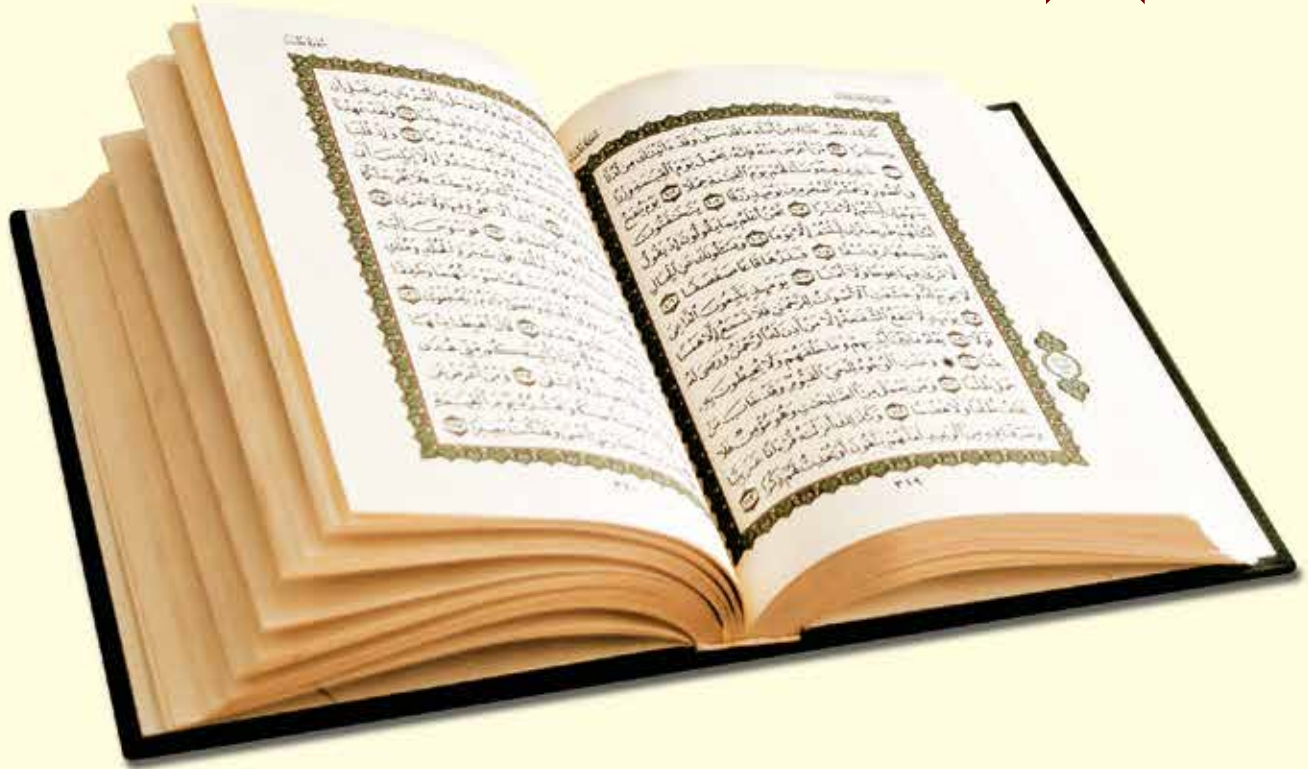
Tasawwuf is the acquisition and rectification of *Akhlaaq e Batini* (internal moral states) with adherence to external injunctions of *Shariah*. The internal moral states sought through *Tasawwuf* include the likes of *Ikhlas* (sincerity), *Tawaduh* (humility), patience etc. and the rectification of *Razail* (vices) like *Hubb e Duniya* (love of the world / worldly things), *Hubb e Jah* (love of fame), *Kibr* (arrogance), *Hasad* (jealousy), *Ghazab* (anger), greed, *Riya* (showing off) etc.

Once the significance of *tasawwuf* is internalized, its methodology is to be adopted through passing the initial stages of repentance (general and comprehensive) and taking guidance from a mentor. It is also important to know the misconceptions that are rife about *tasawwuf* e.g., assuming that future and hidden affairs can be predicted through it, or that it necessarily involves performing supernatural acts, or that salvation in the hereafter or success in worldly affairs is assured through it etc.

The article *What is Tasawwuf* by Khalid Baig dwells further on this subject.

With news of variant upon variant of Covid 19, and resultant infections like black fungus, white fungus and what-not trickling in, we make *du'a* that Allah ﷻ rid us of this affliction so that we may return to some semblance of 'normality' in our everyday lives. *Ameen*.

Wassalam,
Zawjah Farid



Surah Al Maida

Translation with Arabic Text

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani حفظه الله

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ مَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾

Surely, disbelievers are those who say, "Allah is the son of *Masih*," while the *Masih* had said, "O children of Isra'il, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord." In fact, whoever ascribes any partner to Allah, Allah has prohibited for him the *Jannah* (the Paradise), and his shelter is the Fire, and there will be no supporters for the unjust. [72]

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾

Surely, disbelievers are those who say, "Allah is the third of the three"⁴³ while there is no god but One God. If they do not desist from what they say, a painful punishment shall certainly befall such disbelievers. [73]

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾

Why then do they not turn to Allah in repentance and seek His forgiveness, while Allah is most forgiving, very merciful? [74]

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ انظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

The *Masih*, son of Maryam, is no more than a Messenger. There have been messengers before him. His mother was very truthful. Both of them used to eat food. Look how We explain signs to them, then see how far they are turned away. [75]

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾

Say, "Do you worship, besides Allah, what has no power to do you harm or bring you benefit?" Allah is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [76]

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

Say, O people of the Book, be not excessive in your religion unjustly,⁴⁴ and do not follow the desires of a people who have already gone astray, misled many and lost the right path. [77]

عَنِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

On those who disbelieve from among the children of Isra'il, a curse was pronounced by Dawud and 'Isa, Son of Maryam. All this because they disobeyed and used to cross the limits. [78]

كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

They did not forbid each other from any evil they committed. Evil indeed is what they have been doing. [79]

تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِمَّنْ يَقُولُونَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

You see many of them take the infidels (the pagans) for friends. Indeed, evil is what they have sent ahead for themselves, for Allah is angry with them, and they are to remain in torment forever. [80]

﴿٨١﴾ وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

If they believed in Allah, in the prophet, and in what had been sent down to him, they would have not taken them (the pagans) for friends, but many of them are sinners. [81]

﴿٨٢﴾ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُم مَّوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَىٰ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيَسِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

And you will certainly find that the people most hostile against the believers are the Jews and the ones who ascribe partners to Allah. You will certainly find that the closest of them in friendship with the believers are those who say, "We are Christians." ⁴⁵ That is because among them there are priests and monks, ⁴⁶ and because they are not arrogant. [82]

﴿٨٣﴾ وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

When they hear what has been sent down to the Messenger, you will see their eyes overflowing with tears because of the truth they have recognized. They say, "Our Lord, we have come to believe. So, record us along with those who bear witness. [83]

﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

What excuse do we have if we do not believe in Allah and in the truth that has come to us, while we hope that our Lord will admit us to the company of the righteous people?" [84]

﴿٨٥﴾ فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

So, because of what they said, Allah has awarded them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will live forever. That is the reward of those who are good in their deeds. [85]

﴿٨٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

But those who disbelieved and denied Our signs, they are the people of the Fire. [86]

﴿٨٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

O you who believe, do not hold as unlawful the good things that Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress⁴⁷. Verily, Allah does not like the transgressors. [87]

﴿٨٨﴾ وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

Eat from what Allah has provided you as good and lawful, and fear Allah in whom you believe. [88]



Explanation

- 43) This reference is to the doctrine of the Trinity invented by the Christians.
- 44) The Christians exceeded the limits in their veneration of the Masih ﷺ and believed him to be God or the son of God. Moreover, they exceeded the limits in worship, and ignoring the basic requirements of human nature, invented monasticism.
- 45) Verses 82 to 85 were revealed when a delegation sent by Negus, the king of Ethiopia, came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It consisted of seventy people, all Christian scholars and priests. The Holy Prophet ﷺ recited the Surah Yasin (Surah 36) before them. As they listened to it, tears began flowing from their eyes and all of them remarked how similar the discourse was to the one revealed to 'Isa and all of them embraced Islam. When they returned to Ethiopia, the king too declared his conversion to Islam.
- 46) Although the verses were revealed specifically about the delegation sent by the king of Ethiopia, the generality of their words includes other Christians as well, and the verse mentions general characteristics found in many of them. The verse should in no way be understood as condoning priesthood or monasticism. The sense, however, is that Christian priests and monks, having abandoned worldly pleasures, are generally free of greed for mundane gains. Since this greed is the main hurdle in accepting the truth, they are not as arrogant and hostile to the Muslims as the Jews or pagans.
- 47) The monasticism practiced by Christians was predicated on the belief that proximity to Allah cannot be achieved unless one abstains from all worldly pleasures, including delicious food. Admiration of monks in verse 82 could have been misunderstood as an approval of such abstention. The present verse, therefore, warns that no one has any right to hold lawful things as unlawful- It is Allah's exclusive prerogative to declare something lawful or unlawful. Allah's pleasure cannot be achieved by following self-coined rules and by abstaining from permissible things against the demands of human nature.



Conveying the Reward of Actions in this World to the Dead

By Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalawi رحمته الله
Translated by Ismaeel Nakhuda



(Translator's Note: Below is an insightful passage from Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi'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 [Al-Tarhib].

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 [Al-Kanz].

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" [Abu Dawud].

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 [Al-Ihya]. 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 these 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 such person has sent this to you'" [Al-Ihya]. 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 [Badhl al-Majhud].

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 (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) 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 benefitting from the actions of others. In addition to this, 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 [Badhl al-Majhud].

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 [Al-Ihya]. 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" [Sunan Abu Dawud]. 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: deoband.org

Sacrifice (Udhiyyah/Qurbāni): The Rules

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

The Time of Qurbāni

Qurbāni can only be performed during the three days of Eid, namely the 10th, 11th, and 12th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah. It is only in these days that slaughtering an animal is recognized as an act of worship. No qurbāni can be performed on any other day of the year.

Although qurbāni is permissible on each of the three aforementioned days, it is preferable to perform it on the first day (i.e. the 10th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah).

Qurbāni is not allowed before the completion of Eid prayer. However, in small villages where the Eid prayer is not to be performed, qurbāni can be offered at any time after the break of dawn on the 10th of Dhu 'l-Hijjah.

Qurbāni can also be performed in the two nights following the Eid day, but it is more advisable to perform it during daytime.

Who is Required to Perform Qurbāni?

Every adult Muslim, male or female, who owns 613.35 grams of silver or its equivalent in money, personal ornaments, stock-in-trade, or any other form of wealth which is surplus to his/her basic needs, is under an obligation to offer a qurbāni. Each adult member of a family who owns the above mentioned amount must perform his own qurbāni separately. If the husband owns the required quantity, but the wife does not, the qurbāni is obligatory on the husband only, and

vice-versa. If both of them have the prescribed amount of wealth, both should perform qurbāni separately.

If the adult children live with their parents, qurbāni is obligatory upon each one of them who possesses the prescribed amount. The qurbāni offered by a husband for himself does not fulfill the obligation of his wife, nor can the qurbāni offered by a father discharge his son or daughter from their obligation. Each one of them should care for his own.

However, if a husband or a father – apart from offering his own qurbāni – gives another qurbāni on behalf of his wife or his son, he can do so with their permission.

No Alternate for Qurbāni

Some people think that instead of offering a qurbāni they should give its amount to some poor people as charity. This approach is completely incorrect.

In reality there are different forms of worship obligatory on Muslims. Each one of them has its own importance and none of them can stand in place of the other. It is not permissible for a Muslim to perform salāh instead of fasting in Ramadān, nor is it permissible for him to give some charity instead of observing the obligatory salāh.

Similarly, qurbāni is an independent form of worship and this obligation cannot be discharged

by spending money in charity.

However, if someone out of his ignorance or negligence did not offer qurbāni on the three prescribed days (10th, 11th, and 12th Dhu 'l-Hijjah), then in that case only he can give the price of a qurbāni as sadaqah to those entitled to receive zakāt. But during the days of qurbāni no sadaqah can discharge the obligation of qurbāni.

The Animals of Qurbāni

The following animals can be slaughtered to offer a qurbāni:

1. Goat, either male or female, of at least one year of age.
2. Sheep, either male or female, of at least six months of age.
3. Cow, ox, buffalo of at least two years of age.
4. Camel, male or female, of at least five years of age.

One head of goat or sheep is enough only for one person's qurbāni. But as for all other animals like cow, buffalo, or camel, one head of each is equal to seven offerings, thus allowing seven persons to offer qurbāni jointly in one such animal.

If the seller of the animal claims that the animal is of the recognized age and there is no apparent evidence to the contrary, one can trust his statement and the sacrifice of such an animal is lawful.

Rules about Defective Animals

The following defective animals are not acceptable in qurbāni:

1. Blind, one eyed, or lame animal.
2. An animal so emaciated that it cannot walk to its slaughtering place.

3. An animal with one-third part of the ear, or the nose, or the tail missing.
4. An animal that has no teeth at all, or the majority number of its teeth are missing.
5. An animal born without ears.

The following animals are acceptable in qurbāni:

1. A castrated he-goat (rather, its qurbāni is more preferable).
2. An animal that has no horns, or its horns are broken. However, if the horns of an animal are uprooted completely so as to create a defect in the brain, its qurbāni is not lawful.
3. An animal the missing part of whose ear, nose or tail is less than one third.
4. A sick or injured animal, unless it has some above-mentioned defects rendering its qurbāni unlawful.

The Sunnah Method of Qurbāni

It is more preferable for a Muslim to slaughter the animal of his qurbāni with his own hands. However, if he is unable to slaughter the animal himself, or does not want to do so for some reason, he can request another person to slaughter it on his behalf. In this case also, it is more preferable that he at least be present at the time of slaughter. However, his absence at the time of slaughter does not render the qurbāni invalid if he has authorized the person who slaughtered the animal on his behalf. It is a sunnah to lay the animal with its face towards the qiblah, and to recite the following verse of the Holy Qur'an:

"I, being upright, turn my face towards the One who has created the heavens and the earth, and I am not among those who associate partners with Allah."

(Surat al-An'ām, 79)

The most essential recitation, however, when slaughtering an animal is:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Bismillah, Allahu Akbar.

(In the name of Allah, Allah is the greatest).

If one intentionally avoids reciting it when slaughtering an animal, it does not only make his qurbāni unlawful but also renders the animal harām, and it is not permissible to eat the meat of that animal. However, if a person did not avoid this recitation intentionally, but he forgot to recite it when slaughtering the animal, this mistake is forgiven and both the qurbāni and the slaughter are lawful.

If a person is unable to recite Bismillah, Allahu Akbar in the Arabic language, he can recite the name of Allah in his own language by saying, "In the name of Allah."

Distribution of the Meat

If an animal is sacrificed by more than one person, like a cow or camel, its meat should be distributed equally among its owners by weighing the meat strictly and not at random or by mere guess. Even if

all the partners agree on its distribution without weighing, it is still not permissible according to the shari'ah.

However, if the actual weighing is not practical due to some reason, and all the partners agree to distribute the meat without weighing, distribution by guess can be done with the condition that each share necessarily contains either a leg of the animal or some quantity of its liver.

Although the person offering a qurbāni can keep all its meat for his own use, it is preferable to distribute one-third amongst the poor, another one-third amongst his relatives, and then keep the remainder for his personal consumption.

All parts of the sacrificed animal can be used for personal benefit, but none can be sold and cannot be given to the butcher as part of his wages. If a person has sold the meat of the qurbāni or its skin, he must give the accrued price as sadaqah to a poor man who is eligible to receive zakāt.

- Excerpted from 'Merits & Rulings of Dhu 'l-Hijjah: 'Arafah, Eid, Udhiyyah, & Hajj', published at the ilmgate.org



Stay Hopeful!

Translation by Zawja Asim
Translation series of Maulana Abdul Sattar رحمۃ اللہ علیہ spiritual discourses

Repent 1000 times if it's broken

If a sin is committed, do *tawbah*. If you commit it again do *tawbah* again! Whoever will do *tawbah* likewise he does not breach the obligation of *tawba*. Allah has said;

"Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting." (Surah Al-Baqarah: 222)

The person who breaches their *tawbah* again and again but remains steadfast on it and doesn't leave *tawbah* then it's said:

He's my beloved, he commits faults 10 times in a day and 10 times he asks for repentance; he loses nothing, and such is the obligation of *tawbah*;

"Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting." (Surah Al-Baqarah: 222)

These are not called *Taaib* but they are called "*tawwab*" (one who repents often). The one who is steadfast on *tawbah*, develops shame, sadness and remorse; he feels sad and upset as if he has lost something. This sadness and remorse develops over and over again, and thus he becomes a beloved of Allah.

The Barakah of Tawbah

Tawbah has amazing blessings. Even if a man commits sins which surpass the number of grains

of the earth, and the drops of the sea, and reach up to the skies, or even if his sins fill up the space between the earth and the sky, he is sure to receive the blessings of Allah ﷻ when he feels remorse, and thinks of sin as being his destruction.

Someone has beautifully said:

"Oh Allah! I am present at your door, I confess my sins, I am a culprit, if you grant repentance you have the power of it. If you don't grant me repentance then who will forgive me except you (on whose door should I now go?)?"

Let's suppose there is an old man, who now has a curved back, aching joints, white hair, and an empty pocket, and is ignored by everyone around him. He carries the weight of his sins and remorsefully presents himself before his Lord and cries, 'O Allah, the world has left me, but I have come into your court despairingly carrying the burden of my sins. There is no door but yours and I am ashamed...' To such a man, Allah responds, 'O my servant, your arrival is delayed, but my forgiveness knows no delay.'

Pacify your Rabb, the *Rahman*, with Tawbah

Tawbah purifies life. It makes one purified as if he were a newly born baby with no blemishes of

sins. Allah ﷻ has no qualms in granting Tawbah to an eighty years old as well. As mentioned earlier, His forgiveness knows no delay. He is pacified sooner than an angered mother, who, when angry, says that she, does not care for you and why have you approached her after the entire world has turned its back on you. On the other hand, Allah ﷻ accepts one with open arms and says, 'O my servant, the entire world has abandoned you, you are old and have come back to me carrying the filth and dirt of your sins, I won't avert you. My *rahmah* supersedes your sins, no remorse shall remain.

A hadith says that Allah ﷻ does not only forgive his servant but also removes the sins he had committed. He ﷻ even makes the body parts through which the sins were committed forget all those sins, and also erases them from the records of the angels, only so that His servant does not feel ashamed. The justice courts of this world, even if they acquit a criminal, do not erase the record of his crimes. Allah ﷻ, the *Kareem*, on the other hand, erases all past records of one's

sins after they had made tawbah only to save His servant from any further embarrassment.

Censuring someone for their Sins brings upon one's own Doom

Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has informed us that if someone is castigated for his sins after he has made tawbah, the one who castigated him performed a Greater Sin (*gunah-e kabirah*). And such a person should fear falling into a similar sin! A woman in the time of the Prophet ﷺ was punished for committing *zina* but she had sought forgiveness, and the legal (*Shara'i*) punishment was meted out to her - she was stoned. Some of her blood spattered on to a Muslim man, who uttered a few harsh words regarding that woman. When the news of this incident reached the Prophet ﷺ he said: do not say this! This woman has repented in such a way that if only her repentance was distributed amongst the sinners in Madinah, they would all be forgiven!

- To be continued, Insha'Allah

Become a Muslim

Outub Alam Shaikh Abdul Qudoos Al Gangohi (d:1537CE. Allah have mercy on him) said,

O Seeker of Truth! If the path of Islam was as easy (as you think) then everyone would become Shibli and Ibrahim bin Adham (Allah have mercy on them). (In reality) Until and unless you are a (true) Muslim from within you can never be a (real) Muslim from outside.

It is grieving and mournful to see these days that world is full of spiritual mentors (pir) and seekers (mureed) but no one can find a (true) Muslim.

What is mentor-seeker (piri-mureedi) relationship nowadays?

It is all idolatry and self-worship!

May Allah save us all from it. Ameen!

This is in reality my own mournful predicament. I tell it so others can learn from it.

Maktubaat e Qudoosiya, letter #111, page 480 (from Urdu translation by Shaikh Capt. Wahid Baksh Siyal rehmatullah aleh)

Courtesy: ashrafiya.com

Tahajjud: In Pursuit of Peace

By Mariam Majid Sharif

As a child, my 'problems' would be infinite. From a broken toy to a scolding, from a quarrel with friends to math sums. For the longest time, writing continued to be a means of catharsis to me, whether it was a furiously scribbled venting session where I would purge out all the toxic emotions and seek my peace or a completely unrelated treatise involving a complex train of thought with a systematic approach that would later leave me baffled as to how did I even come up with it. Writing gradually became more to me than just a cathartic avenue. I dreamt big and the castles in the air got bigger. I wanted to have my

own blog,
write a

work of historical fiction and the list went on. Until one day I realized that writing had ceased to mitigate the emotional turmoil inside me, and the purging just did not work anymore. It felt as if I had lost my best friend and I stopped. I stopped for years. The ensuing feeling of helplessness was inevitable as I struggled to find something that would give me some form of peace. I would occasionally take up my pen but it seemed as if the word flow had simply frozen and so we parted ways temporarily until fate brought me to *Tahajjud*.

It was a late September night when I kept tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep as a looming fear for a dreaded turn of events weighed heavy on my head. It occurred to me, why not pray for it at Tahajjud? Like so many of us, I was aware of its virtues, but it was not something I would practice diligently and only resorted to it in the case of extreme situations. So, I got up, made du'a and went back to sleep consoling myself with the idea that all will be well for after all, is not the *du'a* made at Tahajjud like an arrow that does not miss its mark? Two days later it turned out that what I had been afraid of had happened. For a minute, I could not reconcile with the idea that my prayer had not been accepted. Were not du'as at Tahajjud fulfilled instantly? That is what I thought. And I took a step back as I felt my faith falter. For months, even when I most needed to talk to Allah ﷻ I could not make myself pray Tahajjud. Until I opened my course books and resumed taking classes.

Being a student of *Hadith*, I should have focused upon incorporating any new knowledge with real life situations, but I had hardly ever done so. Until I started the section of *Learning the Adab of Making Du'as*. And I realized, we are showered with uncountable blessings throughout the day, but do we ever reflect over them and show gratitude to Allah ﷻ? He gives and He gives abundantly. And just how easy it is to take it all for granted! We don't thank Him; sinning becomes a child's play for us and then when we seek Him out to ease our miseries and our

du'as don't get fulfilled, we feel as if we have been let down. And let us not overlook the fact that the reason our prayers are not accepted might be because ' ' (*Khair*) or good is written for us in something else. We spend our days without sparing Him a thought and He is bringing all that is good to our lives in ways we never imagined.

We all need a spiritual wake-up call occasionally. When mine came, I desperately sought a recourse with Allah ﷻ and with extreme trepidation I started praying Tahajjud. It was not easy. Something inside me would constantly rebel and lead me to think, what is the point when my du'a would not be accepted anyway but I persevered. It ceased to be just about fulfillment of du'as for me and became more of a spiritual therapy. There is something so transcendental in the stillness of the late hours of the night when one stands with the belief that Allah ﷻ, the Lord of the Universe, the Ar-Rehman is on the nearest heaven and He is waiting to be invoked. The more you dwell upon this, the more peace and tranquility you feel internally and for me it was as if I had put myself completely at Allah's mercy with *tawakkul* that He has planned what is best for me and relied on Him to give me peace of heart and mind. It alleviated the turbulence inside me and there is solace knowing that I have someone to turn to every single night.

Coming to the purpose of this writing, today we are not just struggling with the problems in our respective microcosms while battling a pandemic, much to the detriment of our mental health, but also watching Palestine burn as it falls victim to apartheid genocide with a sense of

futility and helplessness. There is much that we can do practically but at the same time we all desperately need to form a connection with Allah ﷻ and what better time to do this than this last third of the night? Why not avail this beautiful opportunity that we get every night to thank Him, seek forgiveness for sins committed knowingly and unknowingly and then pray for what we desire? I tried that and I was mind blown by how much peace of heart I got. All of us need this peace in our hearts and minds. Talk to Him in the Hours where we mostly seek distractions that offer only temporary solace. *In sha Allah* we will all be blessed with what is best for us.

Our *Deen* has made the last 1/3rd of the night special for us. This is the time to bond with Allah ﷻ. How long does it take to pray two *Rakaahs* and make du'a? Pray to Him. Value Tahajjud. Implore Him. Beseech Him. Invoke Him. Plead to Him in the last hours of the night to ease your pain. Seek forgiveness. We should be asking for His mercy for ourselves, our family, our country and the Muslim *Ummah*. Most of us might already be doing that. We have a blessing in those hours. Avail this blessing please. Hold on to your faith and have hope in the All-Mighty.

May Allah ﷻ give us all the peace of heart and mind, fulfill our desires, ease the sufferings of our brothers and sisters in Palestine and return Al-Aqsa to the glory of its golden days, give speedy recovery to the unwell, halt the spread of the pandemic and give the World the strength to deal with the inevitable repercussions following its cessation. *Ameen*.

The Reality

You were once in the womb, unmentioned and unknown. And again you will be forgotten, unknown and unmentioned.

- Imam Tabari

A Visit to Howard University, USA

Excerpted from Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb's اورسج برکات
travelogue "Dunya Meray Aagay"
Translation: Zawjah Zia

December 1997

The invitation I received to speak at the Howard Law School USA about the Islamic Law coincided with the golden Jubilee year for Pakistan. Though my hosts had left the exact choice of topic upon me, they had anyhow suggested it to be "Pakistan and the Islamic Law".

Jumping to the opportunity, one of my prospective hosts, Professor Frank Vogel of the Howard Law School communicated that in the same time frame they wanted to hold an exclusive workshop on 'Islamic Finance' too in cooperation with the Howard Business School and they wanted me to chair it.

I accepted both the invites. Incidentally, at the time when it was planned for me to proceed for these two events, the actual critical law scene back home did not seem pretty at all. The world was witnessing the drama in the name of *Nadra Rozgaar*. My heart was already heavy and restless seeing the chaos all around and speaking about 'Pakistan and the Islamic Law' and that too in a foreign country was the last thing I felt like doing at the time. But the arrangements had all been made and my hosts had publicized the event and so backing off at such a moment was out of question. So there I was, checking out at the Boston airport as scheduled. Boston is the capital of the American State Massachusetts. Parallel to it,

across river Charles, is Cambridge, where the Howard University is located.

Howard had initially been working under the Church until the nineteenth century when it was privatized and was made independent of the government and the church. Having been British colonies in the past, Boston and Cambridge are collectively known as New England. The architecture and the air there is less American and more British.

My stay was at the Howard Faculty Club. It was not a mainstream American hotel; the calm and literary atmosphere there was free of most of the absurdities (read entertainment). A Howard professor of middle-eastern studies, Dr. Dawn Babaii had already booked an appointment with me regarding some research work he had been doing. He arrived as scheduled sometime after my arrival. Among conversations he mentioned the students' enthusiasm regarding the two events I was there for. The department of middle-eastern studies had long been working on creating an Islamic banking database. The purpose of the program was to develop software wherein the latest information about the worldwide developments in Islamic Finance and Islamic Financial Institutions could be gathered and made available. So, the software offered consolidated information regarding Islamic



banking prospects including the foundational procedures of the investment in international Islamic banks and financial institutions, the names and locations of the institutions that claimed to be following those procedures, the total capital they were dealing in and their mentionable investment deals – all at one place. I heartily appreciated the truly commendable effort put in by the program’s team.

Since the advent of Islamic banking and financial institutions in the middle-east, the West has been curious about the Islamic Finance system; maybe only because they view it as a fresh lucrative money-market they should not overlook. Catering to the literary consumer, the Howard professors had drafted a book titled *Islamic Law and Finance: Religion, Risk and Return*. They had sent me a draft of the book even before my visit so I could have a look at it and could comment on it during my visit. As for the research-based facts presented in the book about the foundations of Islamic banking, its working and prospects, I found it quite apt and free from any major deficiencies. However, at the end of the book they had a section consisting of some innovative suggestions that they thought could practically compliment the whole idea of Islamic banking. It was these suggestions that had some objectionable issues. In fact, these were the very points they required me to comment upon in the workshop held on the first day of my visit. My comments were hence taken fairly seriously; some of the action-points in the book were altered and others were abandoned altogether.

The dinner following the workshop considerably consisted of vegetable, fish and halal drinks only.

The next day, I was to speak at the Howard Law School at four pm local time but it so unfolded that the Maghrib was at quarter past four. Thus, I requested my hosts to put off the commencement of the event till after Maghrib, to which they happily obliged. I was however given a tour of the Howard Law School and its Islamic Legal Studies Program before Maghrib. A considerable number of Muslims of Howard and Massachusetts had showed up for the event. The prayer arrangements were made in a room adjacent to the lecture hall. I requested a local Muslim to call the Adhaan and the Maghrib Salah was offered with congregation. I was told that it

was the first time ever that the Adhaan and Salah congregation was held in any lecture hall of the Howard University. *Alhamdulillah*.

The lecture hall was now filled with the Muslim and non-Muslim audience; most of whom were students and teachers of Howard from different departments. A few were from outside Howard too and then there were those too who had traveled long distances just for the sake of attending this event.

I began with speaking about the ideology of Pakistan first and then went into some details of why we, at Pakistan, profess Islamic Shariah Law while living in a world that is chanting slogans for secular democracy. I reiterated the acknowledgment that my audience did not comprise of atheists, yet, how absurd and illogical it would be for a people who claim to believe and have trust in God (a statement that is even officially imprinted on the US Dollar) to make that claim and at the same time completely deny God’s influence and guidance in their political, economic and social lives. If there is a God who has Sovereignty over this universe, this earth cannot and should not be deprived of His Sovereignty.

Then I went on to rationally appeal to my audience by giving them food for thought about how all of our physical and intellectual faculties have limitations and how, beyond that, we inevitably depend on Divine revelation; that guides us towards the absolute truth (Al-Haqq) – an idea the definition of which is beyond human capabilities and possible agreement. That Divine revelation and its teachings have been preserved for us in the form of the Qur’an and its explanations by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. How then can we ignore it, especially in our country Pakistan, which sought its independence from the united India on the very basis of this Islamic ideology!

Moreover, a good portion of my speech tried addressing, in satisfying details, the common questions about the misconceptions that the western media tend to spread about the Shariah Law; the rights of women and minorities in Islam, the individual roles of the federal and Shariah courts and the practical implications of the Islamic Law in different public spheres. Also, I

gave a brief account of how, over the past century, we are striving to bring into practice this sacred Law in Pakistan and the hurdles that we face, plus the opportunities we hope for in the future.

After the lecture, I got a chance of intermingling with the attendees and the feedback I received was highly satisfying *Alhamdulillah*. Especially the Muslim audience was evidently happy about now possessing authentic and satisfying answers to questions about their faith that they faced every day. The Muslim students at Howard had a *Howard Islam Society* and they had acquired a separate prayer area in their hostel. These students requested me to come to that prayer area with them and together we offered our Isha

Salah in congregation. It pleased me immensely to see that these Muslim youth were standing firm and practicing their Deen with such zeal and responsibility, even in the prevailing atmosphere. Their efforts around the campus had made possible the five-time Salah, Halal food and Iftar arrangements, Jumuah prayer, Taraweeh prayer in Ramadan, Salah and Iftar breaks during classes, holidays for Muslim students on the days of two Eids, and many other activities.

I began this visit somewhat reluctantly, but returned from it with a totally different mood. My heart felt a great joy seeing these American Muslims' sense of strong connection with their Deen - a quality that we Muslims must possess, no matter where we are in the world.

Ikhlas

Ikhlas (sincerity) cannot be combined in the heart together with the love of being praised and the greed for what other people have, except in the way that water and fire are combined.

So if your conscious tells you to seek ikhlaas, then turn to greed firstly, and slaughter it with the knife of despair (give up hope in worldly belongings), then turn to the love of being praised and abandon it like how those who adore the life of this world abandon the hereafter. If you are successful in slaughtering greed and in abandoning the love of being praised, then ikhlaas will be easy for you.

- Imam Ibn Al Qayyim رحمته الله in his *Al Fawa'id*.

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An Islamic Approach to Humanities

By Dr. Asad Zaman

The methodology of science is suitable for material substances subject to laws, but not for humans with free will. "Social science" was born from the misconception that application of the scientific method to human beings and societies would lead to remarkable progress. However, this approach has failed in many ways, which is documented in this paper. Islam provides us with a radically different approach to the study of human beings and societies, predicated on human freedom to choose between good and evil. This approach is delineated in this paper.

1. Introduction

The message of God to human beings starts with the imperative "Read!" and goes on to introduce the Creator of Heavens and Earth as the One who taught man that which he did not know. This knowledge, given to illiterate and backward Arabs, allowed them to overtake established civilizations of the Chinese, Persians, and Romans. Historian Marshall

Hodgson (1974, p.71) attests to the power of this knowledge as follows: "Soon after the founding of the faith, Muslims succeeded in building a new form of society, which in time carried with it its own distinctive institutions, its art and literature, its science and scholarship, its political and social forms, as well as its cult and creed, all bearing an unmistakable Islamic impress. In the course of centuries, this new society spread over widely diverse climes, throughout most of the Old World. It came closer than any had ever come to uniting all mankind under its ideals."

It was prophesied that Islam came as a stranger and will soon become a stranger. Chittick (1998) writes that the Islamic intellectual heritage, which

was responsible for preservation, enrichment and transmission of this knowledge, "has largely been lost in the modern times." Our goal in this paper is to show that Islam offers deep insights into human conditions, and provides essential foundations for any attempt to study human societies. We have deliberately used the term "humanities" because a second goal of the paper is to show that the Western attempt to apply the scientific method to the study of human beings – reflected in the name "social science" – has proven to be a failure.

2. Two Western Misconceptions About Science

As a result of a long and complex historical process, two major misconceptions about scientific knowledge came to be widely believed in the West. These are:

1. Science is the only valid source of knowledge.
2. The methodology of science is based solely on observations and logic.

These ideas are clearly opposed to Islam, according to which the Revelation is the most certain source of knowledge, while all other human knowledge is uncertain and doubtful. Similarly, the Qur'an (2:3) starts by describing those who are Allah-conscious as those who believe in the unseen. It follows that; the idea that all valid knowledge is based on observations and logic is obviously false. These arguments are sufficient to show the inherent incompatibility between Islamic and Western epistemology. The two propositions can also be contested on secular grounds, as we discuss below.

We have many sources of knowledge which are not "scientific" in the sense of being derived from observations of patterns in the real world.

Children are born with knowledge of how to smile, cry, express their demands, and also empathize. Empirical studies bear out the claim of the Qur'ān (55:1-55:4) – “We created man, and taught him how to speak.” Noam Chomsky showed that children must have innate knowledge of an underlying universal grammar, in order to be able to pick up languages with the ease that they display. A vast proportion of essential knowledge that we have is based on experience such as swimming, driving, understanding how others feel, and so on. Experiences are subjective and not easily communicable to others, making this knowledge non-scientific.

Similarly, the idea that scientific knowledge is based purely on observations and logic is wrong. Again, the story of how this wrong idea came to be widely believed in the West is long and complicated. Manicas (1987) provides a detailed history of the key philosophical ideas. For our purposes, it is sufficient to understand that there are two different approaches to methodology – nominalist and realist. According to the dominant nominalist approach, our only access to the real world is through our observations. If there is a reality hidden underneath the observations, this reality is not accessible to us. Science deals only with observables, and not with the underlying hidden reality. This position was most forcefully advocated by the logical positivists, and became nearly universally accepted in the early part of the twentieth century. Logical positivism had a “spectacular crash” as it became clear in the mid-twentieth century that the fundamental tenets of this philosophy were wrong. An accessible account of the rise and fall of logical positivism is provided by Suppes (1977). Suppes also shows that despite the fall of positivism, many ideas associated with this failed philosophy continue to be widely believed. In particular, social sciences, and especially economics, have been heavily influenced by logical positivism. While some of the social sciences have been revised in light of the failure of logical positivism, no adjustments have been made in the methodology of economics.

The alternative to the nominalist philosophy of science is “realism”. Even though reality is inaccessible, observations provide us with enough clues to enable us to deduce the nature of reality. According to the realist understanding of science, science works by using observations to infer existence of objects, forces, and causal relations which cannot be observed – for example, electrons, gravity, and quantum effects. Manicas (2006) has provided a detailed book-length argument about why nominalism is a mistaken philosophy of science and argued in favor of the realist position. Zaman (2012) shows that the nominalist philosophy has led to serious methodological problems in econometrics and how these can be rectified by moving to a realist position. Note that the realist position is strongly supported by Islam, which teaches us that all of the creation is full of signs which enable us to recognize the Creator. Accepting the realist position implies that progress in science requires going beyond the apparent and the observable to the underlying realities. As we shall see, Western social sciences are not well-equipped to move in this direction, whereas Islam provides us with substantial guidance on how this can be done.

3. Three Major Problems with Social Science

In the early twentieth century, logical positivists argued forcefully that the only valid form of human knowledge was science, and this was based solely on observations and logic. Furthermore, scientific knowledge had to be quantifiable and measurable. All of these propositions later turned out to be wrong, but they had a profound influence on the social sciences. Influential intellectuals like C. P. Snow argued that the modern age required mathematical literacy, and knowledge of the laws of thermodynamics was just as important, if not more, than Shakespeare. The humanities struggled to become like science so as to achieve respectability. To do so, they adopted the then dominant logical positivist analysis of the methodology of science. This was a double mistake. In the first place, radical differences

between the nature of science and the nature of human beings necessitate use of different methodologies for the respective fields. This error was compounded by a misunderstanding of the nature of scientific methodology. It would take us too far afield to discuss the complex and tangled history of how this came to pass (see Manicas, 1987). Instead, we will list three important consequences of this double mistake.

3.1 Morality is Just Noise

One of the leading positivists Ayer (1936) wrote that: "ethical judgments ...have no objective validity whatsoever. They are pure expressions of feeling and ... unverifiable for the same reason as a cry of pain". This position came to be widely believed, with disastrous consequences. Until the twentieth century, intellectuals had assumed that truth had moral dimensions, and had sought to find a 'scientific' basis to establish moral propositions. This project was abandoned as impossible, and replaced by the idea that moral propositions were as meaningless as a cry of pain. Charters of colleges and universities had explicitly sought to build character and inculcate a sense of civic duty among students. However, the idea that morality was not part of human knowledge, led to gradual abandonment of this goal, as well as, removal of courses like 'Civics' from the syllabi. Reuben (1996) has described the historical process by which morality was removed from the educational goals of US universities.

What were the results of the abandonment of the mission of building character, and instilling a sense of civic and social responsibility among students? Over the past century there has been a distinct and measurable decline in moral standards in the West. This has been documented by many authors. Most graphically, an award winning book by Zygmunt Bauman (1989) argues that modern secular democracies create no barriers against the scientific elimination of a sub-population, if this is considered favorable to the group interests. As an illustration, US Ambassador Madeleine Albright did not feel embarrassed to declare on public TV that the lives of half a million Iraqi

children were a worthwhile cost to pay for achievement of US political goals in the Middle East.

Hollywood movies now depict assassins, prostitutes, thieves, and criminals as heroes, whereas this was not possible fifty years ago. Halberstam (2002) has documented how students trained at the finest US educational institutions felt no compunctions in scientific mass murders of innocent Vietnamese population. A 2008 Josephson Institute survey of high school students showed that large numbers cheat, steal and lie, and worse, do not find these actions morally objectionable. Klein (2007) writes that the CIA Kubark Manual represents the first genuine advances in the ancient art of torture in centuries. The Congress has approved torture, renditions, and indefinite detentions of children and civilians without any charge or trial. Movies celebrating torturers and extra-legal actions have been made to justify these to the public.

3.2 Mechanization of Human Behavior

In order to apply scientific methodology to humans, it is necessary to deny their essential freedom. The most influential school of psychology in the twentieth century does precisely that. Skinner (1972) laid out the foundations of 'Behavioral Psychology', which basically treats human beings as robots who can be programmed by appropriate stimulus-response sequences. This school, which ignores feelings, motivations and other non-measurable and unobservable aspects, rose to dominance in the USA precisely because it was 'scientific'.

Just as positivism collapsed against the weight of evidence, so the behavioral school of psychology has received many setbacks. An excellent illustration of the type of problem created by denying un-observables is the "theory of revealed preference" due to Samuelson. Economic theory was regarded as 'un-scientific' because it utilized the idea of the utility derived from consumption – this was a feeling which was not observable. Following the behavioral idea, we can translate this unobservable to the observable choices made by the consumer. The

unobservable hidden preference is revealed by the observable choice behavior: the consumers choose X over Y when they prefer X to Y and when consuming X generates greater utility than consuming Y. Samuelson sought to make Economics a science by replacing the unobservable preferences and utilities by the observable choices. A number of authors contributed to the field, and ultimately came up with a set of axioms on choices which were shown to be equivalent to the standard axioms on preferences. The Nobel Prize awarded to Samuelson mentions this feat of turning economics into a science by removing reference to the unobservable utilities.

However, as Wong (2002) has pointed out at book length, this was a hollow victory. Samuelson was mistaken in thinking that he had eliminated unobservables by replacing preference with choices. Imagine a person who has achieved the Buddhist ideal of complete indifference to worldly affairs. All worldly choices are the same to him. In this case, there is no reason for his choices to obey any axioms, or display any pattern or consistency. The axiom of transitivity imposed on choices reflects our understanding of the nature of human preferences. The observable choices display regularities only because they are based on the invisible utilities that we derive from

consumption, and the stability of these feelings. It is important to note that this is an illustration of the 'second mis-take' – the idea that the methodology of science is based purely on observations and logic. Scientific theories utilize many unobservables like positrons, energy quanta, gravity, electro-magnetic forces and others. Positivists thought that all these unobservables could be replaced by equivalents in terms of observables, but this turned out to be a mistake. This mistaken understanding of scientific methodology was made the basis of the development of a methodology for social science, and the attempt was made to remove all unobservables from social science theories. As just illustrated, this attempt fails, and one must refer to unobservables in order to understand human behavior. Despite this failure, no serious attempts have been made to revise fundamental methodological principles of economics. Karacuka and Zaman (2012) provide a long list of examples showing that economic models are extremely poor at explaining actual observed human behavior because they neglect 'unobservable' dimensions of human motivations.

(To be continued, In sha Allah)

Life's Baggage

We all have a bag. We all pack differently. Some of us are travelling light. Some of us are secret hoarders who've never parted with a memory in our lives. I think we are called to figure out how to carry our bag to the best of our ability, how to unpack it, and how to face the mess. I think a part of growing up is learning how to sit down on the floor with all your things and figuring out what to take with you and what to leave behind.

- Hannah Brencher

The New Menace and Its Answer

By Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

Moral and Spiritual Chaos

Besides Nationalism, another calamity that is bringing ruin upon the Islamic World is the blind admiration for the material things of life by its upper classes. They are ready to sacrifice all other considerations and values in the pursuit of their worldly ambitions. There is at work among them a strong tendency to prefer this material world to the Hereafter and to avail themselves wholeheartedly of its pleasures. The appeasement of the sensual appetites has become the chief object of their existence with the result that moral perversion, drink, debauchery and the other vices have freely crept into them and they have obtained, more or less, a complete freedom from the moral obligations imposed by religion as if they have no connection with it or that the Islamic Shariat has been repealed. With a few exceptions the ruling sections of Muslims, present a picture very much like it everywhere.

The Biggest Danger

This, in brief, is the moral and spiritual state of the present day Muslims. A wave of Paganism is sweeping across the Muslim World and carrying away with it the glorious heritage of Islam. Never has Islam experienced a danger so powerful and so all-pervading. And the tragedy is that there are few who are willing to take stock of this dismal situation and fewer still to place all that they have at stake to combat it. We remember that when agnostic tendencies raised their head in Islam under the influence of Greek philosophy there sprang up a number of outstanding men to put

them down with all the unique resources of their mind and heart and with their social prestige. Similarly, when the sects of Batiniyat and Mulahida made their appearance, the crusaders of Islam jumped into the arena to take issue against them with pen and speech. Thus Islam on account of these timely services continued to command such a strong position intellectually and logically that it could beat off any storm that arose.

The Real Problem

The real problem before Islam now is not that of moral degeneration or slackness in matters of Prayer or other supererogatory observances or the disregard of the religious practices or the imitation of the foreigners. These are important things, no doubt, but the real issue in front of it which has worked itself up like a mighty tidal wave and is striking directly at its roots is one of belief and unbelief. It is that whether Islam will survive in the world or be cast away like an old garment. The battle that is being fought today in the Muslim World is between Western materialism and Islam, the last of the messages from God. On one side there is agnosticism and on the other the Divine Law. I believe this is the



last struggle between religion and irreligiousness after which the world will swing full-scale towards one side or the other.

The Holiest of Holy War

The jehad of today, the greatest need of the present hour, is to repulse this storm of atheism, nay, to go ahead and make a direct assault at the heart of it. The chief task of religious renovation in the modern times lies in the revival of faith among the young men and the educated classes of the Ummat in the basic tenets of Islam, in its moral and spiritual scheme of things and in the Apostleship of the Prophet. There can be no better deed of worship today than to release the educated young men of intellectual and psychological confusion and frustration they are going through and to satisfy them mentally with regard to Islam. The basic characteristics of Paganism that have dug themselves into their minds must be weeded out to make place for spiritual truths of Islam. For a full century the West has been preying on the hearts and minds of the Muslims. It has played havoc with its skepticism, doubt and disbelief. The transcendental truths have been trampled underfoot by the materialistic concepts of political science and economics.

We have watched all this like a mere spectator, heedless of what it was leading to. We sat pretty on what our ancestors had left behind to us and did not realise that it was essential to bring it into conformity with the changing pattern of time. We also made no effort really to understand the thought-process the West had released. We never examined the Western philosophy and way of life critically. Our time was wasted in superficial discussions till now after the passage of a century the time has come before us when the foundations of the faith itself are in danger and a generation has come up which has very little real trust in the spiritual values of life.

Call of Faith

The crying need of the hour is to call the Muslims back to faith. The rallying cry of this new religious endeavour should be "Let us re-create faith in Islam." But mere slogan-raising will avail nothing. We have to think of the way through which to approach the inner selves of the ruling sections of the contemporary Muslim World so that they can be brought back to Islam.

-To be concluded in the next issue, inshaAllah.

Wahn

Sayyiduna Thawban رضي الله عنه narrates: The Prophet ﷺ said:

Soon people will invite each other plotting against you like how a person eating invites others to share their dish.

Someone asked: 'Will that be because of our small numbers at that time'?

The Prophet ﷺ replied: No, you will be many at that time, but you will be scum like that carried down by a flood, and Allah will take away the awe and fear of you from the chest of your enemy and cast 'wahn' into your hearts.

Someone asked: 'What is wahn'?

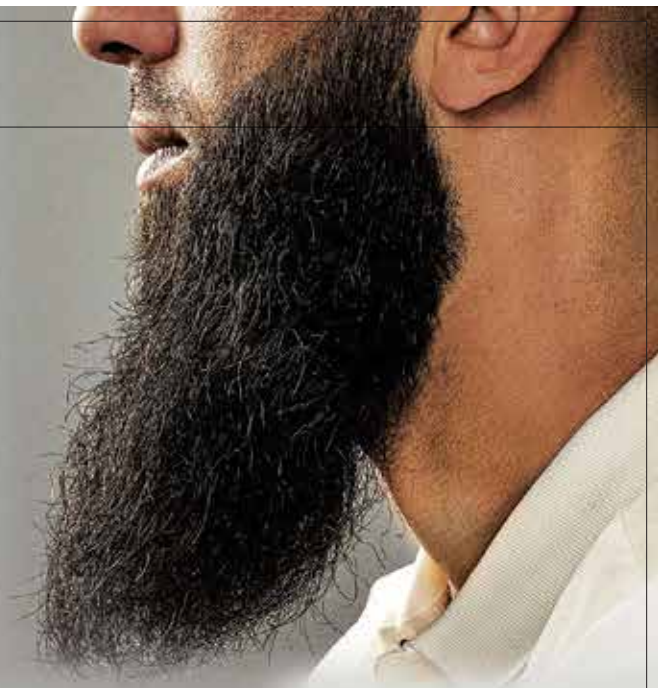
The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Love of the world and dislike of death'.

(Sunan Abi Dawud)



Harder ^{the} Test, Greater ^{the} Reward: The Beard Struggles of a Young Muslim Man

By Muhammad Areeb Nafey uddin Siddiqui



Harder the test, greater the reward.

This is a general rule. The final mission of a game, the final interview before acquiring a lucrative job, the final trial before you get selected in a team: you name any walk of life and this rule applies. And this rule is a reason, among many others, why *Anbiyaa* and the *Sahaabah* have such a high status in the eyes of Allah: they underwent the hardest tests.

This rule is the reason why reviving a Sunnah as we approach *Qayamah* would yield a reward of seventy martyrs (hundred, according to another narration) for the reviver. So hostile would the environment be towards any Sunnah and so non-conducive would the conditions be, that staying steadfast on the noble practices of our noble Prophet ﷺ would be nothing short of a grave test.

Harder the test, greater the reward.

For a young Muslim man who decides to keep a Shariah-compliant beard, it is harder than ever today. Instantly you get the title of 'Mullah'. Not that it is a derogatory term by any means, but the society has transformed it into one unfortunately. And that is only if you're lucky. Things quickly proceed to you being called a fundamentalist, an extremist, or even a terrorist-in-making. The reception from the families—members of whom have been conditioned to think along the same lines—isn't usually encouraging, either. You are viewed with skepticism at educational institutes and workplaces. In some cases, opportunities may be snatched from you, since you don't "look professional enough". Trying to get married is another struggle altogether, since girls often

prefer "more fashionable" men.

But all these factors have been present for the last twenty years at the least. So why is it harder today than ever before?

Social media. There you go. That's your answer.

Every young man, and I am no exception, wants to look chic, trendy and fashionable. And it is the public that decides what is chic, trendy and fashionable. With social media having reduced distances beyond imagination, global fashion trends are quick to reach us. Furthermore, with social media exerting an influence on our lives like never before, the desire to emulate these trends is stronger than ever. And the problem is that all these acclaimed handsome gods of fashion are either clean-shaven, or have fancy beards. As a final nail in the coffin, these gods of fashion are everywhere on the social media, and repeatedly seeing their clean-shaven faces or fancy beards, coupled with the praises being showered upon them, ingrains this message in the hearts and minds of young men that if you want to be appealing to the masses, you must be clean-shaven or have a fancy beard.

And this is what I mean when I say how much more testing it is for a young man to keep a Shariah-compliant beard today. When a young man decides to keep a Shariah-compliant beard, he is putting an end to all these desires. It all starts as early as the popping of the first few hairs on the face. Deciding not to remove those little hair requires immense strength: withstanding the comparisons with goats and other animals from one's peers is no easy task. Seeing all his mates shave their irregular beards is too attractive a

prospective for him to turn down, yet he decides against removing those hairs, just for the sake of Allah ﷻ and Rasulallah ﷺ. Then, as the beard continues to grow, he is consenting to looking much older than his clean-shaven peers, bringing an end to his "childhood" whilst his peers are still enjoying their lives of frivol and frolic. Later, when the peers realise that their beards are growing evenly now, they often resort to more fashionable beard styles. This gentleman here has to crush his desires yet again, allowing his beard to grow according to the Sunnah, just for the sake of Allah ﷻ and Rasulallah ﷺ; all this internal struggle along with the titles of fundamentalist, extremist and terrorist-in-making; all this along with an unsupportive family; all this with the constant fear of being denied educational and work opportunities; all this with the constant sense of insecurity that my marriage proposals will be rejected because I'm too backward or too extreme.

All this because it pleases Allah ﷻ and Rasulallah ﷺ.

As I said earlier, I'm not exempted from any of these desires, either. Despite having a Shariah-compliant beard, Alhamdulillah, there are times when, like others of my age, at times I also wish to look trendier. After all, I am also a product of this social media age. I get to see these widely acclaimed handsome gods of fashion on my Newsfeed every now and then. And their acclaim attracts me as well. But then I am reminded of the incident where Rasulallah ﷺ didn't even look at the clean-shaven ambassadors of the Persian king when they came to him, because he disliked their appearance so much. And they weren't even Believers! If I die today with a face like that, how can I even expect Rasulallah ﷺ for *Shafa'at* (intercession) in front of Allah ﷻ that day?

I know the sacrifice is huge. But then again: harder the test, greater the reward.

Stay Aligned!

Hadhrat Imran bin Hasān رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulallah ﷺ said, "Whoever remains aligned to Allah with his heart, Allah will be sufficient for him in all his affairs. Allah will bestow on him sustenance from such quarters which he did not even think of. Whoever aligns himself with the world, Allah hands him over to the world"

(Targhib wa Tarhib).

Expecting Salvation Despite Violations

Excerpted from Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami's *'uyub al-nafs wa adwiyatuha*
Translated by Musa Furber as *Infamies of the Soul & their Treatments*

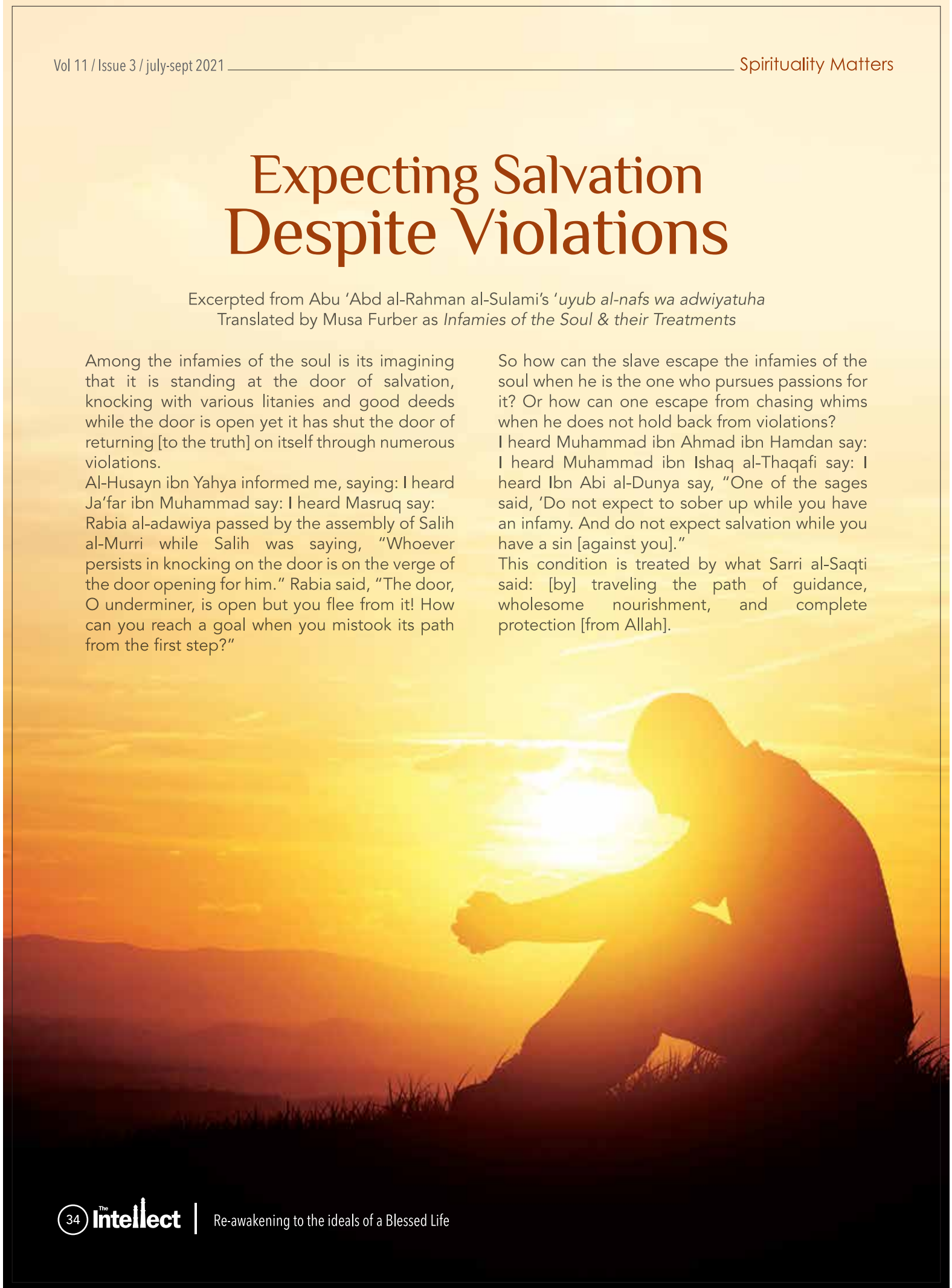
Among the infamies of the soul is its imagining that it is standing at the door of salvation, knocking with various litanies and good deeds while the door is open yet it has shut the door of returning [to the truth] on itself through numerous violations.

Al-Husayn ibn Yahya informed me, saying: I heard Ja'far ibn Muhammad say: I heard Masruq say: Rabia al-adawiya passed by the assembly of Salih al-Murri while Salih was saying, "Whoever persists in knocking on the door is on the verge of the door opening for him." Rabia said, "The door, O underminer, is open but you flee from it! How can you reach a goal when you mistook its path from the first step?"

So how can the slave escape the infamies of the soul when he is the one who pursues passions for it? Or how can one escape from chasing whims when he does not hold back from violations?

I heard Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Hamdan say: I heard Muhammad ibn Ishaq al-Thaqafi say: I heard Ibn Abi al-Dunya say, "One of the sages said, 'Do not expect to sober up while you have an infamy. And do not expect salvation while you have a sin [against you].'"

This condition is treated by what Sarri al-Saqti said: [by] traveling the path of guidance, wholesome nourishment, and complete protection [from Allah].



Loving the Prophet ﷺ

By Someone who yearns the blessed sight of RusulAllah ﷺ

What blinding, arresting, magnificent light
Would be our trance-like state, in your amazing sight
Pure bliss, at the *Hauz e Kauthar*
We are in line, awaiting the blessed, glistening water
Fear, hearts beating hard: don't turn me away
Barred by angels, like those who went astray
Beseech for me, please!
On the Day, mankind, en masse, would be on its trembling knees
And tumbling, shaky on the razor-sharp *Sirat*
I know your shining Sunnah, would light up the all-encompassing dark
O beloved, blessed Messenger of Allah ﷺ,
Hold our hands, make *Shifa'ah*, take us along into Jannah
In Gardens of bliss, serenity and calm
Enveloping us, for our worldly wounds, a perfect balm
Living in peace, in eternity, *In sha Allah*
This is the core of our burning du'as...

Prayers pave ways...

By Dr Anum Fatima

When life is going fast
And you feel you can't keep pace
You are tired
And longing for solace
Go, rest your head on your prayer mat
In front of The One Who created you
Tell Him that you are weak
And are unable to get your destination achieved.
Tell Him that you are trying only for Him
But the targets are making you overwhelmed.
Ask Him to make you strong.
Keep you consistent and help you go on...
Now lift your head and wipe your tears
Feel the strength instilled in you...
Get ready for trying again
Believing that He's with you!



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Inside Different Homes

By Somaya Ramadan Ahmad
Translation: Zainab Wasay

On the night of their wedding, the husband decided to make everything clear from the very start. Thus, he began criticizing his wife's parents for everything they had done since the engagement, while she looked at him bewildered and dumbfounded. She spent the rest of her night crying into her pillow, it was the worst night of her life - though it never should have been.... Because of his immaturity, this newly wed husband made a drastic decision with long lasting negative effects. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has described women as glass vessels and has said to handle them gently (Bukhari). Even in Hajjatul-Wadah the Messenger of Allah ﷺ emphasized on being kind to women (Tirmidhi).

Here we find another husband who has years of experience in marital life. His wife accidentally cooked some food which was not according to his taste. But instead of getting angry at her, he looked at her with a smile and said, "This reminds me of the most beautiful days of my life; when we were newly married and you were learning to make different dishes for me." The wife took a sigh of relief. With his kind words, her husband had removed her worries for not being able to make good food. His *Akhlaq* also remind us of the sunnah, since the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would never find fault in food (Bukhari).

In another home, we find another wife, who has been married for twenty years, preparing food for guests. Among the guests is a respected elderly scholar.

Before leaving, he wanted to thank the wife himself for the food she had made with the simple words which RasulAllah ﷺ has taught us, "*JazakAllahu khairan*".

But he was taken aback when she burst into tears on hearing these words. Then pulling herself together she said, "I'm sorry respected Shaikh, but it's been twenty years and no one has ever thanked me or appreciated anything I do."

This is something very important many people forget to do while caught up in their lives. The wife will continue to do all the work, but no one will be bothered to give her appreciation.

This newly wed wife had heard a reminder on the importance of appreciating one's spouse. Her husband had promised to bring her a special present and she began wondering with excitement what valuable gift her husband was going to bring her.

To increase her anticipation, her husband even called her before coming home to say that he hadn't forgotten to buy the gift – in fact he had already bought it!

But when he came home and gave her the gift and she eagerly opened it, what did she find? Very simple slippers!

She was initially taken aback. She had been dreaming of gold and diamonds and she wasn't expecting slippers, at all. But then remembering the advice on being grateful and appreciative, she quickly put herself and exclaimed, "These are lovely! Thank you for being so thoughtful!"

Later she found out that her husband's mother would find these type of slippers very comfortable, so her husband wanted to give her equal comfort and joy by buying the same slippers for her.

A little patience and appreciation saved them from an unpleasant situation and also eventually unveiled the real reason.

Cooperation and equal contribution to a home is very important in maintaining love between spouses.

A husband and wife called the *Daa'iyah* to their house to help them solve their problems. After listening to both of them, the *daa'iyah* began looking around. When the couple asked her what she was looking for, her answer left them speechless - for she was looking for the love and affection that seemed missing in their home.

The wife didn't want to clean the house because she said it wasn't her duty. Whereas the husband, instead of helping her like the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would help his wives (Bukhari), would only increase the work. They lived in a single bedroom house, which meant that there wasn't much work. But only when there is love, do spouses help and assist each other.

The husband would throw his clothes everywhere, leave his dishes in odd places and leave his dirty socks on the bed without caring about whether his wife would be bothered by the smell. Then he would ask his wife to clean everything. And since everything was to be done by the wife, she would refuse to do anything

saying it's not her responsibility. She would ask for a servant, but the husband would say we can't afford one.

O Fatima bint RasulAllah ﷺ, may Allah ﷻ be pleased with you. When you and Ali ﷺ asked RasulAllah ﷺ for a servant he gave you a *Dhikr* to read before sleeping. (Bukhari)

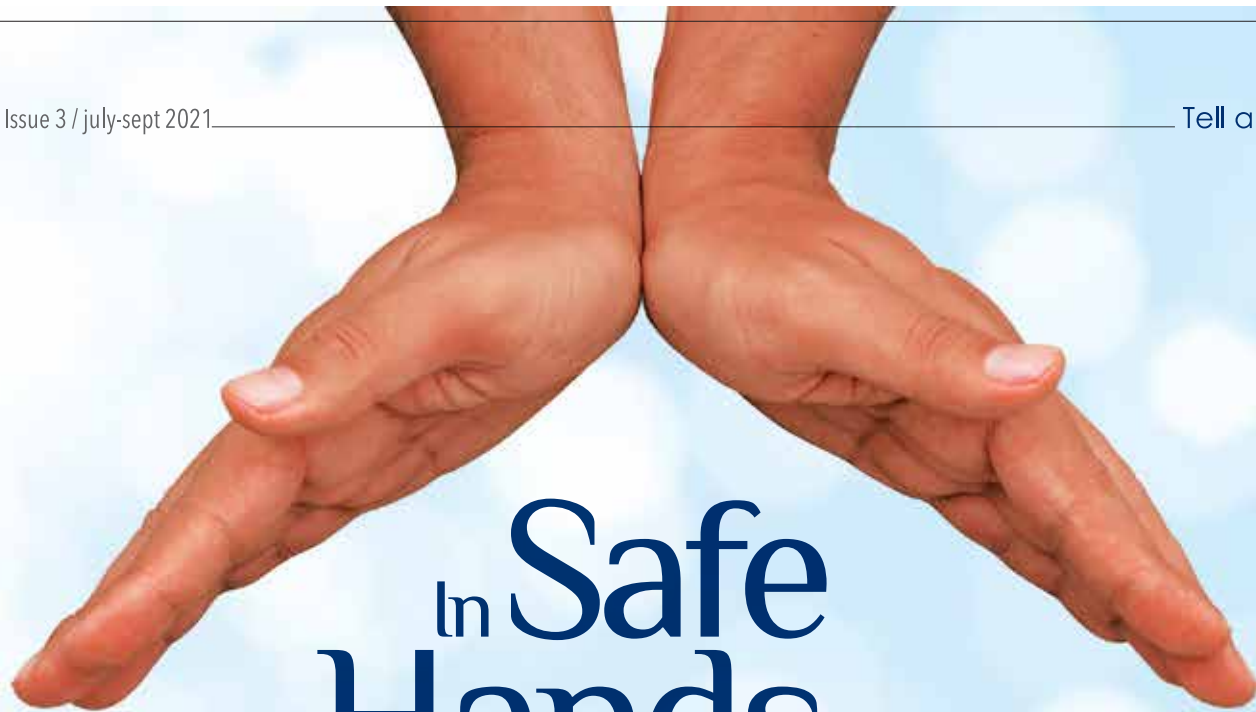
He gave it for both of them to read, since life is about cooperating, working with and loving each other.

This house has somewhat different dynamics. The husband pokes his nose into everything his wife is doing and barely gives her any freedom to do anything. While the wife too wants to know about every single thing happening in her husband's life. Thus, both of them cause their presence to be stifling for the other.

The environment of a home should be one of comfort and peace, everyone should be given some space. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would return from a journey, he wouldn't enter the house immediately, rather he would first have his wives informed of his return (Muslim). This shows that he trusted them and he wanted to give them adequate time and space to prepare for his arrival.

Here's another couple. This couple competes in saying good words to each other and making each other happy. They try to give each other maximum comfort, and all their efforts are only for Allah ﷻ. Thus, Allah ﷻ has given them happiness, and *In sha Allah* we hope that He too is pleased with them.

These are different homes, each with a story of its own. It is up to its residents to choose for themselves a life of happiness or misery - and if there are spouses then they have to make the decision together.



In Safe Hands...

Narrated by Bint Akram

Once, a man accompanied by his son, came to meet Hazrat Umar ؓ. The resemblance between this man and his son was exceptional. Hazrat Umar ؓ felt a little surprised and said to this man that he had never seen such striking resemblance between a father and a son. The man then narrated the strange incident of his son's birth.

This man had to go on a Jihad expedition while his wife expected this son of his. His wife complained to him as to why he was leaving her in such a condition. He pacified her and said that he was entrusting whatever was there in her womb to Allah ﷻ. After that he embarked on his journey. He returned after a long time only to find out that his beloved wife had passed away and was buried in *Jannat al Baqi'*. Naturally, he felt extremely sad at the news. He went to her grave and there he wept and prayed in order to console himself.

At night, however, he saw flames of fire rising from his wife's grave. This got him worried as his wife was a very pious woman. He approached his relatives and asked if they too had seen something similar. They confirmed that every night flames were seen rising from her grave. He could not stop himself from going and finding out what the matter was. At night when he saw those flames he immediately visited her grave. There he was shocked to see that the grave was split asunder and in it sat his wife with his baby – the same son who had visited Hazrat Umar ؓ with him – and a voice was calling out, "O you who entrusted your *amanah* to Allah, here it is! Take it back! Had you entrusted this child's mother to Allah ﷻ, by Allah, tonight, you would have found her too." He picked up his baby from the grave and it returned to its normal state.





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Indispensable Tips for Muslim Parents

Essential Extracts from Islamic Writings
By Zawja Farid

You might feel you are already familiar with all that is required to be a good parent. Think again. There are things you might have missed and even if you haven't, a little revision does no harm!

- Instruct and remind your child about Salah and ask him to remain clean all the time.
- Don't allow kids to lock their rooms; even when with friends. If the door is unlocked, keep checking on them intermittently.
- Don't allow kids to sleep on their tummies.
- Don't leave kids alone and don't let them be idle for too long; an empty mind is the devil's workshop; if a child is sitting idle, negative thoughts will creep into his mind; engage him in some useful activity: reading, cleaning / organizing his room, dusting, watering plants, helping in house chores, making grocery lists etc.
- Keep a vigilant eye on your child's company; children are very impressionable.
- Keep the laptop being used by the child or any device connected to the internet in a central location (say, the lounge), so that you can keep an eye on what the child is up to and the child also knows that I may be monitored and will be apprehended if I go astray. Check device's "history" and "searched items" on and off.
- Keeping a child busy in a healthy physical or mental activity is very essential. Watching

endless TV and playing videogames is decidedly not healthy. Screen-time needs to be minimized. Programs for kids with elements of violence should be disallowed. There are documentaries related to history, geography, the solar system and what not, easily available to be watched – a parent watching with the child, at least for some time, helps in developing the child's inquisitiveness and interest. Read out stories of the Companions رضي الله عنهم; play knowledge-enhancing guessing games; garden together; cook, walk, go to a nearby park – the options are many. Skipping, running and football are all energy-boosting, refreshing activities.

- Being a parent is a full-time job: be vigilant about exchanges between your child and his / her friends and once in a while look through their bags, books and cupboards to nip the evil of objectionable material in the bud. It sounds like policing and maybe a bit like vigilantism, but in these crazy times of the net and social media, being careful is a million times better than being sorry. Do check on any social exchanges of your child on the internet and keep webcams off. Don't allow indulgence in taking or exchange of selfies.
- Closer to puberty, beware of any child spending too much time in the washroom.
- Don't let a child touch itself inappropriately.

- If a child seems allergic to a particular family member or is too close to one, find out the reason in an inconspicuous manner.
 - Keep a “code word” with your child. If any stranger pretends to know the parents or asks the child to accompany him, your child should know that he must first ask the password.
 - Separate the beds of the siblings by the age of seven.
 - Guide the kids about their emotional and physical changes, as per their age; it is much better that they get to know through their parents in an appropriate and decent manner than being misinformed by outsiders.
 - The child should be allowed to go to bed only when feeling drowsy at the designated bed time and once up in the morning, they should not be allowed to sleep on in their beds.
 - Parents must maintain their privacy.
 - When needed, use graceful words and body language to warn children.
 - When kids are around thirteen, fourteen years of age, parents should share the teachings and learning points of Surah Yusuf and Surah Nur with them.
 - Teach them the essentials of Fiqh. (This guidance is missing in a number of Muslim homes).
- Most importantly, at each and every step, make *du'as* for your children and seek refuge for them in the blessed words communicated by Allah ﷻ from the whisperings of Satan.

Checkpoint

If you cannot sit by yourself for an hour, two hours or three hours without reaching for your phone; you have serious problems before your Lord and you will have difficulty in your grave. If we cannot learn to sit by ourselves, facing the Qiblah, in solitude and darkness, head lowered in a state of Muraqabah and realising that Allah sees us. Then when we die and are placed in our graves, there will be a deep sense of alienation. We have to learn how to do this now. Our lives are short and our days are limited. The more we go through this process now, the easier it will be when we meet our Lord.

- Shaykh Yahya Rhodus

Things^{to do} after Ramadan

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

For the development and maintenance of reverence of God (*taqwa*) in our post-Ramadan life *sayyidi wa sanadi* Shaykh Mufti Mohammad Taqi Usmani (Allah preserve him) said,

1. Leave sinful activities:

Be strict on holding your lower (*nafsanī*) desires. Make a firm determination. Do not yield to these

sinful desires easily. These desires and Satan are our two arch enemies.

2. Change the thought pattern.

The mind is constantly occupied with thoughts. There is no gap or vacuum in this process. These thoughts are either of worldly matters or useless issues or sinful activities. It is essential to intervene

and develop a spiritually healthy thought pattern. We have to actively think about hereafter, heavens, thankfulness of Allah for the innumerable bounties and blessings bestowed upon us, asking refuge for anticipated calamities, repenting from sinful activities, etc.

3. Adopt pious company

This is the most effective way to achieve the change of thought pattern. It leads to absorption, assimilation and implementation of the Divine teachings in our life. Without the company of the pious the Deen remains limited to superficial level.

4. Make remembrance of Allah

Set up a daily routine of making remembrance of Allah. There are three categories of remembrance of Allah. First is that it is done with the tongue without presence of mind. Second is when tongue is silent and there is mindfulness. Finally, when both tongue and mind are making the remembrance together. Do not under evaluate even the first category. It is a stepping stone for the rest of the categories. Moreover, with consistency it eventually engulfs the mind also.

Make a daily time table for this. The daily activities done in an organised method creates *barakah* in time. More things are done in the same period of

time. Include in it these four things, recitation of Holy Quran at least two pages daily, *durood*, third *kalima* and *isteghfir*. Fix a specific time for them. In other times recite whatever form of remembrance comes to mind.

The remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*) is a form of energy and power. It assists in development of determination to fight the lower desires.

5. Make supplication (*dua*)

Set a specific time for this. Like prior to sleeping, after *esha*. For few minutes sit and supplicate.

Say, 'O Allah I want to follow the path You are pleased with. I want to control my thoughts, aspirations and desires as per Your desires. You have repeatedly instructed us in the Holy Quran to do so. How can I do it? I am weak. My determination and effort are feeble. Provide from Your benevolence and mercy the determination, power and motivation so I can control my desires and make them totally subservient to Your commands.'

Make this supplication daily without any gap. It is impossible that Allah will reject this supplication indeed.

Courtesy: ashrafiya.com

The Struggle

I have never struggled to rectify something that is more difficult to overcome than my soul; sometimes I win, and sometimes I lose.


- Sufyān al-Thawrī رحمته الله







ABU AYYUB AL-ANSAARI



By Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha


*He would be buried beneath
the walls of Constantinople...*



This sublime Ansaari Companion, from the tribe of Bani Najjaar, was named Khalid bin Zaid bin Kulayb. But he was commonly known as Abu Ayyub .


Allah  granted him lasting fame because the Blessed Prophet  stayed in his house on his historical arrival in Madina. What greater honour could there be?


Let us relieve those glorious moments when Rasul Allah  entered Madina as we recount how he chose Abu Ayyub's  house.

Upon entering Madina, the Blessed Prophet  was given a heartwarming welcome. The people of Madina literally opened up their homes and hearts for Allah's Beloved. All eyes were adoringly focused upon his blessed face. And each person longed to have the honour of hosting the Prophet .






Before coming to Madina, the Prophet  had spent four days in Quba, which was located in the outskirts of Madina. Here, he had built a masjid which would go down in history as the first mosque to be founded upon taqwa.




As the Prophet  rode on his camel, he was surrounded by the nobles of Madina. They crowded around him, blocking the camel's path in their enthusiasm, beseeching, "Rasul Allah , please stay with us and allow us to serve you."





However the Blessed Prophet  did not yield to their entreaties and told them, "Leave her alone, for she had been commanded."


The people watched the camel's progress tensely. Whenever it passed beyond any house without stopping, the owner would feel downcast while the people whose houses lay ahead would feel hopeful. The camel maintained a steady pace and finally halted at an empty plot of land opposite of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansaari's  house



where it knelt down.


However the Prophet  did not dismount and the camel set off once more, while Rasul Allah  held the reins loosely in his hands. Almost immediately it retraced its course and returned to the original spot. Ecstasy flooded the heart of Abu Ayyub  as he rushed to Rasul Allah , welcoming him to his home. Reverently he picked up the Prophet's  belongings and carried them inside, with the air of one bearing a priceless treasure.

Abu Ayyub  lived in a double storied house, he had vacated the upper floor for the Prophet . But the Prophet  chose to stay on the ground floor.


At night the Prophet  went to bed and Abu Ayyub  and his wife went upstairs. As soon as they closed the door, Abu Ayyub  exclaimed, "Woe betide you! What have we done? How can we stay above the Messenger of Allah ? What if we should come between him and the Divine Revelation? We would be doomed!"

Both husband and wife were horrified. In desperation, they ran to a corner of the room which did not lie directly above the Prophet  and remained in the corner all night.

When morning dawned, Abu Ayyub  said to the Prophet , "By Allah, neither Umm Ayyub nor I slept a wink last night."

The Blessed Prophet  inquired, "Why is that, Abu Ayyub?"

He replied, "I realized that I was above you and any movement of mine could cause dust to fall upon you or I could come between you and the Divine Revelation."

The Prophet  reassured him, "Take it easy on yourself, Abu Ayyub. It is easier for us to stay downstairs because of the excessive number of

guests who will come to visit us.”

In the narration of Abu Ayyub رضي الله عنه, “So I obeyed the command of the Allah’s Messenger ﷺ. Until there came a bitterly cold night, and we accidentally broke a jar and the water spilled out. Instantly Umm Ayyub رضي الله عنها, and I rushed to the pool of water; all we had with us was a piece of velvet that we used as a blanket. Frantically, we began to mop up the water so that no drops should seep through and fall on the Prophet ﷺ. In the morning I begged the Prophet ﷺ, “May my father and mother be ransomed for you! I cannot bear to be above you while you reside beneath me.”

When I related what had happened, he agreed to move upstairs.”

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ stayed in Abu Ayyub’s رضي الله عنه home for almost seven months while his masjid was being built in the empty spot of land where the camel had knelt. Upon the completion of the masjid, he moved to the rooms adjoining the masjid, which had been built for his wives. Thus, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ became Abu Ayyub’s neighbor.

Abu Ayyub’s adoration for the Prophet ﷺ permeated his very being. And in return, Rasul Allah ﷺ loved him with a warm love that was free of all formality. In fact, the Prophet ﷺ regarded Abu Ayyub’s house as though it were his own home.

Ibn ‘Abbas رضي الله عنه narrated, “Once, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه went at high noon to the masjid, ‘Umar رضي الله عنه him and asked, “O Abu Bakr, what brings you out at this hour?”

Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه replied, “Nothing, but intense hunger.”

‘Umar answered, “By Allah ﷻ I too have come out for this reason.”

While they were both talking, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came out and asked them, “What brings both of you out at this hour?”

They replied, “By Allah ﷻ, nothing but intense hunger has brought us out.”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “By Him in Whose Hands

rests my soul, I have come out for the same reason. Come with me.”

They set off until they came to the house of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansaari رضي الله عنه. It was Abu Ayyub’s رضي الله عنه daily custom to store some food for Rasul Allah ﷺ. If the Prophet ﷺ did not come at his usual time, he would give the food to his family.

When they reached the door, Umm Ayyub رضي الله عنها came out, exclaiming, “Welcome to the Messenger of Allah and those with him!”

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ asked her, “Where is Abu Ayyub?” In the meantime, Abu Ayyub رضي الله عنه, who had been working in a nearby date palm, heard the voice of Rasul Allah ﷺ and came running to meet him, declaring, “Welcome to the Messenger of Allah and those with him! O Messenger of Allah, this is not your usual time for coming.”

The Prophet ﷺ answered, “You have spoken truthfully.”

Abu Ayyub hastened to his date palm and broke off a bunch of varied dates containing ripe, dried and half-ripe dates. The Prophet ﷺ said to him, “I did not wish you to cut all of these, can you not pluck some of the ripe ones?”

Abu Ayyub رضي الله عنه replied, “O Messenger of Allah, I want you to eat from the ripe, dried and half-ripe dates. I also intend to slaughter an animal for you.”

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not slaughter an animal that gives milk.”

So Abu Ayyub رضي الله عنه slaughtered a lamb and instructed his wife, “Knead some dough and make bread for us, for you are an expert in making bread.”

Then he stewed half the lamb and roasted the other half. Once the food was prepared, he placed it before the Prophet ﷺ and his two companions.”

The Prophet ﷺ took a portion of the meat, and placed it within some bread and said, “Abu Ayyub, take this to Fatima for she has not eaten such food since many days.”

When they had eaten to their fill, the Prophet ﷺ

remarked, "Bread, meat, ripe, half-ripe and dried dates!" His eyes brimmed with tears and he said, "By Him in Whose Hands rests my soul, surely this is the blessing about which you will be asked on the Day of Judgment. When you are given such food, say, 'Bismillah, in the name of Allah' as you start eating, then say, "All praise be to Allah Who satiated us and conferred countless bounties upon us."

Then the Blessed Prophet ﷺ arose and said to Abu Ayyub ؓ, "Come to us tomorrow."

The Prophet ﷺ always returned any favor he had received. Since, Abu Ayyub ؓ did not hear these words, 'Umar ؓ told him, "The Blessed Prophet ﷺ has commanded you to come to him tomorrow."

Abu Ayyub ؓ answered, "I hear and obey, O Messenger of Allah."

The next day, Abu Ayyub ؓ went to the Prophet ﷺ, who gifted him a slave girl who used to serve him. He said, "Treat her well, Abu Ayyub for we have seen nothing but good from her, as long as she was with us."

Abu Ayyub ؓ returned to his home with the slave girl. When Umm Ayyub ؓ saw her, she asked, "To whom does this girl belong, Abu Ayyub?"

He answered, "To us, Rasul Allah ﷺ has gifted her to us."

Overcome with gratitude, she uttered, "What a gracious benefactor, and how noble the gift!"

Abu Ayyub ؓ added, "He enjoined us to treat her well."

Anxiously, Umm Ayyub ؓ asked, "How should we fulfil the Prophet's ﷺ command?"

He replied, "By Allah, I think the best way of obeying the Prophet ﷺ is to free her."

She answered, "You are absolutely correct and have been rightly guided." So they freed the slave girl.

Abu Ayyub ؓ spent a long life which he spent fighting in the path of Allah ﷻ. He never held back from any Muslim battle, from the time of Prophet ﷺ till the time of Mu'awiya ؓ, unless he was already engaged in another military engagement.

When Mu'awiya ؓ was making preparations for the conquest of Constantinople, Abu Ayyub ؓ was eighty years old. However, his age did not deter him from enrolling under the banner of Yazeed, and traversing the sea in the path of Allah ﷻ.

Soon after the initial confrontation with their enemy, he fell so sick that he was unable to take part in any further fighting. Yazeed came to see him and asked, "Do you need anything, Abu Ayyub?" He replied, "Convey my salaams to the Muslim army and tell them that Abu Ayyub enjoins you to penetrate the enemy territory as far as you can possibly reach, and to take me with you so you may bury me beneath the walls of Constantinople." After saying these words, he passed away.

The Muslims army fulfilled the wish of the Companion of Rasul Allah ﷺ. They attacked the enemy repeatedly. When they reached the walls of Constantinople they dug a grave for Abu Ayyub ؓ and buried him there.

May Allah ﷻ reward Abu Ayyub ؓ for his noble intention to die as a warrior fighting in the Path of Allah ﷻ.

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

The Point

By Zawjah Farid

The Point – an epitome of all that was flashy; that which dazzled the eyes of onlookers; the place to be for anybody deemed “somebody” in the higher echelons of the society; all the top-brands spread out like threaded beads along its shiny corridors; glistening windows, with rapacious eyes peeking in, devouring the trinkets and whatever else adorned the display trays; its parking lot: a nightmare, impossible to find a slot without going round and round and round...

And now... now, a spectacle in near-ruin: a lone leaf twirls and twists as it embraces the wind in its parking bay; a weary guard does not need to make much effort in directing one or two half-hearted visitors to the empty slots; the music in the play area (once choc-a-bloc with jostling kids), now blasts ominously to lure absent children; the empty shops haunt, some with shutters half-way down; the bored worker dressed up as Mickey Mouse, sits on a chair, his elaborate head-gear dangling by the side of his seat; the expensive dry-fruit stall still stands, with the keeper tossing a pistachio or two into his mouth, expecting and awaiting non-existent clientele; everything wears a desolate look.

All the ‘loyal’ customers have run off to a pristine, dazzling mall, thrice its size. The Point stands alone, towering over its own shadows.

Similar are the tales sung by the wind blowing through the elaborate ruins of the People of Aad, Samud and Aeeka; the sprawling gardens of *ahl-e-Saba*, the once-flourishing cities of Mohenjodaro and Harrappa; the doomed abodes of Pompeii; the echoes of the Roman Colosseum, forever dissipated in the air; Petra, Volubilis, Babylon, thriving, booming cities... once.

The moving hands of time spares no civilization.

Look at trees: sturdy, hundreds of years old, exhaling calmness and serenity, but losing their green and their cool eventually.

Can we then, feeble as we are, immortalize our legacy by dragging ourselves through a pointless existence by running after futile endeavors; like the strangely (or aptly!) named ‘Cruises to Nowhere’?

On a timeline from the descent of Man to Earth, which ultra-microscopic point is marked as the duration of your life or mine?

In 2121, when we would all be naught but dust, strangers would be occupying the lands where our homes once stood; our belongings and all that was dear to us would be lost forever or passed on to those who know nothing about us. Our worldly belongings: divested, distributed, consumed...

No one would know our faces or our names. We would be no more important than a speck of dust that falls upon the shoulder and is unceremoniously dusted away; our lives, our thoughts, our dreams, our aspirations, our likes, dislikes, our arguments and attachments, our friendships, enmities...Poof! Naught but dust.

Think about it: what really is the point?

“Has the time not come yet for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth?” (Al-Hadid: 16)

“Their reckoning has drawn near to men, and in heedlessness are they turning aside” (Al-Anbiya:1)



What is Tasawwuf?

By Khalid Baig

"Verily, he who has purified the heart is successful and he who has despoiled it has lost."

A lot of people have misunderstandings about *tasawwuf*.

Many think that it is something beyond Qur'an and Sunnah. Errant Sufis as well as the superficial ulema, although on the opposite ends of the spectrum, are together in holding this mistaken notion. Consequently, the first group has shunned the Qur'an and Hadith while the second group has shunned *tasawwuf*. Actually, although the term *tasawwuf*, like many other religious terms in use today, evolved later, the discipline is very much part of the Shariah. The department of the Shariah relating to external deeds like *salat* and *zakat* is called *fiqh* while the one dealing with the internal feelings and states of the heart is called *tasawwuf*. Both are commanded in the Qur'an. Thus, while commanding *Salat* and *Zakat*, the Qur'an also commands gratefulness and love of Allah ﷻ and condemns the evil of pride and vanity. Similarly, in the books of hadith, along with the chapters on *ibadat*, trade and commerce, marriage and divorce, are to be found the chapters on *riya* (showing off) *takabbur*, *akhlaq*, etc. These commands are as much a mandatory requirement as the ones dealing with external deeds.

On reflection it will be realized that all the external deeds are designed for the reformation of the heart. That is the basis of success in the hereafter while its despoiling is the cause of total destruction. This is precisely what is known technically as *tasawwuf*. Its focus is *tahzeebe akhlaq* or the adornment of character; its motive is the attainment of Divine pleasure; its method is total obedience to the commands of the *Shariah*. *Tasawwuf* is the soul of Islam. Its function is to purify the heart from the lowly bestial attributes

of lust, calamities of the tongue, anger, malice, jealousy, love of the world, love of fame, niggardliness, greed, ostentation, vanity, deception, etc.

At the same time, it aims at the adornment of the heart with the lofty attributes of repentance, perseverance, gratefulness, fear of Allah ﷻ, hope, abstention, *tauheed*, trust, love, sincerity, truth, contemplation, etc.

To diagnose and treat the diseases of the heart normally requires the help of an expert mentor or *Shaikh*. Here are the qualities of a good *Shaikh*.

1. He possesses necessary religious knowledge.
2. His beliefs, habits, and practices are in accordance with the Shariah.
3. He does not harbor greed for the worldly wealth.
4. He has himself spent time learning from a good *Shaikh*.
5. The scholars and good *mashaikh* of his time hold good opinion about him.
6. His admirers are mostly from among the people who have good understanding of religion.
7. Most of his followers follow the Shariah and are not the seekers after this world.
8. He sincerely tries to educate and morally train his followers. If he sees anything wrong in them, he corrects it.
9. In his company one can feel a decrease in the love of this world and an increase in the love for Allah ﷻ.
10. He himself regularly performs *dhikr* and *shughal* (spiritual exercises).

In searching for a *Shaikh*, do not look for his ability to perform *karamat* (miracles) or to foretell the future. A very good *Shaikh* may not be able to show any *karamat*. On the other hand, a person showing *karamat* does not have to be a pious person - or even a Muslim. Prominent Sufi

Bayazid Bistami رحمته الله says: "Do not be deceived if you see a performer of supernatural feats flying in the air. Measure him on the standard of the Shariah."

When you find the right *Shaikh*, and you are satisfied with his ability to provide spiritual guidance, you perform *baya* or pledge. This is a two-way commitment; the *Shaikh* pledges to guide you in light of Shariah and you pledge to follow him. Then the *Shaikh* will give his *mureed* (disciple) initial instructions. They include the following:

1. Perform repentance for all the past sins and take steps to make amends, e.g. if any *salat* has been missed so far in the life, you start making up for it.
2. If you have any unmet financial obligations toward another person make plans to discharge them.
3. Guard your eyes, ears, and tongue.
4. Perform *dhikr* regularly.
5. Start a daily session of self-accounting before going to bed. Review all the good and bad deeds performed during the day. Repent for the bad ones and thank Allah for the good ones.
6. Perform *muraqaba-e-maut* (meditation over death) every night before going to bed. Just visualize that you have died. Reflect upon the pangs of death, the questioning in the grave, the plain of Resurrection, the Reckoning, the presence in the Court of Allah رحمته الله, etc. This helps bring softness to the heart and break the tendency to commit sins.
7. Develop humility. Even if you observe another individual committing the worst of vices you should not despise him/her, nor should you consider yourself nobler. It is very much possible that the perpetrator of the vice may

resort to sincere repentance while the one who despised the sinner becomes ensnared in the traps of *nafs* and *Shaitan*. One has no certainty regarding one's end. One, therefore has no basis for regarding another with contempt.

The essential idea of *tahzeeb e akhlaq* is to bring our natural faculties in a state of balance. The three basic faculties are anger, desires, and intelligence.

Anger:

When in equilibrium it results in valor, forbearance, steadfastness, the ability to restrain anger, and dignity. Excess will result in rashness, boastfulness, pride, inability to restrain anger, and vanity. A deficiency will result in cowardice, disgrace, and feeling of inferiority.

Desires:

Equilibrium here results in chastity, generosity, *haya* (decency), patience, and contentment. Its excess leads to greed and lust. The other extreme results in narrow-mindedness, and impotence, etc.

Intelligence:

Equilibrium here makes man wise, sharp-witted and one with great insights. Excess here makes one deceptive, fraudulent and an imposter. A lack of it results in ignorance and stupidity with the consequence that such a person is quickly misled. A person will be considered as having a beautiful *seerah* (character) only when these faculties are in the state of balance and equilibrium. Internal beauty varies with people just as external beauty does. The possessor of the most beautiful *seerah* was Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam. The beauty of our *seerah* is based on its closeness to his *seerah*.

[Condensed from the writings of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi رحمته الله]

A Thousand Times...

"Be the kind of soul that others wish they could meet you a thousand times."

(Translation of an Arabic quotation)



Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دوست برکاتہ

Translation by Umm Abdullah Zubairi

We remained in Makkah Mukarramah for some days after Hajj. During those days I would take my respected mother (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon her) for *tawaaf*. I had memorised almost all the prayers (*duas*) of *tawaaf* by then and would recite them loudly, while many ladies would repeat after me.

Makkah Mukarramah was a small city at that time. I was allowed to go out up to a roofed Bazaar, which I came to know was known as "Souq Ul Mudda'a" or "Souq Ul Layl" (This Bazaar has now been incorporated into the Haram after the new expansion). The son of Haji Sahab Rahimahullah had become our friend (and nowadays the grandson of late Haji Sahab is the owner of the famous perfume shop "Surrati"). He would sometimes take us to this bazaar. In those days one Pakistani Rupee comprised of sixteen *Aanaas* while one Saudi Riyal was equivalent to twenty *Aanaas*. I liked a drink sold in that bazaar which cost one Riyal. After doing *tawaaf* or helping others do *tawaaf*, I had no other preoccupation in the remaining time except for going to the Bazaar and having that drink.

When the time came to depart from Makkah Mukarramah for Madinah Munawwarah, we came to know that the entire road was unpaved.

Travelling by bus was unsafe because when the driver accelerated the bus up on the unpaved road, passengers' heads would at times hit the roof, causing injury. Also, a bus ride took a long time to reach Madinah Munawwarah. As a result our respected father Rahimahullah decided to travel by plane. We thus reached Jeddah again. We were told that the plane would depart around Maghrib time, so we reached the airport near Asr. What was the state of the airport? It was actually only a small building which did not have enough space for passengers to wait inside. All passengers thus had to wait outside the building, on the sand. We all spread a cloth and sat outside. This was the first time I would be travelling by plane so besides the eagerness of visiting Madinah Munawwarah, I also had the childish excitement of travelling by a new mode of transport. It was announced that the plane would depart around Maghrib time, but we remained sitting there until Isha without any news of the plane. We continued waiting even after Isha till late night, until some passengers began to fall asleep.

A representative of the airline came around midnight with a list of passengers. He began calling out passengers' names to confirm their attendance. At the end he reached the name of a lady which had "*Musammaat*" (1) written next to it. He thought this was also someone's name and kept calling out "*Mussammaat*", "*Mussammaat*".

How could have anyone replied to this title? Hence, he kept calling out this name from one end of passengers to the other without getting any reply. Finally, perhaps it was Bhai Jaan who explained to him that this is not a name, rather ladies write this word next to their names. Anyway, we regained hope that after this activity of marking attendance perhaps we would soon be asked to board the plane. However several hours passed by without anybody coming to us, until the entire night passed by. When it was close to Fajr time, we were informed that the plane would depart soon and passengers were being boarded onto the plane. Our respected father رحمته الله said that if we were to sit in the plane at this time we would miss Fajr prayer, so we intentionally delayed boarding the plane until we could pray Fajr. This was a small Dakota plane, and since it was my first flight I fully enjoyed it.

The runway of Madinah Munawwarah Airport was not paved; rather it was made of gravel. When the wheel of the aircraft touched down on the ground, gravel particles flew up in the air and as a result the plane, instead of landing, bounced up and began ascending. After ascending a bit, it descended again and when its tyre touched down on the ground it again bounced up and started ascending. Perhaps this happened three or four times, and only after that did it land. I thought this was the normal landing procedure of airplanes, but only later did I come to know that this had happened owing to some fault in the plane, due to which an emergency could have arisen. It was by the Grace of Allah Ta'ala that it successfully landed at its third or fourth attempt. When we disembarked from the plane, we saw that there was no building and the Madinah Munawwarah airport comprised just one small room.

It was only the eighth year of my life, but the love of Madinah Munawwarah was infused in me from the beginning, and visiting this holy city felt like a beautiful dream. In those days the north gate of Masjid Nabawi, which was called Bab Al-Majeedy, used to be located at the corner of the first courtyard of the Turkish construction;

meaning the length of the Masjid was hardly one-sixth of its present-day length. In front of this door, after some open space, a tunnel-like path which had shops on both sides led to a building known as "Istafa Manzil". This was a building constructed by a friend of my respected father, late Haji Istafa Khan Sahab. He was a pious businessman of Lucknow, and had had this building constructed to provide free residence to those visiting Madinah Munawwarah during Hajj or otherwise. We stayed in the basement of this building. A peculiarity of this basement was that it contained a well; this was the same well which was located in the garden of the companion Hazrat Abu Talha Ansari (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with him) and was known as Bir Ha or Bir Abu Talha.

After the following verse of the Noble Quran was revealed,

You shall never attain righteousness unless you spend (in the path of Allah) from what you love.

the Noble companions (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with them) used to desire not to miss out on any opportunity of doing good deeds. Thus almost all of them began searching their hearts for their favourite and most beloved possession. Thereafter each of them began giving those possessions in charity for the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala. There are many events related to this which appear in various narrations. One of those companions was Hazrat Abu Talha Ansari (May Allah Ta'ala be pleased with him). He said to the Noble Messenger ﷺ, "O Messenger of Allah! I love my garden, Bir Ha, the most and wish to give it in charity." The Noble Messenger ﷺ replied: "Excellent! That is a very profitable property. My opinion is that you should spend it on your near relatives." He thus did so. It is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari that this garden was located in front of Masjid Nabawi. The Noble Messenger ﷺ himself used to like the water of this well, and would eagerly drink it. This good fortune fell to our lot that we got the opportunity to stay near this blessed well twice, and were inundated with its blessings. Now Istafa Manzil and the well have been incorporated into the expanded part of the Masjid.

Our respected father ﷺ took us to Masjid Nabawi, introduced each and every section of the Masjid, and then took us to present our greetings to the Noble Messenger ﷺ. I don't remember exactly how many days we stayed in Madinah Munawwarah, but most likely it was eight days. During this time, our respected father ﷺ took us to visit numerous historic sites, the first among which, after Jannat Al-Baqee', was Mount Uhud. We presented our greetings to the martyrs of Uhud, and I saw our respected father, Bhai Jaan and other companions trying to visualise the positions of the Pagan and Muslim armies, and trying to identify the hill at which the Noble Messenger ﷺ had deployed the archers. This hill is called Jabal Ar-Rumat, and the discussion regarding the direction from which Hazrat Khalid Bin Walid attacked this hill continued for some time without any decisive conclusion. We also visited Masjid Qiblatain during these visits, i.e. the Masjid in which the command to change the Qibla from Bait Al-Maqdis to the Honourable Ka'aba was revealed, and the Noble Messenger ﷺ, during the prayer, changed his direction towards the Honourable Ka'aba. It was a small Masjid at that time, and contained two small

Mihrabs opposite to each other. One of the Mihrabs, towards the north, was to indicate that the prayer was started facing Bait Al-Maqdis, and the other one was towards the south, in the direction of the Honourable Ka'aba, whereby the Noble Messenger ﷺ and his companions turned towards this one during prayer. Similarly, we also got the opportunity to visit the place where the Battle of the Trench took place, and I saw my elders trying to determine the location and dimensions of the trench. Further, we also visited Masjid Quba. At that time, it this was also a small Masjid. A bar protruding from a specific wall indicated that the Noble Messenger ﷺ used to lead prayers at this spot. There was another small Mihrab in the courtyard of the Masjid about which it was said that this was the place where the she-camel of the Noble Messenger ﷺ would sit.

Note:

- 1 "Musammaat" is an Urdu equivalent to the English word "Lady" which is sometimes written next to someone's name.

To be continued, inshaAllah.

Getting Married: Valuable advice

"Getting married isn't going to solve our inabilities to wake up for Fajr or get up for qiyam. We need to develop our own selves without expecting marriage to somehow magically change our lives. Marriage can be a great tool of self-improvement and can help us change for the best, with Allah's will. Marriage is amongst the greatest blessings that Allah ﷻ can bestow on a person; and the creation of a family, and taking care of that family, is amongst the greatest acts of worship. But if we are not personally working on ourselves now, how can we expect that it will be easier with the additional baggage of another individual who is also imperfect?"

-Ustadha Maryam Amirebrahim



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