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Re-awakening to the
Ideals of a Blessed Life

The Intellect

The Aims of Education

Remembering
an Icon

The Ruling
on Smoking

In the
New Life

What
Constitutes
the World?

The Three
Questions

Al-Qur'an

by Mufti Taqi Usmani مفتي تقي عثمانی

**Thankless
Children**

**The Coal
Basket**

**Islam versus
Science or
Scientism?**

**Those Who
Accept
Guidance**



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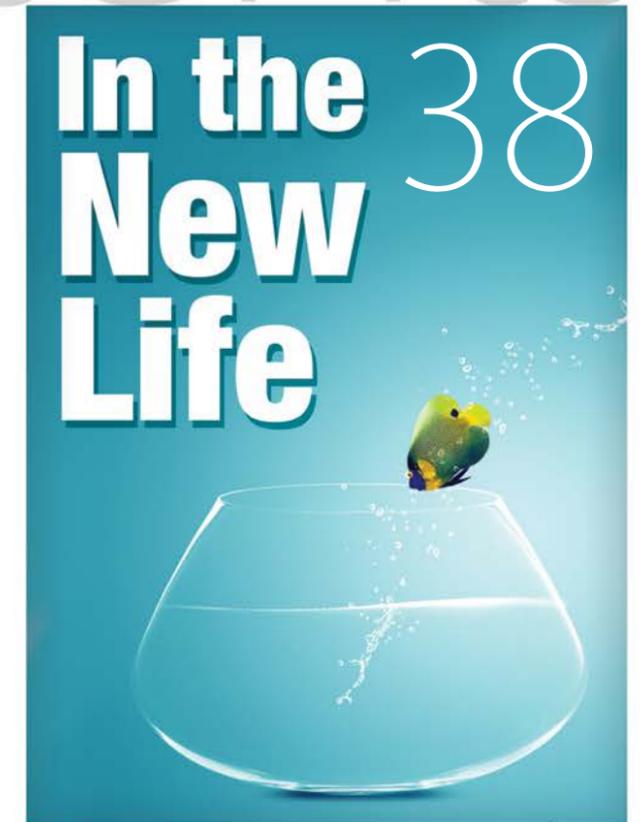
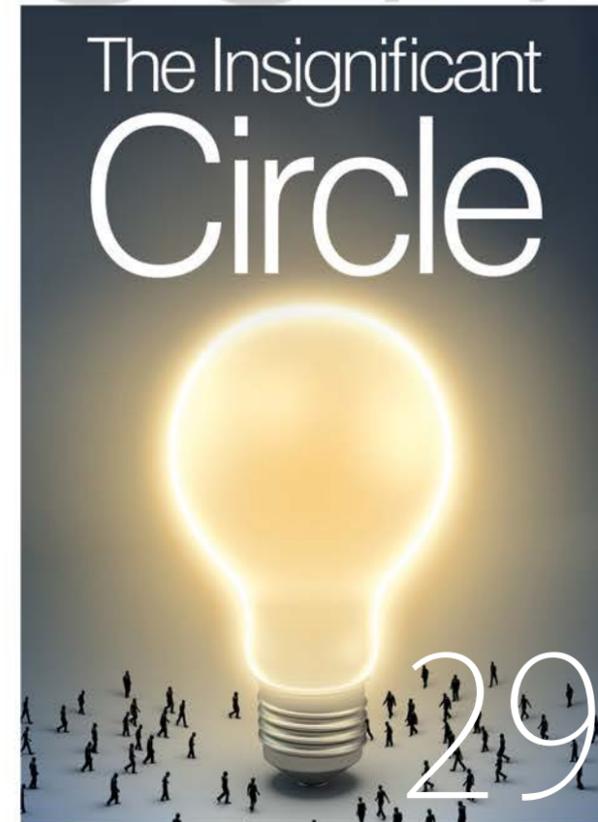
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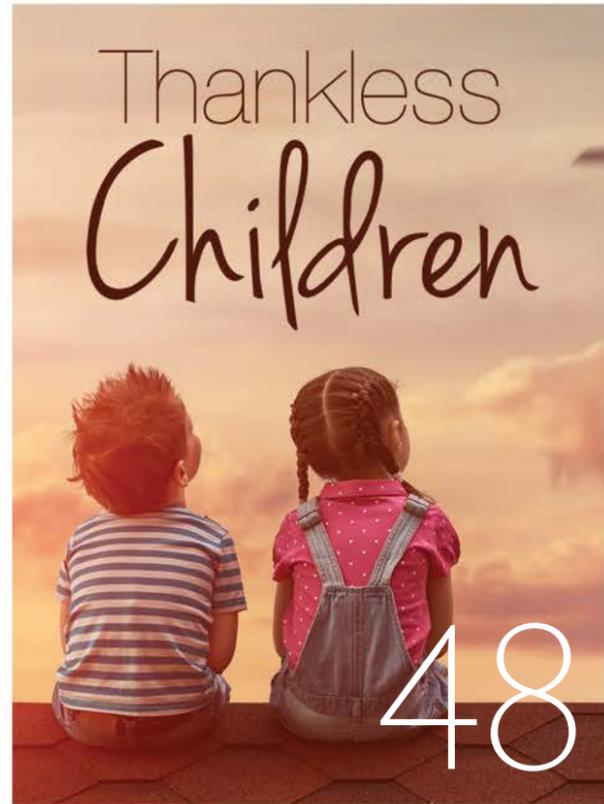
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Uzair Zavary

Designing & Illustration



Fahmedeen Publications

Legal Advisor

G.M. Bhutto

Printer

wasaprinters@cyber.net.pk

Ph:+92-21-35313278 Mob:+92-332 8278537

E-mail: info@intellectmagazine.com

Website: www.intellectmagazine.com

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

While looking for a house in a perfectly nice neighbourhood, one sector was constantly being sidelined by the property dealers. When asked the reason for the step-motherly treatment towards this particular area, we were told that since nobody wished to see houses here, the estate agents didn't bother or waste time by showing them around.

Full marks for anyone able to guess the reason!

It is pertinent to mention here that it was a perfectly safe and neat clean neighbourhood; neither did it lack basic amenities nor access to necessary services; it wasn't even out of the way or inaccessible in any manner. Then, what really was wrong with it?

The only (weird) reason it was ignored, we found to our shock, was because it was next to the local graveyard! So a place which should

have served as a constant reminder had become an area to fear and run away from. How ridiculous.

(It reminds me of the elderly wasting hours upon hours glued to their Television screens because they don't know how to kill time. Really, those with at least apparently the least time, waste it more!)

Moving on from this 'grave' matter to one of an icon's recent death, do read the article featured in *Reflections* about Muhammad Ali, the incomparable boxer. Appearances can be misleading, so even if someone opines that his outlook may not exactly have been *Shairah*-compliant, no one can ever gauge or undermine his special relationship with Allah ﷻ and the level of *eeman* in his heart starting right from his inspirational conversion to Islam, taking a stand for the *deen* with fearless conviction throughout his life and observing his faith relentlessly right up to his death. The stands that he took for Islam are numerous – many that born-Muslims may not have dared to take. (Case in point: refusal to be drafted up for the Vietnam War, just because it didn't align with his Islamic ethos and to the very severe detriment of his career and financial position).

Our *Cover Story* this time, digs deep to pinpoint the real aims of education by elucidating the difference between merely having an expertise in / technical

knowhow of a particular field of knowledge ("instruction") versus being a good person, equipped with the basics for earning a livelihood, but with an acute sense of responsibility and duty towards self, family, friends and humanity in general ("education"). To this end, the worthy educationist, Syed Ashraf Ali, also dwells upon the concept of "quality of life" as viewed through the eyes of three different groups of people with varying interpretations: the secular-modernists, the humanists and the religious. Throughout the article, the dots are joined methodically and convincingly to emphasize that the third view, those of the religious, is the most comprehensive and fulfilling one, allowing humans to partake of "...a very large perspective", that of eternity and infinity and that this perspective alone can help us define the real purpose and aims of education, fulfilling our role as vicegerents of God on earth, with guidance from Him alone.

Islam versus Science or Scientism, also featured in this issue, thematically aligns with our cover story in that it begins by describing the real rationale behind the scientific endeavors of the Muslim greats of yesteryears, how they knitted their research with their religious world-view, how prefaces were devoted to "praising God" like other religious books of the time and going on to explain how science and reason is divorced from the Divine in the modern world and thus not able to achieve harmony on earth by refusing to submit to the eternal Will of God.

The themes of 'eternity' and "infinity" can lead a thinking person to brood over our apparent physical inconsequentiality in an expanding and 'borderless' universe. *The Insignificant Circle in Urban Pangs* dwells a bit more on this captivating subject.

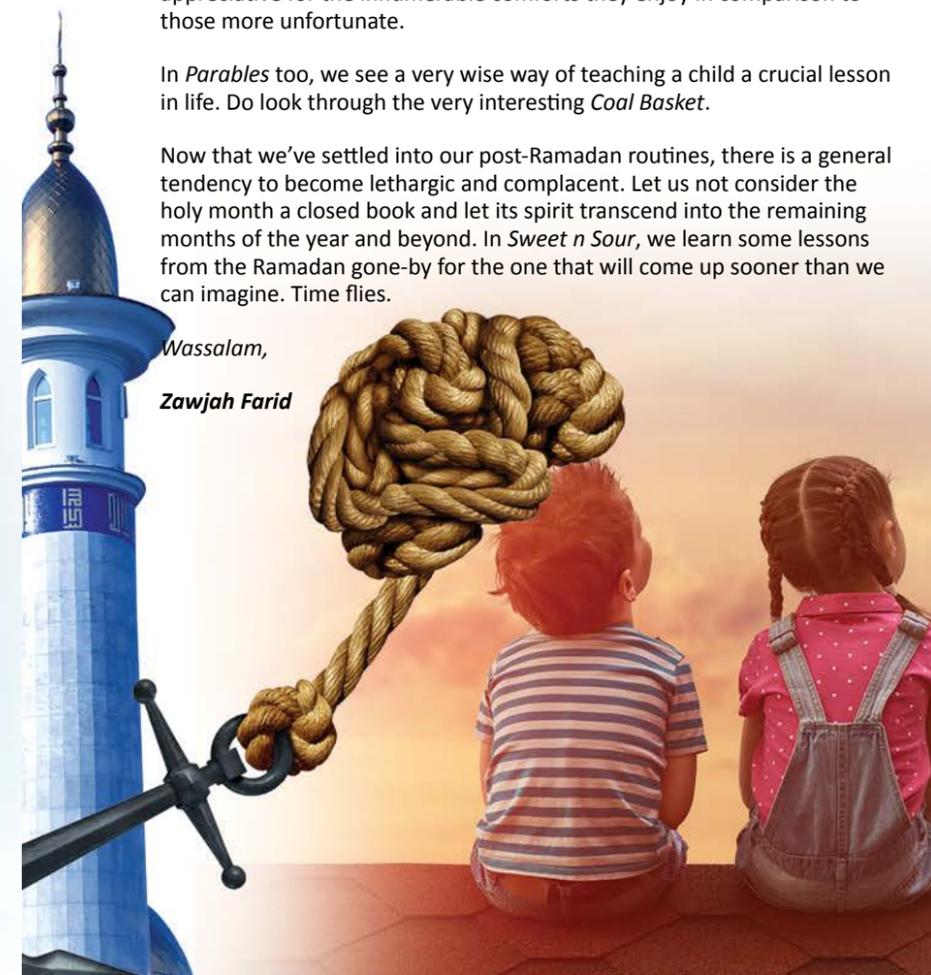
In *Parenting*, Dr. Yusra Shabbir talks about the difficulty parents face in pleasing children these days. Most remain unappreciative of the sacrifices parents make for them and no amount of material comforts make them thankful towards their elders. The writer thus suggests ways and means of inculcating a mindset of 'thankfulness' among kids so that they remain appreciative for the innumerable comforts they enjoy in comparison to those more unfortunate.

In *Parables* too, we see a very wise way of teaching a child a crucial lesson in life. Do look through the very interesting *Coal Basket*.

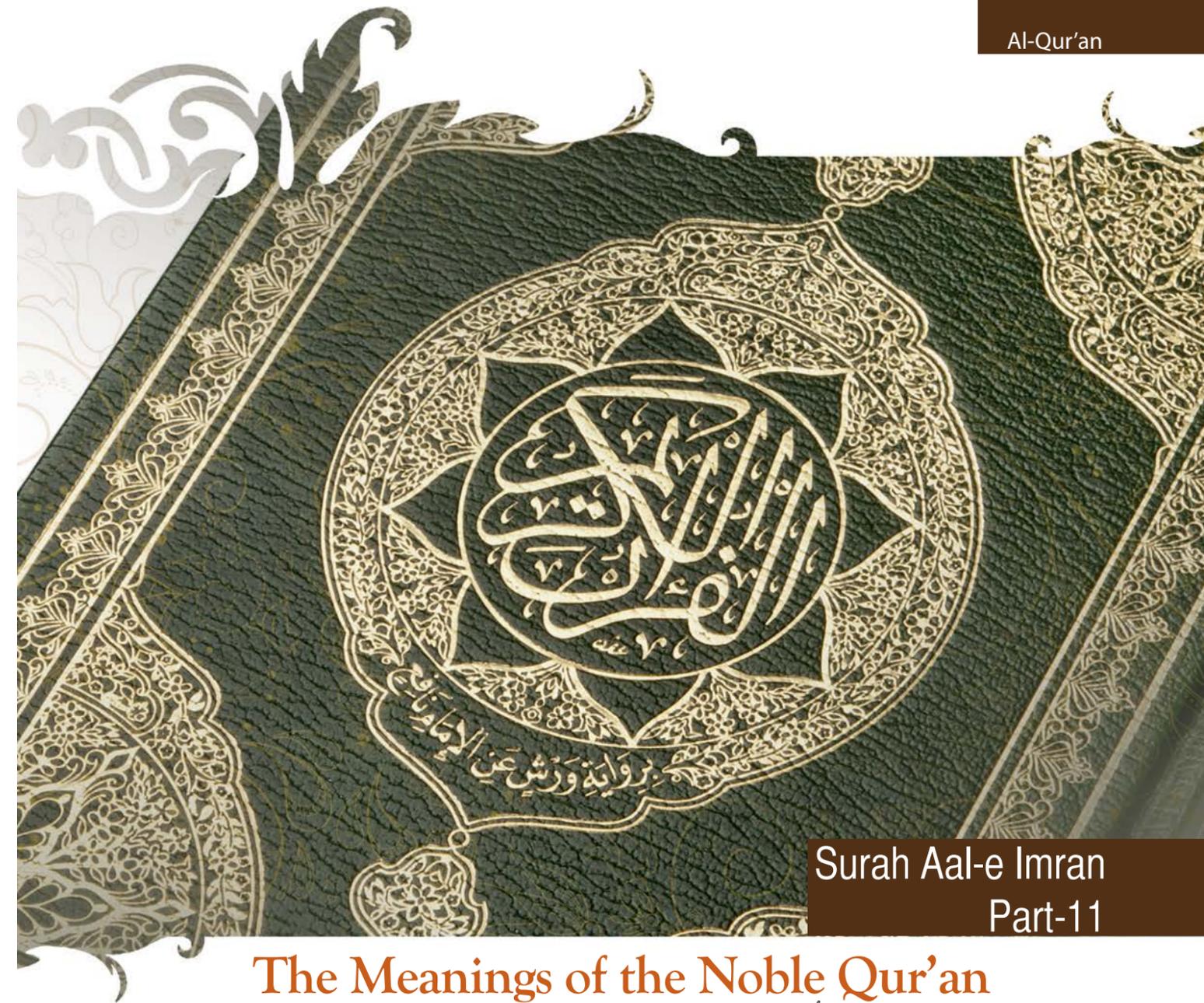
Now that we've settled into our post-Ramadan routines, there is a general tendency to become lethargic and complacent. Let us not consider the holy month a closed book and let its spirit transcend into the remaining months of the year and beyond. In *Sweet n Sour*, we learn some lessons from the Ramadan gone-by for the one that will come up sooner than we can imagine. Time flies.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid



Huma jewellers pg10



Surah Aal-e Imran
Part-11

The Meanings of the Noble Qur'an

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مدظلّه

Translation with Arabic Text

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَيَ ضَلَالِينَ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

164) Allah has surely conferred on the believers when He raised in their midst a messenger from among themselves who recites to them His verses and makes them pure and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom, while earlier, they were in open error.

أَوْلَمَّا أَصَبْتَكُمْ مُصِيبَةً قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَيْنَ مَا جَاءَنَا هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

165) How is it that, when you suffered a hardship twice of which you had inflicted upon them, you say, "Where did this come from?" Say, "This is from your own selves. Allah is surely powerful over everything."

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَيَاذَنَ اللَّهُ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

166) Whatever you suffered on the day when the two troops faced each other was by the will of

Allah, and in order to know the believers,

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ تَأَفَّكُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا فَنُحِبِّبُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَأَنْتَبَعْتُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَفَرِ بَوَاسِئًا أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِسْلَامِ يَقُولُونَ يَا فَوَهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

167) and in order to know those who are hypocrites. It was said to them, "Come on, fight in the way of Allah, or defend." They said, "Had we known it to be a fight we would have certainly followed you." That day, they were nearer to disbelief than to Belief. They utter from their mouths what is

not in their hearts. Allah knows well what they conceal.

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَمَدُوا لَوْ أَمْلَأْنَا مَا قَتَلُوا قُلُوبًا فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

168) Those who said about their brethren, while themselves sitting, “Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed.” Say, “Then avert death from yourselves if you are true.”

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْواتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

169) Never take those killed in the way of Allah as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, well-provided,

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

170) happy with what Allah has given them of His grace; and they feel pleased with the good news, about those left behind them who could not join them, that there shall be no fear for them nor shall they grieve.

يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ وَفَضْلَ اللَّهِ لَا يَضِيعُ أَلَّا يَرْضَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

171) They feel pleased with blessing from Allah, and grace, and with the fact that Allah would not let the reward of the believers be lost.

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقْبَلُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ الْقَرْعَةِ ﴿١٧٢﴾

172) Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after they had received the wound, 44 for those of them who did good deeds and feared Allah there is greater reward.

الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ الْقَرْعَةِ ﴿١٧٣﴾

173) -(that is) those to whom people said, “The people have gathered against you; so, fear them.” It increased them in Faith and they said, “Allah is fully sufficient for us, and the best One in whom to trust.”

فَأَقْبَلُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمَسَّ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ وَأَقْبَلُوا بِرِضْوَانٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

174) So, they returned with bounty from Allah, and grace, with no evil having even touched them, and submitted to the pleasure of Allah. Allah is the Lord of great bounty.

إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ. فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا إِيَّانَا كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

175) It is none but satan who frightens (you) of his friends. So, do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are believers.

وَلَا تَحْزَنْكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُصِرُوا لِلَّهِ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِطْلًا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

176) Those who hasten towards disbelief should not make you grieve. They cannot harm Allah at all. Allah intends not to spare for them any share in the Hereafter. For them there is a mighty punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُسْرِئُوا بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يُصِرُوا لِلَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾

177) Certainly, those who bought disbelief in exchange for Belief cannot harm Allah at all. For them there is a painful punishment.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّئُهُمْ خَيْرًا لَأَنْفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّئُهُمْ لِيُزَادُوا إِسْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

178) Those who disbelieve should not think that the respite We give them is good for them. In fact, We give them respite only that they may increase in sin, and for them there is a humiliating punishment.

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَى مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّى يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَكُمْ عَلَى الظُّلُمِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْتَدِي مِنَ الرُّسُلِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَأَتَيْنُوا اللَّهَ وَرُسُلَهُ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾

179) Allah is not to leave the believers in the state you are in, unless He separates the impure from the pure. 45 Allah is not to inform you of the Unseen. 46 But Allah selects from His Messengers whom He wills. So, believe in Allah and His Messengers. If you believe, and fear Allah, you will deserve a great reward.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْغُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُمْ حَسِبُوا أَنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُسَاطَرُوا بِمَا يَبْغُلُونَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَبْرُئُ السَّمَكِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

Explanation

44) Verses 172 to 175 refer to the expedition of Hamra-ul-Asad: When the pagans of Makkah went back after the Battle of Uhud, and crossed distance, a thought occurred to their minds that, instead of hurrying back to Makkah, they should have stayed at the field to annihilate the Muslims to the last man, because the Muslims having faced unexpected casualties, must have lost their morale, and it was a unique opportunity to crush them. According to this thought they suspended their journey for a while, but then apprehending difficulties resumed their retreat. However, on their way back, they found some people travelling to Madinah whom they directed to frighten the Muslims at Madinah by warning them that the Makkans were planning to launch a second attack. On the other hand, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had come to know, through revelation, about their initial thought of marching back to Madinah, and had started to pursue the Makkans along with some of his Sahabah j who had received injuries in the battle. When he reached Hamra-ul-Asad, a place about eight miles away from Madinah, he was interrupted by Nu‘aim Ibn Mas‘ud Thaqafi who was directed by the Makkans to frighten the Muslims. He said that the Makkans had arrayed a huge army to attack the Muslims again. Although this news should have discouraged the Muslims who were in extreme hardship at that moment, all of them said, “Allah is fully sufficient for us, and He is the best in whom to trust.” On the other side, a traveller, Ma‘bad by name, proceeding from Madinah to Makkah met the Makkani army and told them that the Muslims had started pursuing them with a well-equipped army. This news frightened the Makkans and they never returned. The Muslims, after satisfying themselves about the flight of the Makkani troops, went back to Madinah safely.

Zuyyufur Rehman pg 13

On Forgiveness

To fulfil a promise is a practical form of trustworthiness while to break it is identical, in effect, to untruthfulness. The holy Prophet ﷺ has, thus, stressed upon us the need to discharge every engagement and keep a promise when we make one.

We have earlier seen the Tradition that to fulfil one's promises is among the few moral virtues about which the holy Prophet ﷺ has said that he could give the assurance of forgiveness in after-life to those who possessed them.

Likewise, we have quoted earlier the tradition denoting that "He who does not fulfil his promise has no share in Faith."

(354/114) It is related by Abu Hurayrah h that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"The signs of a hypocrite are three: When he speaks, he is false; when he promises, he fails; and, when is trusted, he betrays."** [Bukhari and Muslim]

Commentary: While commenting on an almost identical Tradition related on the authority of Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Umer h, we have already indicated at length, what is actually meant by these acts or habits being the signs

of hypocrite. These practices, as we said, bear a close relationship with hypocrisy and a sincere believer should stay clear of them. Whoever possesses these habits is a hypocrite, if not in the sphere of faith, at least in the sphere of conduct.

In another version of the same Tradition, reproduced in Sahih Muslim, it is added that though such a person may be observing prayer and fasting, and he may also be professing to be a Muslim, he is a hypocrite, all the same owing to these habits.

(355/115) It is related on the authority of Sayyidina Ali and Abdullah ibn Mas'ud i, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"Promise, too, is kind of debt (and should, therefore, be repaid)."** [Tabarani]

Commentary: It denotes that if a person promises to give anything to anyone or do him some other favour or enter into an arrangement with him, he should fulfil it, as a matter of duty. Nevertheless, should the promises be relating to a thing which is forbidden by the Shari'ah or involves the violation of the rights of anyone, it will not be binding. The duty will then, lie in ignoring it and there will be no sin on its non-fulfilment, but reward for compliance with the holy-law.

(356/116) Abdullah ibn Hamsa has said, "I brought something from the Prophet ﷺ before he received his prophetic commission, and as there was something still due to him I promised him I would bring it to him at his place, but I forgot. When I remembered three days later, I went to that place and found him there. He said, **"You have vexed me; I have been here three days waiting for you."** [Abu Dawood]

Commentary: This shows that he was true to his promise even before he became a Prophet and waited for that man for three days. We must know that it is not necessary to observe a promise to this limit according to Shari'ah but the nature of the Messenger ﷺ demanded that.

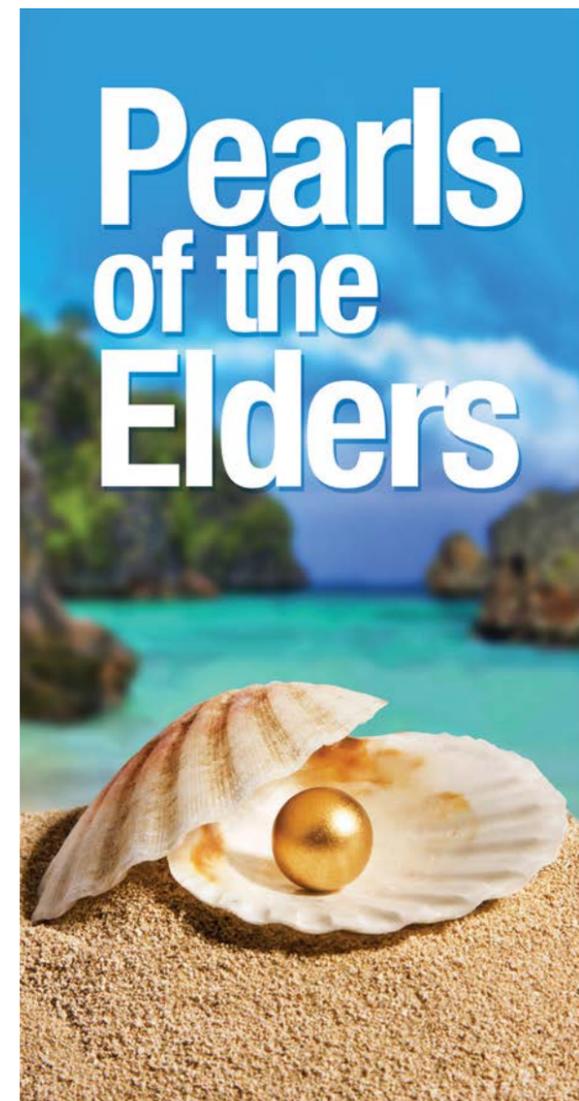
(357/117) Zayd ibn Arqam h has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"If someone makes an appointment with a man and one of them does not come before the time of prayers, if the one who has come goes off to pray he is guilty of no sin."** [Razin]

Commentary: The one who has come has fulfilled his duty. If he goes away to pray when it is time of prayer, or goes away to attend to something else then he cannot be blamed for breaking his promise. There will be no sin on him.

(358/118) It is related by Zayd ibn Arqam h that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: **"If a person promises his brother to visit him, and it is also his intention to do so, but (owing to some reason), he cannot go at the appointment time then there is no sin on him."** [Abu Dawood and Tirmidhi]

Commentary: The emphasis in it is on intention. If the man really meant to fulfil the engagement, but could not do so on account of something or another, he will not be defaulter in the sight of Allah. But if the intention was not there and it was only a deception then he would, doubtlessly, be called to account.

(Excerpted from 'Ma'arif ul Hadith', Maulana Muhammad Manzoor No'mani r, published by Darul-Isha'at)



"If one night you see someone committing a sin, tomorrow do not look at him as a sinner, he may have repented during the night and you did not know."

Ali ibn Abi Talib h

"He who has no manners has no knowledge; he who has no patience has no Religion (din); and he who has no God-consciousness has no closeness to Allah."

Hasan al-Basri r

"Whoever learns something in the name of Allah, seeking that which is with Him, he will win. And whoever learns something for other than Allah, he will not reach the goal, nor will his acquired knowledge bring him closer to Allah."

Hasan al-Basri r

"All humans are dead except those who have knowledge ... and all those who have knowledge are asleep, except those who do good deeds ... and those who do good deeds are deceived, except those who are sincere ... and those who are sincere are always in a state of worry."

Imam al Shafi'i r

"There is no doubt that the heart becomes covered with rust, just as metal dishes - silver, and their like - become rusty. So the rust of the heart is polished with dhikr, for dhikr polishes the heart until it becomes like a shiny mirror. However, when dhikr is abandoned, the rust returns; and when it commences then the heart again begins to be cleansed. Thus the heart becoming rusty is due to two matters: sins and neglecting remembrance of Allah. Likewise, it is cleansed and polished by two things: istighfaar and dhikr."

Ibn al Qayyim r

"If you don't have the ability to compete with the pious in righteous deeds then compete with the sinners in asking Allah's forgiveness."

Ibn Rajab r

"Suffice it as a recompense to you for obedience that He has judged you worthy of obedience."

Ibn Ata'illah r



Fatwa Forum

Being Doubtful about the Number of Raka'at Performed

Q. "It frequently happens during *namaz (salah)* that I forget the correct number of *rak'at* I have performed. For example, I get confused during the *salah* whether I have performed two *rak'ats* or three *rak'ats*. Normally, in such a situation I repeat my prayer all over again. Is this what we are supposed to do or is there any other solution to this problem? Please enlighten me in this respect."

(Maleeha Siddiqi, Karachi)

A. You need not repeat the prayer every time you face such a situation. If a person has experienced this confusion for the first time, he or she is required to repeat the *salah*. However, if this confusion occurs frequently as in your case, you are not required to repeat the prayer. Instead, whenever you are confused during your prayer, you should guess and should act according to the number which appears to you more probable. For example, if you are confused in the *zuhr* prayer whether you have performed two *rak'ats*, or three *rak'ats*, and after reflection it seems to you more probable that you have performed three *rak'ats*, you should act accordingly and after adding one more *rak'at*, your four *rak'at* will be deemed to have been completed.

But even after reflection, if you cannot recollect the actual number of *rak'ats*, both possibilities are equal and you cannot prefer one of them over the other, then you should act according to the lesser number.

For example, if you cannot recollect whether you have performed two *rak'ats* or three *rak'ats*, you should presume that you have prayed only two *rak'ats* and should add two more *rak'ats* to complete your *zuhr* prayer.

However, in this case (i.e. when acting according to the lesser number) one should sit for *tashahud* after each *rak'at* which could possibly be his last *rak'at*. Therefore, in the example above, (when one is confused about two or three *rak'at* and takes it to be his second *rak'at*) he should sit after his next *rak'at* and should recite *tashahud*, because there is possibility that it is his fourth and last *rak'at*. Then after reciting *tashahud*, he should stand up and should complete the four *rak'at* according to his presumption, and should perform a *sajdah of sahw* in the last.

Take another example: Suppose you are saying the prayer and get confused whether it is your first *rakat* or second one. Both possibilities are equal. Now you should take it as your first *rak'at*. Normally it means that you should not sit for *tashahud* after *sajdah* but since there is a possibility that it is your second *rak'at* i.e. the last *rak'at* in *fajr* prayer, you should sit after *sajdah* and after reciting *tashahud* you should stand up again and perform another *rak'at* with a *sajdah of sahw* at its end.

In this manner, you can resolve the problem without repeating the prayer.

New Zaiby
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Du'a how to beg Allah

Translated by Asra Ahmed

The Realities of the Worldly Life

Our Holy Prophet ﷺ, in his enlightened teachings, left behind for his people such detailed instructions and explanations, that at any stage in life, during any moment of worry, when we are faced with a problem, following these instructions with complete faith and belief, would make us very comfortably reach our destination and attain success quite easily.

In this world we are faced with both favorable and unfavorable situations; here we experience times of both peace and restlessness, of fulfilled hopes, and of crushed dreams. Sometimes, all our wishes are fulfilled, while at other times, it seems as though barrier after barrier is blocking our path. A person who at times appears perfectly content, at other times appears completely desolate, from the weight of his worries. This is the same world, which sometimes looks like a Heaven, while at others, it resembles the dreary Hell.

The Favor of the Holy Prophet ﷺ on his People

Of course, all this is common in this world. However, Allah ﷻ has given us such a beloved role model- The Holy Prophet ﷺ - that before he passed away, he solved all the problems that his Ummah was to face in the future. He left no stone unturned; he left a solution for every problem, because he was a kind well-wisher, who only wanted the best for his Ummah, and was a source of mercy for us. The result of this kindness and mercy was that he didn't want to leave his people, or their future generations in any kind of problem or worry. Thus he gave us a solution for every problem, and the instructions that the Prophet ﷺ gave, proved to be very useful. Their results were always a hundred percent accurate, and still are.



The Immediate Benefits of Supplication

From amongst the various instructions given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ on dealing with the problems we are to face in life, is a very important instruction, which is *Du'a* (Supplication).

Allah ﷻ has opened the doors of His blessings and mercy to those who have learnt the art of asking from Him. I can say to you with complete conviction that the one who has asked Allah ﷻ with sincerity will be rewarded instantly with a sense of wellbeing and peace. He will feel connected to Allah ﷻ, like a person who is weighed down by a lot of worries, and then pours his heart out to someone powerful over the phone, who has the means to put an end to all his worries, and is left content and at peace that the other person will take care of his matters for him. Similarly, pouring your heart out to Allah ﷻ leaves you with a serene feeling of contentment. Whatever the situation may be, he will be left with inner peace.

Allah ﷻ loves us More than Our Mother Does!

Whatever you ask of Him, it is completely in His means to grant it when and if He wants to, be it instantly, or sometime later, or not at all. He is *Al Ha-keem*, *Ar Rahman* and *Ar Raheem*, the Perfectly Wise, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful. His love

is more than a mother's love for her child, and He knows what is best for His servant. Just like a mother who knowingly does not grant a child's wish when she knows it will harm him in the future, Allah ﷻ also does not grant His servant's wish immediately. He, The All Wise, then fulfills His servant's wish sometime later, either in this world or in the Hereafter. Always be assured that what the servant will get in the Hereafter will be so much, and so great that he will feel fulfilled.

The Countless Blessings in the Heaven

Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran,

أَعْيُنٌ مُّرْتَبِعِينَ لَهْمُ أُخْفِي مَا نَفْسٌ تَعْلَمُ فَلَا - (Surah As Sajdah: Verse: 17)

Translation: "And [as for all such believers,] no human being can imagine what blissful delights, as yet hidden, await them [in the life to come] as a reward for all that they did."

The believer cannot imagine the blessings with which he will be rewarded in heaven. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said,

"Allah ﷻ will reward the believer with that which no eye has seen ever before, no ear has heard ever before and that which is beyond anyone's imagination."

How to Become Close to Allah ﷻ

The solution to our problems that is taught to us by our dear Prophet ﷺ, is to make *Dua* (Supplication). This is the best way to ease our hardships and the easiest way to get closer to Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ Loves those who ask from Him

Even the most generous person in this world will get irritated if he is asked for things repeatedly. He will get upset and start avoiding such people who keep on asking for one thing or the other. One of the unique qualities of our Lord is that He is happy with those who keep on asking of Him and gets upset with those who don't. According to the Holy Prophet ﷺ,

"Allah ﷻ gets upset with those who don't ask from Him."

And Allah ﷻ brings the one who asks Him again and again, closer to Him.

Allah ﷻ states in the Qur'an,

تَكْفُرُونَ وَلَا لِي وَالشُّكْرُ وَكُنْتُمْ أَكْثَرُ كُرُونِي فَادُّ - (Surah Al Baqarah: Verse 152)

(Surah Al Baqarah: Verse 152)

"So remember Me, and I shall remember you; and be grateful unto Me, and deny Me not."

Begging Allah ﷻ will always be rewarded- your worldly matters will be resolved and you will get closer to Allah ﷻ. For a believer, his greatest asset is his closeness to Allah ﷻ. This world and its blessings, or heaven and its countless blessings do not hold any value before a believer's proximity with Allah ﷻ. The key to achieving closeness to Allah ﷻ is making *dua*.

When a person is asking Allah ﷻ with complete faith and sincerity, Allah ﷻ does not like to leave him unfulfilled. He is *Al Mannan*, The Bountiful. He is the one who keeps favoring and not once does He guilt us with reminders of His innumerable blessings. And sometimes, when one is unable to express himself to Him but is still asking Him, He will still grant his servant's wish, as He is also The Generous One.

It is not possible for anyone to ask Him without being responded to. He says in the Quran,

لَكُمْ أَسْتَجِبْ اذْعُونِي رُبُّكُمْ وَقَالَ - (Surah Al Mumin: Verse 60)

Translation: "But your Sustainer says: "Call unto Me, [and] I shall respond to you!"

"Ask Me in the manner I deserve to be asked and I will

grant you” and Allah ﷻ does not like those who don’t ask from Him.

My dear friends! We as humans always have expectations from others. We keep expecting others to grant our wishes. If we would only realize that if we would ask and plead the same from Allah ﷻ instead, all of our problems would be solved and we would succeed in the Hereafter.

Recognizing Allah ﷻ

Allah ﷻ has blessed us, Muslims, with the most beautiful religion and the best of all the Prophets. This is one of the biggest favors of Allah ﷻ upon us that He has made us a Muslim and a Muslim never gets discouraged. Whenever he is in need of something, he can easily make contact with his Lord, who is always there, never once pausing to sleep or to even blink.

Allah ﷻ says in the Quran,

(Surah: Al Baqarah, Verse: 255) *تَوَدُّهُ وَلَا يَسْتَأْذِنُ بَلَا*

“Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep.”

could turn away His bounty”

In yet another place in the Qur’an, it is stated that,

بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْهُ يُرْسِلُ فَلَا يُحْسِبُ مَا وَلَّهَا تُحْسِبُ فَلَا رَحْمَةَ مِنَ اللَّهِ يُفْتَحُ مَا

(Surah: Fatir, Verse: 2)

“Whatever grace God opens up to man, none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds, none can henceforth release”

He is Allah ﷻ and everything is controlled by Him.

The End of our Desolation

Once our connection with Allah ﷻ is successfully established, we will no longer fall prey to misery and depression. The ones who suffer from depression are those who do not know how to ask of Allah ﷻ. He has repeatedly drawn attention to His Mercy, in several places of the Qur’an. Allah ﷻ says:

الْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الْقَوِيُّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ رَوْعٌ مِنْ يَتَأَسَّرُ لَأِنَّهُ لَدَّ رَوْعٌ مِنْهَا تَتَأَسَّرُونَ وَلَا

(Surah Yusuf: Verse 87)

Omega

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The secret to a successful life is to pray to Allah ﷻ. Ask for whatever you want, whenever you want. Make it a habit to beg Allah ﷻ even when you are engaged in your everyday activities. We should all pray that Allah ﷻ may teach us the correct way of supplicating to Him.



He hears and knows everything. He controls everything and He gives fame or humiliation to whomever He pleases.

As mentioned in the Qur’an,

(Surah: Al Hajj, Verse: 18) *مُكْرَبُونَ لَهُ مِمَّا اللَّهُ يَخْتِيبُ وَمَنْ*

“And he whom God shall scorn [on Resurrection Day] will have none who could bestow honour on him”

In another place, the Qur’an states,

(Surah: Al Anam, Verse: 17) *لَهُ كَيْفٌ فَلَا يَصُدُّهُ اللَّهُ بِمَسْسِكَ وَإِنْ*

“And if God should touch thee with misfortune, there is none who could remove it but He”

Allah ﷻ also says,

(Surah: Yunus, Verse 107) *لِيُضِلَّهُمْ وَإِنْ يَدْفَعِ اللَّهُ بَشِيرًا وَإِنْ*

“And if He intends good for thee, there is none who

“and do not lose hope of God’s life-giving mercy: verily, none but people who deny the truth can ever lose hope of God’s life-giving mercy.”

And do not think that Allah ﷻ will not extend His Favor and His Blessings towards you, as indeed, the ones who think like this are the disbelievers.

He whose connection with Allah ﷻ has been broken, and He who does not even recognize Him can be weighed down with worry, but a faithful servant of Allah ﷻ can never truly give up hope, as he has Allah’s ﷻ support.

The secret to a successful life is to pray to Allah ﷻ. Ask for whatever you want, whenever you want. Make it a habit to beg Allah ﷻ even when you are engaged in your everyday activities. We should all pray that Allah ﷻ may teach us the correct way of supplicating to Him.

To be continued, insha’Allah.



The Aims of Education

By Professor Syed Ali Ashraf (late)

The aims and objectives of education can be stated after defining the difference between education and instruction. Education helps in the complete growth of an individual's personality, whereas instruction merely trains an individual or a group in the efficient performance of some task. A human being may be a great general, an efficient carpenter or a first-class pilot, a lawyer, a mechanic or a pathologist, a renowned doctor, a chemical engineer or a chartered accountant, but still remain a semi-educated, ill-mannered, immoral, unrighteous or unjust person. Similarly, someone may be a very fine painter, a good poet;

or possess a love of beauty which is highly delicate and sensitive, but may, at the same time, be cruel or brutal, or an untruthful, unsocial individual, who deliberately ignores his or her duty towards neighbours or even spouse and children. We can say that people who have specialized in certain educational fields are well-instructed individuals, but we cannot necessarily regard them as truly educated. On the other hand, someone who knows and performs his or her duty towards self, family, neighbours and humanity, and at the same time has acquired a basic knowledge about how to earn a livelihood honestly and live a decent

life, should be called an educated person. Such a person may not have specialized in a particular field of knowledge, but lack of expertise does not automatically prevent him or her from being recognised as an excellent human being.

Good people are not necessarily complete people. In fact, no-one around us can be regarded as complete, because there is no end to the growth of human personality. A wide knowledge of many subjects helps in the growth of personality provided that we know how to adjust our knowledge to our behaviour, and how knowledge and action are to be integrated into a broad, total framework of life. The outlook of an educated person is not static, but is modified and mellowed as he or she applies principles to practice and acquires an outlook enriched by experience.

In order to achieve such integration, we need some basic values, and the society in which we live needs some basic, unquestioned assumptions. The human being is both an individual and a member of a community. One cannot be separated from the other without

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destroying something vital in both. The individualism that stresses complete freedom from any kind of social control is in practice impossible because it leads to the disintegration of society and gives complete licence to the individual to break or make social institutions at will, and overthrow the ideals and value-assumptions of the community according to whatever individual whims dictate. Similarly, a complete social control that represses the creative and critical urge of the individual cripples the spirit, and leads society either to degeneration and stagnation or to sudden and violent social upheaval. Education preserves the basic structure of society by conserving all that is worthwhile in basic values and institutions, by transmitting them to the next generation and by renewing culture afresh whenever degeneration, stagnation, or loss of values occur. At the same time, the job of education is, to use the words of Professor Jeffreys, 'the nurture of personal growth.' It is through this nurture of the individual and the preservation and transmission of culture that both the individual and society attain a 'quality of life', which as Whitehead says, 'lies always beyond the mere facts of life'. Education conveys this sense of quality to pupils, the quality that has an objective status beyond any subjective assumptions and assertions, but which requires individual cognition if individuals are to grow as full men and women. There are various interpretations of this quality of life. The

most significant are the secularist-modernist, the humanist, and the religious. As the system of education depends on these interpretations, it is necessary for scholars to take them into account in order to emphasize and be appreciative of the typically Muslim point of view.

Secularist-modernists do not distinguish conceptually and practically between education and instruction but regard education not as a conservator of human values - the guardian of tradition - but as a process of change and a venture into the unknown. 'Organisation of new knowledge' seems more important than the preservation of knowledge already acquired. The modernist concept, stated clearly and forcibly by John Vaizey in *Education in the Modern World*, does not draw any distinction between the universal and the absolute, and the local and relative, between revealed knowledge (*ilm naqli*) that a Muslim believer derives as a direct gift from God, and acquired knowledge (*ilm kasbi*) that human intelligence and imagination have succeeded in accumulating. Vaizey goes further, and

points out that even this accumulated knowledge which for generations past scholars and thinkers analyzed, classified and graded with reference to the 'liberal' concept of man, and values that humanists believe in (which even a modern non-Christian or anti-religious thinker like Bernard Russell used to stress), is of arguable relevance. This conclusion has been reached by secularist-modernists only because they conceive education as a process that helps humanity to live well in this material world. They do not believe in fundamental, unique, immutable, moral or spiritual values.

The humanists also deny the concept of man that 'revealed' knowledge has given to us. They conceive education as a continuous process of mental, emotional and moral development, as an initiation into a quality of life which helps humans to see different points of view and the relationship of these various points of view to one another. As R.S. Peters, in his work, *Education as initiation*, says,

"The great teacher is he who can convey this sense of quality to another, so that it haunts his every endeavour and makes him sweat and yearn to fix what he thinks and feels in a fitting form. For life has no one purpose, man imprints purposes upon it. It presents few tidy problems; mainly predicaments that have to

be endured or enjoyed. It is education that provides that touch of eternity under the aspect of which endurance can pass into dignified, wry acceptance, and animal enjoyment into a quality of living.

The unfortunate thing about this attitude is its vagueness. It considers education as having 'no ends beyond itself'. It makes a person, as Newman rightly pointed out, into 'a gentleman' and not necessarily 'a religious man'. The spiritual world or the world after death do not have any relevance to the process of cultivating this quality. 'Humanistic thinking,' as another humanist, Laszlo Versenyi in his book, *Socratic Humanism* has said, 'is the cultivation of man, his self-cultivation and self-unfolding into full humanity.' What this cultivation of self means to a modern

humanist has been explained by William D. Hitt in his book entitled, *Education as a Human Enterprise*. It means the cultivation of a scientific attitude of a kind which demands rejection of dogma, and questions absolutes, and, instead of faith, demands a reliance on 'reason' alone. It stresses 'human values' and the complementary roles of science and those human values.

It is this concept of man which humanists preach that differs fundamentally from the concept of man that religion gives us. Insofar as values are concerned, there appears to be a good deal of similarity. Both humanists and religious thinkers agree on the 'objective' status of values, but humanists think that through man's efforts

Love and Time A Parable

Once upon a time, there was an island where all the feelings lived together: Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all of the others, including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island would sink, so all constructed boats and left, except for Love.

Love was the only one who stayed. Love wanted to hold out until the last possible moment.

When the island had almost sunk, Love decided to ask for help.

Richness was passing by Love in a grand boat. Love said: "Richness, can you take me with you?" Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat. There is no place here for you."

Love decided to ask Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel. "Vanity, please help me!" "I can't help you, Love. You are all wet and might damage my boat," Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by so Love asked, "Sadness, let me go with you." "Oh, Love, I am so sad that I need to be by myself!"

Happiness passed by Love too but she was so happy that she did not even hear when Love called her. Suddenly, there was a voice, "Come, Love, I will take you." It was an elder. So blessed and overjoyed, Love even forgot to ask the elder where they were going. When they arrived at dry land, the elder went her own way. Realizing how much was owed to the elder, Love asked Knowledge, another elder, "Who helped me?" "It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"Time?" asked Love. "But why did Time help me?" Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how valuable Love is."




Islam versus Science or Scientism?

By Sohaib Baig

5). The doctrine of Tawheed, of oneness and unity, symbolized the spirit of the universal Islamic scholar – seeking to further investigate the Divine Laws that encompassed the universe, and realizing that eventually everything in the universe pointed to God (Seyyed Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam, 1968*). Indeed, science blossomed in Islam, reaching unprecedented levels of activity, ingenuity, and interfaith (and inter-ethnic) academic cooperation never before witnessed in history. Throughout Islamic history, a peculiar brand of scholars emerged, known as hakeems, who embraced all the sciences with a complete sense of unity, realizing that

Islam was built upon a foundation of learning and knowledge. Numerous verses in the Qur'an emphasized the importance of knowledge and critical thinking, as did the Prophetic traditions (Qur'an: 2:121, 13:19-24, 20:114, 22:46, 39:9, 39:18, and 96:1-

all knowledge simply represented "branches" from the same "trunk," and while Divine knowledge was inherently superior and absolute, scientific knowledge also formed a vital branch of this tree of knowledge - to place *all* focus and weight on one branch at the

expense of the other would destroy the balance of the tree (ibid.). Thus, when carefully followed, this tree would extend in all directions, and Muslims would produce achievements in all fields of knowledge. The equilibrium achieved by this hierarchy was carefully guarded throughout Islamic history, and tensions mainly occurred whenever one branch would begin upsetting the balance of the entire tree, as does the modern scientism of today.

As early as the 8th century, scholars functioning inside the Islamic world had begun embarking upon the path of scientific knowledge (or non-religious knowledge). By this time, the Islamic realm reached from Spain to India, and was witness to the flowering of cities like Cordoba, Baghdad, Damascus, and Jaundishapur. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in his *Science and Civilization in Islam*, includes chapters briefly surveying Muslim activities in the fields of cosmography, geography, cartography, natural history, sociology, physics, optometry, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, alchemy, theology, and philosophy. Thus we learn that Jabir bin Hayyan (721-815) was the founder of the Islamic alchemy, practicing at the court of Harun

topographical studies. In the 14th century, the famous traveler ibn-Battuta would also begin his long travels first by heading to Makkah for the pilgrimage (ibid.). The necessity of finding the direction to Makkah for prayer, as well as determining prayer times, would also spur astronomical activity (ibid.). Thus, work on perfecting the astrolabe would increase, and Abu Sai'd al-Sijzi, another astronomer of the 10th century, would even construct an astrolabe "based on the motion of the earth around the sun" (ibid.). Al-Biruni in the 11th century would work on determining longitudes and latitudes. Others would go onto criticize Ptolemy's epicyclic theory, including Ibn Tufail and Jabir bin Aflah in the 12th century (ibid.). Al-Biruni would even debate the possibility of a heliocentric model (ibid.) while Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (13th century) and his students would make several criticisms of the Ptolemaic model and try to explain planetary motions in what is now known as the Tusi Couple model. Nasr goes as far to say that "all that is astronomically new in Copernicus can be found essentially in the school of al-Tusi and his students" (ibid.). The Islamic laws of inheritance also spurred mathematical activity, as the

in the modern world, neither science nor reason is hitched to the Divine. Instead, it is usually hitched to the service of modern man, who in turn, has unhitched himself from the Divine in his zeal to gain mastery and power over the natural world. Such a conception is not harmonious with the Islamic view of man as the viceroy of God on earth, where he has to live harmoniously, obeying His every command and recognizing that God Alone directly controls all the affairs of the universe.



al-Rashid. Hunain ibn Ishaq (810-877), a Christian scholar, would play an important role in translating Greek and Syriac texts into Arabic. Al-Kindi (801-873) would write dozens of treatises on mathematics, logic, and philosophy, becoming the founder of the Islamic Peripatetic school of philosophy. Al-Khwarazmi (d. 863) would write *al-Jabr wa'l-muqabalah* (or *Algebra*) from which Algebra would get its name. He would also greatly refine and improve upon the Ptolemaic geographical maps, as well as make one of the best Muslim astronomical tables. Al-Razi (865-923) would write 184 works mostly on medicine, with masterpieces on smallpox and measles. Likewise, Nasr mentions the accomplishments of dozens of other scholars, clearly establishing that science bloomed under Islam (ibid.).

In fact, many of the inherent rituals of the Islamic faith encouraged and necessitated the learning of science. For example, to complete the pillar of Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah, pilgrims needed to know the geography of the lands they would cross, as well as possess the technology to guide themselves with on their journey (ibid.). Thus, al-Kindi would write the *Description of the Inhabited Parts of the Earth*. Al-Yaqubi, another geographer of the 9th century, would write the *Book of Countries*, which would include

calculations could get quite complex. Thus, we see in al-Khwarazmi's landmark book *Algebra* an entire chapter entitled "On Legacies," where he discusses how to mathematically solve complex inheritance scenarios. In essence, not only did Islam condone scientific activity, but it also required it to some extent, to carry out its injunctions as the Islamic empire expanded.

What makes this entire period of scientific activity unique was that Muslims still operated in a framework that actively acknowledged and depended upon the Divine. Al-Khwarazmi's *Algebra*, for example, begins its preface with a long paragraph devoted to praising God and sending salutations upon the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as would any other religious book of the time. In medicine, we also see this phenomenon especially prevalent. In fact, the term *hakeem* would come to denote both the sage and the physician, because usually both were embodied in the same person (Nasr, *Science and Civilisation*). Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd, for example, were both philosophers, but made their living as physicians. In fact, physicians would be expected by society to combine "scientific acumen with moral qualities," to have an intellect "that was never divorced from deep religious faith and the power of God" (ibid.). Nizami-i'Arudi, a physician

and a poet of the 12th century, describes in his *Four Discourses* the qualities of a physician: how "no physician can be of tender disposition if he fails to recognize the nobility of the human soul; nor of wise nature if he unless he is acquainted with Logic; nor can he excel in acumen unless he be strengthened by God's aid . . .". Thus in one sentence, he unwittingly unites both rationality and spirituality in one harmonious worldview, symbolizing the traditional Muslim attitude.

Fast forwarding to today, we see a quite different world. To begin with, the conflict thesis proposed by the likes of John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White in the 19th century resonates deeply in the subconscious of the masses, even if it does not among historians anymore. Even so, science has unhinged itself from the service of religion, and now purports to serve itself, expanding to constitute a new "scientism" where rationality and empiricism both form the most absolute basis for belief, and revelation is demoted into the scientifically unnecessary but ultimately personal and subjective realm. The belief in progress lies at the center of scientific activity, and modern civilization looks forward to an eternal growth, boosted by the engines of objectivity and reason. Under a world of scientism, religion is left behind to wallow in its own unempirical realm, and is forced to slowly follow behind the path science blazes far ahead to maintain any legitimacy. Instead, scientism desperately wishes science itself to become the absolute source of understanding age-old questions on the purposes of existence as well as morality (Neil Postman, *Technopoly*). Thus, from the Muslim believer's point of view, unbelief forms the basis of modern civilization (Charles Eaton, *King of the Castle: Choice and Responsibility in the Modern World*).

It is thus no surprise that Islam actively opposes the underpinnings of modern science, even if many Muslims are not too aware of the fact. In fact, the believer's critique of modern science can be nothing short of "radical" (ibid.). Full scale attacks have thus been launched against this brand of science, "which has shown itself unable to coexist with anything" (Huston Smith, *The Way Things Are: Conversations on Religion, Science, and Spirituality*). In the criticisms of many scholars, many common themes can be found revolving around the proper position of science, reason, and man in the worldwide scheme of things. They also focus on the evils of a godless science which demurs not to the Divine, but to the vicious desires of godless men. They ultimately call for a return to traditional science, pressing exceedingly urgently for the East to not follow in the same path as the West, and thus bring about the same catastrophes as the West did, especially at a time when the West itself is slowly beginning to realize its excesses.

At a time when science's authority and scope seems limitless, the renowned authority on world religions Huston Smith sets out to mark down many of its limits,

exploring when and how we place too much pressure on one branch of the tree. To begin with, the scope of reason itself is limited, as "Reason is not itself a light. It is more like a transformer that does useful things but on condition that it is hitched to a generator" (Huston Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*). Reason is thus just one of the many tools of man, but to reduce man to reason would be extremely inaccurate and incomplete, like "someone who supposes he can absorb and digest knowledge through his belly" (Eaton, *King of the Castle*). Thus, with its pillars being limited, science itself is limited. Science cannot deal with "normative" values – questions on how people should do things. For instance, it can tell whether smoking harms the lungs, but it cannot adjudicate over whether you should smoke or not. Science also fails to provide answers to global questions, such as "what is the meaning of it all?" And even though one could make new discoveries, in science one still has the option "to shrug" it away and find no meaning in it. Science also cannot deal with qualities – for example, it cannot measure happiness or sadness in numerical and accurate terms, because "quality is unmeasurable" (Smith, *Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*). Although some may counter these criticisms by saying that science is still in its infancy, the truth is that for science to be capable of answering such questions, it would have to necessarily compromise the strict empiricist method it prides itself on, which would then weaken the whole foundation of science itself as being based upon empirical data. Thus, with these limits in mind, Smith ventures as far as to declare a "scientific worldview" a "contradiction in terms" because "'world' implies whole and science deals with 'part.'" Indeed, "to hope for a worldview from science is like hoping that increasingly detailed maps from Illinois will eventually produce the ultimate map of the United States" (ibid.). In essence, science represents just one aspect of man's existence, not all of it.

However, in the modern world, neither science nor reason is hitched to the Divine. Instead, it is usually hitched to the service of modern man, who in turn, has unhitched himself from the Divine in his zeal to gain mastery and power over the natural world. Such a conception is not harmonious with the Islamic view of man as the viceroy of God on earth, where he has to live harmoniously, obeying His every command and recognizing that God Alone directly controls all the affairs of the universe. In Islamic epistemology, man possesses no rights, save that which God gives him. Especially important is how the Muslim believes only a soul devoted to the Divine (itself a natural act) can remain in peace and safe from the unrestricted flames of desire and power— otherwise, he will fall into the depths of discord and chaos (Seyyed Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*). And since modern man has disconnected himself from the Divine, Muslims find it unsurprising that he has destroyed the harmony of life. The current environmental disaster is a prime example of this, where "the rapidity of change . . . follow[s] the impetuous and heedless pace of man rather than

the deliberate pace of nature” (Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*). Thus, this disconnection from the Divine has led to the “contamination of man’s total environment,” which is actually the “the central problem of our age” (ibid). However, those who refuse to acknowledge that their science is responsible for committing these acts, and instead blame “wicked politicians and rapacious businessmen,” fail to realize the folly in them having (supposedly innocently) “taken it for granted that none but angels would make use of the knowledge” (Eaton, *King of the Castle*). In reality, the “pollution of the environment is no more than the after-effect of the pollution of the human soul,” which only occurred after the “Western man decided to play the role of the Divinity upon the surface of the earth” (Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*). Thus, he has “burned his hands in the fire which he himself kindled when he allowed himself to forget who he is” (ibid.). In essence, the current environmental disaster is a very real disaster, and is a direct consequence of rejecting God’s authority and relevance over mankind, as well as man’s submission and humility before Him.

But perhaps because of the ostentatious and totalitarian manner the West presents its science to the world, claiming to have gained freedom from the shackles of narrowness and rigidity (as symbolized by religion) which has allowed it to produce the highest levels of scientific achievements ever in the history of man, Muslims are extremely vulnerable to fall under

the spell of its dazzling feats. Yet, this cannot happen under any circumstances, for it would bring about the complete destruction of the Earth and its resources: “The earth cannot support additional mistakes of the kind committed by Western Civilization” (ibid.). Already, the Western man is on track for depleting in 400 years the petroleum built by nature in 400 million years (Seyyed Nasr, *The Need for a Sacred Science*), and if the Eastern world would imitate Western patterns of consumption, there would undeniably be complete chaos. Thus, Muslims cannot continue with a sense of inferiority *vis-à-vis* Western science. In reality, they must transcend the “arrogance of the West in relation to other cultures” (Eaton, *King of the Castle*), and develop a new framework and response to modern scientism, one that will most importantly retain the traditional view of man being the vicegerent of God and recognize the limitations of scientific thought. In the meantime, Westerners must also revisit the conflict thesis of religion and science from the perspective of all religions, because Christianity is only one in a diverse field of religions, and to paint all religions with the color of Christianity would not be an accurate depiction. In any case, the Islamic view maintains that a return to traditional science is required for building equilibrium and harmony on the Earth, so that all the branches can blossom harmoniously and extend in all directions, through innovation yet submission to the Everlasting Will of God.

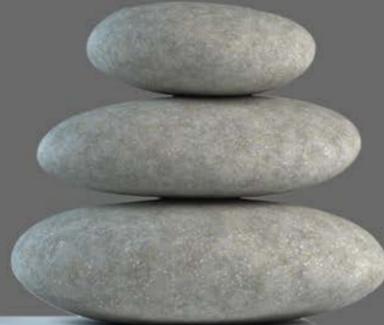
Sayyidi wa sandi Shaikh Mufti Mohammad Taqi Usmani (Allah preserve him) mentioned:

“There is growing trend of Islamic awareness and practicing in younger generation. This often leads to clash with their non practicing parents. Sometimes the situation becomes ugly. It is imperative to be firm on the religious commandments. This is because there is no obedience of anyone in things that displease Allah. However, in doing so full respect of the parents has to be maintained. There should be no anger, rudeness or harsh language used. This is also an Islamic injunction. The fine balance between the practices of Deen has to be maintained in order to gain pleasure of Allah.”

From ashrafiya.com



Balancing the Practices of Deen



The Insignificant Circle

By Zawjah Farid

tiny portion of this huge realm. This also means that since the real size and spread of the Universe is unknown, we do not really know our own coordinates in the Universe! Where exactly is our miniscule abode stationed in this grand design? No one can accurately answer that.

A man once asked *Imam Ghazali* ر: where is God? *Imam Ghazali* ر replied: first tell me, where are you? And we know now, it has no simple answer.

Let’s travel a bit deeper into the space around us.

Billions and trillions of stars come together to form galaxies. Then, thousands of galaxies stationed together form clusters and super-clusters and in this entire intricate web of gazillions of stars, our World is an extremely infinitesimal speck.

Our Universe may either be finite, with a size, or as NASA postulates: flat and infinite (but with a finite age).

The current ‘observable’ Universe (stars, galaxies, and matter that can be observed from Earth), has a diameter of around 92 billion light years (and expanding)! The actual size of the Universe is said to be much, much larger. But even in the ‘observable’ portion, scientists understand only around 4 %; the remaining 96 % is stuff that astronauts can’t see, detect or explain; they just refer to it as dark energy or dark matter.

So, in simple words, Science, with all its hyped up advancements, has been able to observe a very, very

So for an astronaut looking down upon the world from outer space, it would seem to be just a dot amongst innumerable others. And an astronomer looking up with his telescope would feel exactly the same.

In this backdrop, in terms of size, where does each individual human being within the world stand? A zillionth of a dot? Smaller? So profound is the difference between our scale and that of the Universe that philosophers were forced to propose the theory of ‘cosmic insignificance’, suggesting that our physical smallness and finiteness means we are just specks of microcosmic dust in the vast cosmic ocean - and thus, almost literally, nothing.

Despite this material ‘insignificance’, we roam the earth with arrogance and haughtiness; unaware, lost, wrapped up in our own individual dreams, issues and expectations out of life. We dare to question things that are beyond our intellect. We demand to know reasons for commands that are outside our realm of understanding.

But here, one must not jump to another extreme that may result from our so-called “cosmic insignificance”: “if we are ‘nothing’, our actions, morals and behavior amount to nothing, so why bother about following the rules or doing the right thing?”

No. As Muslims, we are not to lose sight of the fact that Allah (C) has created us as *Ashraf ul Makhlooqat* - this means, that despite our physical ‘insignificance’, we are expected to remain on a higher moral ground throughout our finite lives in the world, because we are answerable for what we do, and hence rewarded or punished in another, infinite existence in the Hereafter. So though, our physical smallness should create in us humbleness and humility, it should not make us negligent towards the moral expectations attached to our *ashraf ul makhlooqat* status nor make us despair or feel depressed.

Also, it should help us realize that just as we don’t know much about our very own Universe, how can any human contest the existence of another realm in the Hereafter?

Our material tininess should give us hope. Our problems, which may seem like mountains to us, are in fact really minute, if viewed in the right perspective. So a believer thanks Allah C in good times but bears with patience the bad times. These tribulations are very small in comparison to ultimate, never-ending bliss.

Finally, it must give us strength.

At an individual level, each one of us has a circle of friends, relatives and acquaintances. This circle generally dictates our behavior and our reactions to things - it puts pressure on a girl beginning to do *hijab* and it builds resistance to a man growing a beard; it forces people to mingle in mixed gatherings and it makes small of transactions involving *riba*; it encourages people to continue practicing *bida’at* and discourages people from leaving ‘minor’ sins.

But how insignificant is this circle!

There are millions and millions of people outside this circle who neither know us nor ever will; there are scores who will never know of our death nor cry over our unfulfilled dreams. A person dies and the belongings he held dearest to his heart are distributed amongst others - including those he may not have gotten along with in his life!

Additionally, taking a prudent cue from the vastness and expanse of the Universe around us, should we let our unbounded Hereafter be impacted by a few infinitesimal dots on Earth? Should we take pressure from this circle, one which will perish itself, and stand accountable before its Lord C, humbled and petrified?

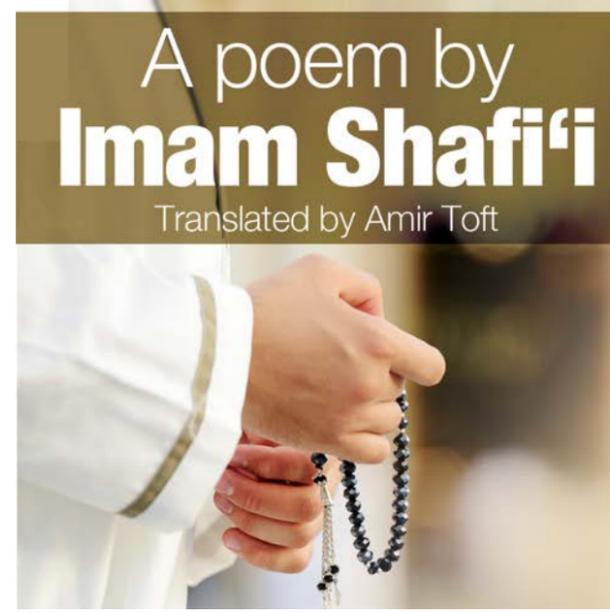
So, though this tiny existence of ours, akin to just the blink of an eye, with all its stupid problems, issues and aspirations, means nothing in comparison to the scale of the cosmos and creation, but we are unique and alive with an innate, breathing moral compass. The Universe can keep its size, because we have our eventual significance and infinity in the Hereafter!

In the meanwhile, on this testing ground, we are not to be blown away in the wrong direction by the insignificant circle that surrounds us, but keep robustly entrenched, with humility, to the roots of our strong spiritual injunctions.

jazaa

foods

pg31



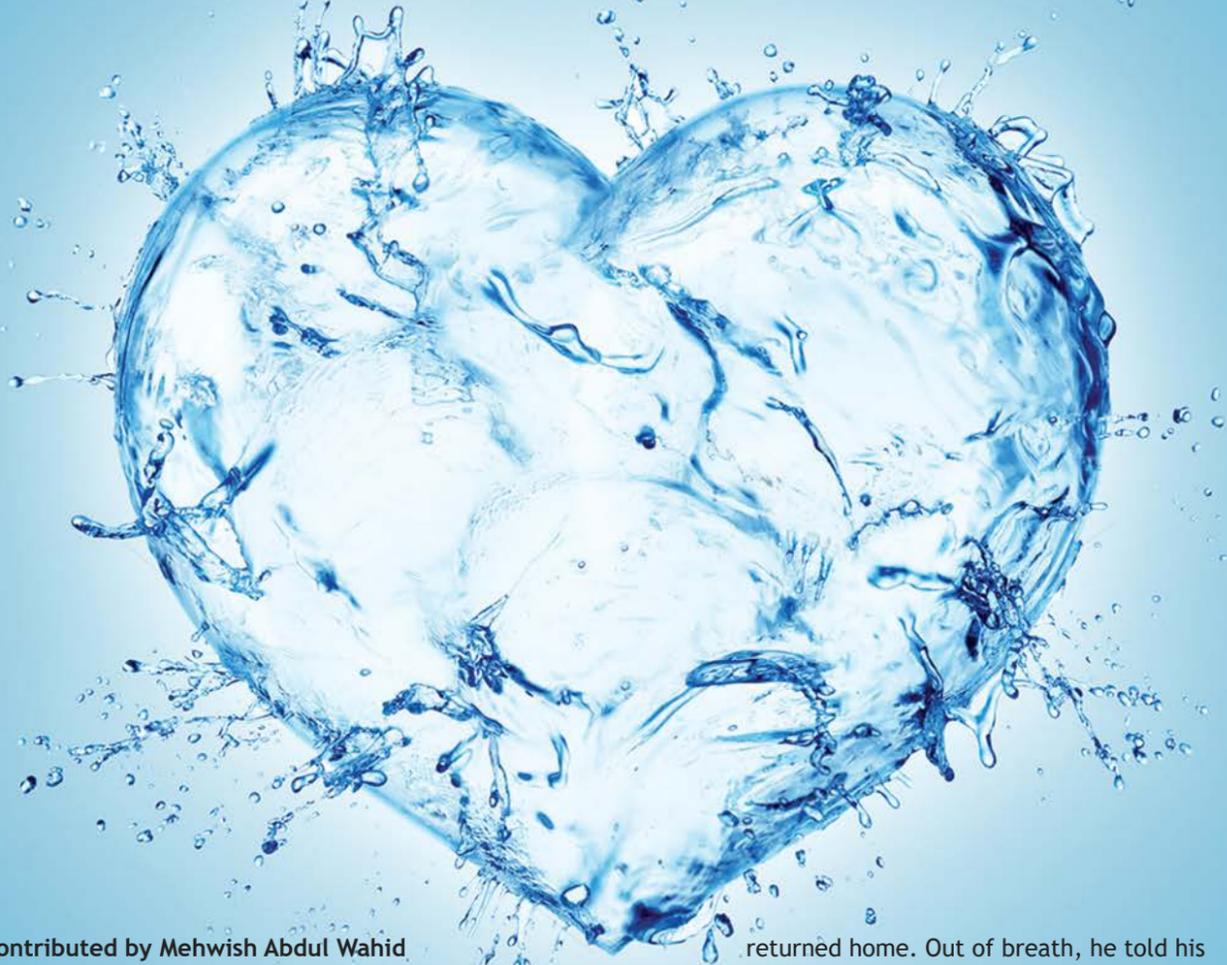
A poem by
Imam Shafi'i
Translated by Amir Toft

When friends are in hard times of no avail,
They're near to foes when weighed upon the scale.
What get you now from all of God's creation
Save now and then some shallow consolation?
In vain has been my weary lifelong search
For a friend who'd never leave me in the lurch.
The world and those thereon have grown so brutal,
That now its people seem no longer people.

Original Arabic:

صديق ليس ينفخ يوم بُوس	قريب من عدو في القياس
وما يبقى الصديق بكل عصر	ولا الإخوان إلا للتأسي
عبرث الدهر ملتتمساً بجهدى	أخا ثقة فألهانى التماسى
تنكرت البلاد ومن عليها	كان أناسها ليسوا بناس

The Coal Basket



Contributed by Mehwish Abdul Wahid

An old man lived on a farm in the mountains with his young grandson. He was a Muslim. Each morning Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading the Qur'an. His grandson wanted to be just like him and tried to imitate (follow) him in every way he could. One day the grandson asked, "Grandpa, I try to read the Qur'an just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Qur'an do?"

The Grandfather quietly turned from putting the coal in the stove and replied, "Take this coal basket down to the river and bring me back a basket of water". The boy did as he was told. He ran away to bring water. But all the water leaked out before he got back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, "You'll have to move a little faster next time". He sent him back to the river again. This time the boy ran faster. The basket was empty before he

returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was impossible to carry water in a basket. He went to get a bucket instead.

The old man said, "I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You're just not trying hard enough." He went out of the door to watch the boy try again. At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got back to the house. The boy again dipped the basket into river and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, "See Grandpa, it's useless!"

"So, you think it is useless?" The old man said, "Look at the basket." The boy looked at the basket and for the first time realized that the basket was different. It had been transformed - the dirty, old coal basket was now clean, inside and out.



The Battles of Mind

By Mariam Maajid Sharif

Every person goes through inner conflicts during which their conscience is combated by temptation of some kind. Who can remain a stranger to their conscience? For anyone who is trying to get closer to Deen, such battles are a routine activity. After all, isn't temptation a part of the examination Allah ﷻ puts us through to test the strength of our Iman? I have often found myself right at the center of these confrontations - torn between my conscience and temptations, and mostly ending up making choices...

One day when I was thoroughly frustrated with the onslaught of imaginary sparring in my head, I took up my pen with the intention of venting out my emotions, and the result was this. May Allah ﷻ give us all the strength to remain steadfast upon His Deen and guard our Iman against sins and temptations. Aameen.

يأقلب القلوب ثبت قلبنا على دينك

The walk wasn't long
As I trudged towards the end,
Only the desire to belong
Would help me somewhat ascend

Not just the desire to belong
But the urge to find,
A holding that is strong
Yet, remain free from being confined

To be imprisoned by the Self
To have demons overriding conscience,
Into desperate oblivion, I delve
To seek an excuse or some lenience

It's no better than an albatross
That perpetually hangs,
Control is the conscience's loss
As it submits to evil's fangs

The albatross morphs into a serpent
The devil's mouthpiece, as it advances,
The conscience surfaces weak and spent
Its appearance mourning lost chances

Despite the unequal states
The battle never ceases,
For the conscience patiently waits
For a chance to gain its lost pieces

Some skirmish would it be
Some confrontation,
When conscience in all its glory
Would strike and end the serpent's elation

Until then the opponents remain unequal -
The serpent may strike when the iron's hot,
Yet, it is fated to die, for in the battle's sequel
The conscience will vanquish and end the plot.





THOSE WHO ACCEPT GUIDANCE

Bint Ahmad

Before the Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madina, he sent his Ambassador Musab ibn Umair **h** to convey Islam to the people of Madina. This young man would leave every morning to meet with people and talk to them about Allah **c** and Prophet Muhammad **ﷺ**. Soon, the message of Islam reached every home.

There were households where the entire family converted to Islam, and there were those where only one or two people accepted the Message. One such family

was the family of Amr ibn Jamuh.

Amr was a well-respected leader of Madina. Like any other leader, he had built a temple inside his home where he would worship idols and sacrifice animals in their names. During one trip to Abyssinia, he purchased a fine piece of wood and instructed his wood carver to sculpt an idol. When the idol was ready, Amr named it Manat and adorned it with fancy clothes and fragrance. Little did he know that while he was bring-

ing in a new idol, his family had converted to Islam.

Being a political figure, Amr would meet different people in a day. During such meetings, he learnt of Musab's **h** preaching and feared for his family. He rushed home and instructed his wife, Hind bint Amr **i**, to keep an eye on the sons lest they meet the Makkan lad and go astray. Hind **i** assured her husband not to worry about the sons. They were doing fine.

Without dropping any hint on the father, Muadh ibn Amr **h** schemed with a close friend, Muadh ibn Jabl **h**, to take the idol, Manat, out of the temple and throw it in trash. The next morning when Amr woke up, he washed his face and headed to the temple, as was his routine. Not finding the idol at its place, he came out howling, threatening his family and looking for the idol here and there.

Amr went out of the house and soon was back with a foul-smelling Manat. He cleaned it up, perfumed him and vowed that this injustice done to Manat will not be tolerated. Hind **i** and the boys looked at the head of the family unbelievably - was he really speaking to a deaf and dumb piece of wood, they wondered. Amr did not stop speaking to the idol. He apologised to it and gave his sword to Manat so it could defend itself.

The family did not give up on their father. So when Amr went to bed, Muadh ibn Jabl **h** came back and with the help of Amr's sons picked up Manat and threw it in trash once again. A dead dog was lying nearby, Muadh **h** picked up the carcass and tied it to the neck of the idol. Next morning when Amr didn't see Manat at its place, he went out and saw it lying in trash. However, this time he did not hasten to pick it up. Amr contemplated that perhaps Manat doesn't deserve respect. It had a sword, yet it could not defend itself and came here to lie on a pile of trash? Leaving Manat behind, Amr returned home with a grieving heart.

Seeing him dejected, the family asked for the reason. Amr changed the subject and asked Hind **i** if their sons have violated his instructions. This was a moment when Amr felt defeated and did not have the energy to argue, so Hind **i** informed him that their son Muadh **h** met with the preacher from Makkah and learnt something from him. But since Amr is the head of family, he should call Muadh **h** and ask him what he has learnt. Amr called Muadh **h** and instructed to share what he had learnt.

Muadh **h** recited Surah *Al-Fatihah* with *Tawuz* and *Bismillah* in the beginning. Upon hearing the Words of Allah **c**, as if talking to himself, Amr said, "How beautiful and eloquent is this speech!" Then he asked Muadh **h** if all talks of Musab **h** were as beautiful as this. The delighted son replied, "Yes father! All of his talks are sweet and beautiful. Wouldn't you want to listen to more of his talk? Come with me and

listen to him. Other honourables of our tribe Asad ibn Zarara, Usaid ibn Hadhair, Saad ibn Muadh, Saad ibn Ubada and Abdullah ibn Rawaha have preceded you."

Hind **i**, who was witnessing this conversation between the father and son, said, "If you listen to the talk of the Makkan preacher and accept it, it would be better for you." Amr replied that he would consult his gods. Muadh **h** jumped in and said, "O father! Will you seek advice from a deaf and dumb piece of wood?" Shocked, Amr asked his son what he meant. Muadh **h** asserted that the idol was nothing but a piece of wood. "Yes, you are right. It is deaf and dumb and free of sense and perception," then Amr looked at his family and said, "Don't you agree with me."

The family was startled and said, "Why not! You are our leader!" "Then be my witnesses, I have accepted Islam. There is no real God except Allah **c** and I testify that Muhammad **ﷺ** is the Messenger of Allah."

This was an overwhelming sight for the family. Musab ibn Umair **h** was invited to the home and the home was cleansed of the filth of idolatry.

Amr ibn Jamuh **h** after embracing Islam

By now the Prophet **ﷺ** had migrated to Madina and had instructed Ansaar and Muhajjireen to prepare for the Battle of Badr. Amr ibn Jamuh **h**, now a Muslim, was also determined to participate in the first battle against idolaters. He gathered his armour and started preparing for the battle. When his family saw this, they reminded him of the fault in his leg and tried to stop him. But nothing could weaken Amr's **h** resolve. The family rushed to the Prophet **ﷺ** and requested him to not let Amr **h** participate in the battle. For the sake of the family, the Prophet **ﷺ** accepted this request and stopped Amr **h** from participating.

Amr **h** was upset that he could not participate in the first major battle, his sadness increased when he learnt that Muslims have been victorious. He desired that he would be allowed to participate in the next battle and that Allah **c** would grant him martyrdom.

The idolaters were now preparing for the Battle of Uhud to take their revenge. The Companions **h** who missed the Battle of Badr were getting ready for the Battle of Uhud, and among them there was Amr ibn Jamuh **h**, as well.

When Hind **i** saw Amr **h** carrying his weapons, she inquired where he was headed. He said, "To fulfil my dream. I am going to Uhud with the Prophet **ﷺ**." Hind **i** tried to stop him stating that he is exempted because of his disability. Amr **h** responded, "I want to enter Paradise with this limp."

His son tried to stop him but Amr **h** would not listen to anyone. Rather, he went to the Prophet **ﷺ** and this time complained about his family. He said, "My wife and sons are preventing me from participating in

the battle with you. They say, 'You are crippled, you walk with a limp, fighting is not for you,' and I want to enter Paradise limping." When the Prophet ﷺ witnessed his sincere resolve, he instructed the family to not prevent him; perhaps Allah ﷻ might grant him martyrdom. He then turned to Amr h and said, "Allah ﷻ has exempted you."

Amr h grabbed his armour and marched to the battlefield with his sons like a lion ready to pounce. He fought the enemy with valour and strength and attained martyrdom.

It is reported that moments before his martyrdom he came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, "O Prophet of Allah ﷻ! If I die while fighting in the way of Allah ﷻ, will I be able to walk without a limp in Paradise?" The Prophet ﷺ said, "Yes, you will."

And he was martyred.

When the Prophet ﷺ passed by his body, he said, "As if, I can see you in Paradise, you are walking without a limp." He said that among Allah's ﷻ servants are those who if they swear by Allah ﷻ, then Allah ﷻ honours their oath.

Amr ibn Jamuh h was one such man. He, who was once against his family's acceptance of Islam, died for the sake of Islam. He was so sincere in his statement that Allah ﷻ accepted his plea and granted him martyrdom. *SubhanAllah!*

May Allah ﷻ make us sincere in our statements and promises, and allow us to live our lives as is pleasing to Him; to die in the state of *Eemaan* as His submissive servants, *Aameen*.

Frooto

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Gems of Wisdom

"I looked at all the friends and did not find a better friend than safeguarding the tongue. I thought about all the dresses but did not find a better dress than piety. I thought about all sorts of wealth but did not find a better wealth than contentment in a little. I thought of all sorts of good deeds but did not find a better deed than offering good advice. I looked at all types of sustenance but did not find a better sustenance than patience."

Umar h

"If one night you see someone committing a sin, tomorrow do not look at him as a sinner, he may have repented during the night and you did not know."

Ali ibn abi Talib h

"The foolish one speaks to me with all ugliness, And I hate to respond to him, He increases in his foolishness while I increase in my forbearance, Like the 'oud which intensifies its sweet scent the more it is burnt"

Imam al-Shafa'i r

"If your intention in seeking knowledge is between God Most High and yourself and not merely to gain information, then rejoice! The Angels will spread out their wings for you while you walk, and the creatures in the sea will ask God to pardon you."

Imam al-Ghazzali r



'Life is so difficult over here,' Sarah thought to herself while doing the dishes after *iftar*. She was hardly paying any attention to what she was doing. Her mind was wandering in the alleys of the past - the carefree days of maidenhood. How easy it was to tell mom that she did not feel like doing a house chore. How wonderful was the feeling of having her younger sister bring a steaming mug of tea after *iftar*, and Sarah enjoying it casually with her eyes scanning the pages of her favourite book. The reverie was disturbed by the sound of the footsteps of her husband, who had just returned from the *masjid* after offering the *maghrib salah*. He asked her if she had prayed yet and that is when Sarah realised that it was getting late for her prayers. She quickly arranged the dishes in the drainer, wiped up the kitchen counters, switched off the lights, and hurriedly climbed

the stairs leading to her room.

After about twenty minutes or so, Sarah found herself reflecting all over again upon the train of thought that occupied her mind while doing the dishes in the kitchen. She had been married for four years, and had a one-year-old to look after. Life was not as rosy as she had anticipated it to be before getting married. Real life has real people in it, with real problems and responsibilities characterizing their lives. She was still in the process of adjusting to the new realities of life. She was still discovering the various facets of the personalities of the people who were now her family. It was this process of adapting to the new and the unknown that made her upset at times. During those times she was compelled to reminisce about her past, and long for the times and people she once took for granted in life. 'Yet, there was a lot to be thankful for,' thought Sarah. So many things that enriched her soul with every passing day, helping her mature and turn into a wise woman. Allah ﷻ had His ways of teaching his slave the lessons that make life wholesome. Through ups and downs, highs and lows, He ﷻ made sure that His slave acknowledged His presence in his life, and realised that there was a Being who managed his affairs. This made Sarah smile, and she folded her prayer mat, she could hear her little one practice saying, '*amma*', constantly repeating it after his father...

Life of this world was never meant to be perfect...

Only *Jannah* promises perfection. The life of this world is characterized by constant struggle; nothing but tests

and trials. This thought is so consoling that it can help one get through all the troublesome phases of life. Early years in a marriage are not always a smooth road. A woman, specially, has to come to terms with various changes in her life and ways of living. Developing an immaculate understanding with one's spouse is the prime goal. Then there are the new family members who have been living with a set of rules all their lives. It is observed that mostly it is the new addition in the family who has to understand those rules and try her best to adapt to them. Easier said than done. Whenever she is confronted with a difficult situation, she is reminded of her past associations, the ways that she had been living by for years in her parents' house. It is in those trying times that the thought of this world being so very imperfect comes as a big consolation. This thought also always infuses one with positive energy to carry on and make peace with the imperfections in one's life.

Accepting people the way they are

I remember how one of my mentors once advised me against idealising too much when it comes to dealing with people in life. He said, "One should not idealise relationships and people, and try to accept them with

Never lose sight of the fact that the primary thing that matters most after marriage is the love between the husband and the wife. For a believer this love is always based on *taqwa* and *lillaahiyyat*. Simply put, this means loving each other for Allah's ﷻ sake. Love based on *taqwa* never fades away and helps the spouses accept each other wholly with their flaws and imperfections.



all their imperfections." This advice has always stayed with me, and often helped me uplift myself in many a trying situations. People, a friend once said, are neither devils, nor angels. They are humans, always oscillating between good and evil. One must not lose sight of this fact, and own one's relations wholeheartedly, making room for other people's imperfections in one's life. This is not an easy task and requires a lot of patience. The reward, however, is also immense for those who exercise patience.

Making it meaningful

A woman must invest her energies in making her married life a meaningful experience for herself and her husband. Remembering Allah ﷻ at all times, being mindful of their prayers, urging each other to do good, and repenting immediately after committing a sin, are little acts that have the potential to cement a solid foundation for the relationship between the spouses. When God-consciousness forms the basis, the result is an enriched and a wholesome relationship.

Raising godly beings

Why waste time in sulking over who said what in the family? Why not focus all your energies towards raising healthy, God-conscious little *momins*? Once Allah ﷻ has blessed you with the *n'imah* of kids, then all you have to do is to look after them in the best possible manner. They become your center of attention. Raising kids is a full-time job that leaves no room for the mother to indulge into any kind of useless activities such as gossiping, wasting time over the social media, etc. Further, always being mindful of your child's good and pious upbringing helps take your mind off the trivial, domestic issues and problems that (yes, be assured!) are present in every household. Kids can be a major source of setting our priorities right in life.

Love lasts

Never lose sight of the fact that the primary thing that matters most after marriage is the love between the husband and the wife. For a believer this love is always based on *taqwa* and *lillaahiyyat*. Simply put, this means loving each other for Allah's ﷻ sake. Love based on *taqwa* never fades away and helps the spouses accept each other wholly with their flaws and imperfections.

Try nurturing this love at its best, because if everything in your new surroundings is just perfect, but there is no love and compatibility between the spouses, then know that marital happiness will always remain an unfulfilled dream. Love and compatibility can help you sustain through and weather the trials of life without falling apart.

I always think that getting married is like giving your life another chance to start all over again. It is just like being born anew. If the foundational bricks are placed with care and contemplation, it is expected that the entire structure will turn out to be a sturdy one. People getting married should seriously reflect about the huge change that shall beset their lives once they form a new relationship. They need to think as to how they can make their marriage a meaningful one prior to getting married. "After all, it is for Him to whom belongeth the dominions of the heaven and the earth." Always ask for a pious spouse, a patient you, and a meaningful life. It is not difficult for Allah ﷻ to bless us with a meaningful life. In fact, He wants us to lead a life filled with purpose. All we need to do is to ask.

In the New Life

By Bint Akram






The Ruling on Smoking

By Mufti Ebrahim Desai سنة في السنة

It is a universally accepted and indisputable fact that smoking has many serious health and life hazards, for example, lung cancer, etc. to the smoker as well as those (non-smokers) in his environment; therefore, it is not permissible. Shari'ah has explained in great length the importance and virtue of good health to the extent that Rasulullah ﷺ even advised to maintain a balance in eating and drinking as an imbalance could be harmful to health. He advised having dates, being hot in nature, with cucumber, as the latter has a cooling

effect (*Shamaail*). On one occasion, Rasulullah ﷺ even stopped Sayyidna Ali عليه السلام from eating dates upon recovering from his illness and advised him to have vegetables instead. Although date is not only nutritious but also a means of obtaining blessing, but in certain conditions, since it could be harmful, Rasulullah ﷺ advised against it. From that, one can gauge the extent of abstaining from cigarettes which contain many harmful ingredients, for example, carbon monoxide, nicotine, tar and benzene

vapour.

Muhammad Abdul Ghaffaar al-Afghan in his book, 'Ninety nine harms of smoking', has listed ninety-nine sicknesses resulting from smoking. Doctor Salatuddeen Abdur-Rabbi Nabiy, a neurosurgeon in Cairo says, 'When a person becomes enslaved to the habit of smoking, it has a very harmful effect on the smoker's health, especially to his heart. As a result, his heartbeat and blood circulation becomes unstable and he experiences drowsiness from time to time due to the shrinking of his brain's arteries. Sometimes, during old age, he suffers from high blood pressure and angina. Similarly, his digestive and respiratory systems are harmed and the smoker loses his appetite. He is also afflicted by a cough which is known as the smoker's cough. When his nervous system is affected the smoker feels a prickly sensation, a numbness in his limbs and also a pain in the

nerves. However, lung cancer is the most likely outcome of smoking.

Proof for the Prohibition of Smoking

Smoking did not exist in the time of Rasulullah ﷺ, but our magnificent *deen* has laid down general principles from which many laws are derived. From these principles, many 'Ulama (Allah's mercy be upon them) have come to the conclusion that smoking is *haram*.

A verse of the Noble Qur'an states, 'And do not throw yourself into destruction with your own hands.' (*Al-Baqarah 2:195*). Smoking causes fatal sicknesses, for example, lung cancer, tuberculosis, etc. In another verse, Allah Ta'ala says, 'And do not kill yourselves' (*An-Nisaa 4:29*). Prophet ﷺ said, 'Whosoever drinks poison, thereby killing himself, will sip this poison forever and ever in the fire of *Jahannam*.'

*Excerpted from 'Kitaabon ki dars-gah mein' by Ibn ul Hasan Abbasi
Translated by Bint Akram*

Once an expert calligrapher wanted to find out as to what religion was true and most authentic. He prepared beautifully scribed copies of the Bible, the Torah and the Qur'an, but at the same time made some changes to the text of all three sacred books. He then presented the Torah before the Jewish scholars. They read the script and gave gifts to the calligrapher for his exquisite talent. Next, he took the Bible to the Christian priests who also praised his effort, and bought the beautifully scribed copy at an expensive price. In the end he presented the copy of the Qur'an to the Ulema of Islam, who when found the text to have been tampered with, lambasted the calligrapher and immediately took him to the ruler. The ruler, on finding the calligrapher guilty of *tahreef-e-Qur'an* (tampering with the text of the Qur'an), ordered death penalty for him. Now the calligrapher revealed that Alhamdulillah he was a Muslim, but he wanted to know which was the true and preserved religion. His experiment proved that it was only the tradition of Islam that remained completely preserved, and none could manipulate the word of Allah ﷻ, the Qur'an.

The Preserved Qur'an



Eva

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Ramadan Lessons

By Asra Ahmed

Much like many other Islamic practices, the concept of Ramadan is one that is quite misunderstood by most non-Muslims and a surprising number of Muslims as well! As children, we come to know and love Ramadan as the month at the end of which our elders would hand over shiny white envelopes stuffed with *Eidi* (gift money to commemorate the end of the Holy Month), and as adults, we realized that but a trivial part of it.

A lot of Non-Muslims are either completely foreign to the “alien” concept of Ramadan, or familiar with the concept but completely clueless about what it actually entails. Many have been known to ask the question, “so do you guys actually starve yourself for the entire month?” in shock and disbelief, somehow believing that it is possible for anyone to do that and still manage to come out of it alive and healthy. They are then patiently (or impatiently, depending on just how much the concerned Muslim is being affected by his fast) told that we don’t starve ourselves for a whole month; we simply avoid consuming food and water from dawn to dusk, and this is also in solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters who have to face this lifestyle every day. Living in our privileged bubble, we often forget that not everyone has been blessed with the same kind of material wealth that we have been, so this month stands as an important reminder to constantly thank Allah every day for all that He has given us. This then leads many to give a sigh of relief and assume that “Oh, but you can drink water right?” And our negative reply often leaves them baffled.

My personal favorite misconception is the one where it is assumed we lose tons of body weight. Our non-Muslim friends stare at us, sigh and wistfully say “You must lose so much weight and be in great shape by the end of Ramadan then”. How far this is from being true, I cannot emphasize enough. While this magazine is aimed to reach Muslims globally, regardless of ethnicity or race, I will assume that a majority of people reading this article either belong to, or know someone belonging to the Pakistani community. In saying this, I will therefore also assume that before Ramadan begins every year, countless resolutions are made to start eating healthier. But alas! Every year, we succumb to the notoriously oily and fatty foods that are so bad for us, but taste so good. The golden brown samosas, pakoras, jalebis and chaats only serve to add some kilos to the weighing scale, rather than deduct from. Yes, indeed, unless you are someone who has mastered the art of eating healthy, or are on a very strict diet, you will find yourself having a strong sense of déjà vu as you stand cringing, on the weighing scale at the end of Ramadan every year.

The added weight is also due to the fact that at both Sehri and Iftaar, we overcompensate for the lack of eating throughout the day. We feel that unless we somehow manage to squeeze in 8 ounces of water and lots of food during these two meals, we will feel dehydrated and malnourished. This

mediately backfires on us, as about ten minutes after the Fajr *adhaan*, we are left with a parched throat and a full stomach. A smarter idea would be to consume foods that are high in water content, like fruit and yogurt, as well as dates and foods like egg and oatmeal that are high in protein and fiber respectively.

Another aspect of Ramadan which people often get confused about is whether fasting is obligatory on all Muslims, regardless of age and health status. Children who have not yet attained puberty, the extremely elderly and the sick are exempt from fasting, but a *Kaffarah* is usually required in the case of all but the former. While fasting is not obligatory on young children, you will usually find tiny tots clad in hijabs and Muslim caps, excitedly wanting to be like the rest of their family members and fast. A lot of Muslim families get their children into the habit of fasting from an early age, so that when it is obligatory on them to fast consecutively for a month, they won't have a hard time.

Now that we've cleared up some common misconceptions that Non-Muslims have about Ramadan, I find it only fair to address the things us Muslims get wrong about Ramadan too. Being a teenager, I myself am guilty of the first point I will address, which is sleeping all day and just waking up for *Iftaar*. This is by no means acceptable, as in doing so; we miss several obligatory prayers, which in turn ruin the entire point of us to even have fasted. I like to think that I've gotten better at avoiding this practice over the years (my mother would probably disagree!) however, Ramadan is the one month we have when the Shaytaan is locked inside the gates of Hell. It is like a hall-pass to get in as much *Ibaadah* (worship) as we possibly can, without any distractions. This simply cannot be done if all our time is spent sleeping.

A lot of those who actually don't spend all their time sleeping spend it in the way they usually would if it wasn't Ramadan. This in particular has been a

problem among the youth, as for the past few years, Ramadan has been coinciding with our summer vacations from school. So, where the youth would typically be lacking the motivation to spend their vacations constructively anyway, in the month of Ramadan this lack of motivation increases tenfold, due to laziness. Now don't get me wrong, the whole point of fasting is to go about your day doing the work you normally would, but sans food and drink, to reflect on the lives of those who do the same, but can't always afford three or more meals every day. However, we are also required to bring about positive changes in our life, as Ramadan is not just about abstaining from the *Halal* (permissible), that is, food and drink, but also about avoiding the *Haram* that has become so prevalent in our society, like watching television and movies, listening to music, mingling with members of the opposite gender etc. We should avoid these sins throughout the year, but particularly in Ramadan, as when we're going out of our way to stay hungry for the most part of the day in these hot summer months, what is it really doing for us, if we continue spending our days watching movies, and doing all the sins anyway. Another recent trend that has become increasingly popular among the youth is to stay up all night immersed in such activities, and then sleep after *Sehri*. However, it is also fair to point out that it is not just the youth who are at fault. A lot of adults continue their daily routine in the exact same way as before Ramadan, and that is where the problem lies. They often arrive home from work right before *Iftaar*, and by then are too exhausted to worship, read Quran or do *Dhikr*. So such people should clear up their schedules just a bit during this Holy Month, to allow time for extra worship.

I know that we have reached the end of this article; at least a few readers would have seen my words as a reflection of their own actions this past Ramadan. None of us is perfect, which is why sincere repentance is so important, and the important thing is to aspire to alter our lifestyle during the blessed month next year *Insha'Allah*.

Abdullah ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه says: "Knowledge is of three types: the book that is forever speaking (Qur'an), an established sunnah, and 'I do not know'."

In his explanation to this statement, al-Munāwi رحمه الله says: "It is learnt from this hadith that it is a duty of an 'Ālim that if he does not know the answer to a question, he should say 'I do not know', or, 'I am not certain', or, 'I have no knowledge thereof', or, 'Allah knows best'. If a person is asked a question and he replies, 'I do not know', this does not lower his rank, as some ignorant people assume. This is because the ignorance of a qualified 'Ālim with regard to certain matters does not harm him. Rather, his saying, 'I do not know', raises his rank because it is proof of his great status, the strength of his dīn, the fear of his Sustainer, the purity of his heart, the perfection of his recognition [of Allah] and the goodness of his intention."

The Three Questions

Once, a king asked his minister to answer three questions.

1. Which is the truth that is universally accepted and no one can challenge it?
2. What is the most deceitful thing in the world? And
3. Which deed is the one before which all low or high, poor or rich are compelled to bow?

The minister thought over it for long and could not cook up an immediate answer. He, therefore, asked the king to give him some respite. He was allowed three days' grace, failing which he would face capital punishment! He deliberated over these questions throughout day and night and many answers came to his mind. But when he cross examined them, they proved to be false. For the first answer, he thought that the correct answer could be "Allah c" but there are atheists in the world who deny His existence. The other answer, he thought, could've been the "Sky" but once again, scientists could challenge it. Whatever answers his mind could come up with, were disputable. In this condition, two days passed in vain.

On the third day, his anxiety heightened, for it seemed certain that nobody could save him from the gallows. He, therefore, came out of his palace and unconsciously went towards a field. He passed by a farmer, ploughing his field. The farmer noticed his frustrated and grieved face.

The Farmer: I think you look quite upset and it seems you are from a noble family. Why are you so worried and disturbed?

The Minister: Yes. I am. There seems to be no solution to a problem I am facing these days.

The Farmer: You are right. Some problems appear to be too tough to be resolved. You should

at least talk to some well-wisher friend. It would lighten your heart; perhaps, your suffering maybe reduced or eliminated. If you think I can help you, then please lay open your heart to me. May Allah c open the way!

The Minister: I am a Minister of this country. The King has asked me three questions and I am puzzled about the answers. He then repeated the questions to the farmer.

The Farmer: Oh! These are very simple and easy. It is really surprising that being a Minister, you don't know their answers.

The Minister: Do you know their replies?

The Farmer: Yes, I do. The answer to your first question is "Death". It is such a real truth no scientist, atheist or a layman can reject. The answer to your second questions is "*Dunya*". This *dunya* is the most deceitful place in the world. Till the time a man is alive in this world, he perceives all his assets and properties as his own, saying, "my factory, my shop, my bungalow, my ride, my property, my wife and my children", so on and so forth. When he passes away from this world, his eyes lay wide open. Then, he comprehends that whatever he had seen in this world was a dream. None of it is his. Had they belonged to him, they would have been with him.

The Minister: You have correctly and beautifully answered the first two questions. What about the third one?

During this time, someone brought the meal. The



farmer invited him to join him, assuring him to reply his third question. The minister had not eaten anything for the last two days; due to his bewilderment, no food seemed to interest him. As soon as they finished their meals, the farmer asked the minister to put down the left-over food in the pot of a dog, tied down with a tree nearby. Once again, the talk resumed.

The Minister: Well, we have taken the meal and now do me a favour and reply the third question.

The Farmer: There is a condition for that and if you fulfill it, I shall certainly let you know.

The Minister: Please go ahead. I am willing to fulfill it.

The Farmer: Go and eat the left-over with the dog.

The Minister: Do you know what are you saying?

The Farmer: Look, if you want the answer, you have to do this. Otherwise, you may

go elsewhere. This is my condition and without this, I cannot comply with your request, The minister had no time and option to go elsewhere. He was hurt and felt greatly disturbed. He looked here and there to ensure that there was no one watching him kneel down to eat with the dog.

As he was about to eat, the farmer caught him by the shoulder and stopped him and said that he, being a minister, was willing to eat with a dog out of a necessity (*gharz*), which nowhere could be fulfilled. This selfishness is so evil that even great men don't feel shy to bow down to achieve their aim. Those who are selfless are, in fact, men of Allah ﷻ and it is their sterling dignity that they don't bow down before anyone except Allah ﷻ.

(Ad-Dawah, July 2014)

The Analogy

There was a greengrocer who had a sweet-voiced talking parrot. In the absence of its master, it would perch itself on a bench and entertain the visitors and traders with its fine talk. It would skillfully address the human beings in their language and sing the song of the parrots melodiously. Once, when its master was away, it flew away from its bench and spilled the bottles of oil. After a while when the master returned and seated himself upon the bench, he found that it was full of oil and the grease had smeared his clothes. In anger, and it was made bald by the blow. Thereupon the parrot stopped

Days passed and it seemed the parrot had fallen silent forever. He heaved deep sighs of grief at the silence of the beautiful hearts. He would now, in remorse, tear upon his beard saying, "Alas! The sun of my prosperity has gone under the sun!" "Would that my hand had been broken such a blow on the head of that sweet-tongued one?"

He would shower dervishes with gifts in the hope that he might get all in vain. He would display every sort of marvel to the bird in the

One day while he was seated on his bench and his countenance bare-headed dervish passed by. The parrot too caught the sight of this wonderment, "Hey, how is it that you are mixed with the bald? Did you The people around burst into laughing at the analogy that the parrot had made. It had deemed the dervish to be like itself!

کار پاک را قیاس از خود مگیر در نوشتن گر چه باشد شیر شیر

[Do not measure the actions of the pious by the analogy of yourself, though shēr (lion) and shīr (milk) are similar in writing]

Adapted from R.A. Nicholson's translation of *The Mathnawi* of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi (rahimahullah)

Haseen

Habib

pg47

I have started to dread the ubiquitous situation that I now see so often in our homes: little children who are genuinely ungrateful for countless blessings around them. They are not happy with their toys or clothes; constantly complain about their food; bicker with their parents that they are not doing enough to meet their needs. There is an epidemic of ungratefulness in Muslim homes. Many of these children grow up to become thankless, reckless and irresponsible adults.

Being thankful to Allah ﷻ inculcates positivity in life; it lets one see major life challenges as mere hurdles; it broadens the horizon of one's humility to an extent that one is able to see *khair* (goodness) even in troubled times. It goes without saying that if you cannot be happy with the little you have, how can you be happy with the more that you are hoping for!

Allah ﷻ says:

"If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe" (Holy Qur'an 14:7).

As Muslims we owe gratitude to Allah ﷻ as well as to those around us. Parents should take this aspect of Islam very seriously and inculcate the correct attitude in their children. The loudest and the most effective way of instilling *shukr* (thankfulness) in the lives of our children is through living by it. Children do not remember what adults say but they do remember what adults do!

Parents should make a serious effort and consider the following ways of making children more grateful individuals:

(1) Say "Alhamdulillah!"

Parents should be vigilant in attributing all goodness and blessings to Allah ﷻ. Alhamdulillah is an important form of *Dhikr* that should constantly be on our tongues. It should be said clearly so that children learn to associate with it properly. Teaching children to say words like, *wow* or *awesome* has become the norm in our families. These are fleeting phrases the essence of which does not glorify the Creator in the

manner He ﷻ deserves. Alhamdulillah should not be restricted to the blessings in our life, but should remain an integral part of our everyday speech even in times of calamity. Crying, wailing or condemning ourselves to the dungeons of hopelessness and despair are not from the teachings of Islam.

(2) Establish Salah

Salah is one of the greatest expressions of Shukr. Parents, before anyone else, should be mindful of their salah: They should explain Salah to their children that it is we, humans who are in need to thank Allah ﷻ for His blessings and to glorify Him ﷻ; He is in no need of our Salah. Many parents are delusional in undermining the Salah and do not train their children accordingly. Years later they are seen complaining that their children are ungrateful of their efforts. The reality is that the one who does not thank the Creator (with all the blessings He bestows upon us in spite of our sins) will never thank anyone else.

(3) Prostration of Shukr

It is from the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ that whenever he received a glad tiding, he would fall into prostration. Parents should revive this important Sunnah and reflect how many decades have passed that we didn't put our head on the ground and thank Allah ﷻ. We underestimate the mental caliber of our children, and assume that they will not be able to understand our actions, but always remember that children remain alert all the time. Only if they have seen you do something will they be able to reproduce it in the years to come.

(4) Take your children to visit the sick and the poor

Taking your children to visit the less privileged is a powerful means of inculcating appreciation of the blessings of Allah ﷻ. This act should start at a young age. In our society, as children get older, their focus becomes going to the gaming zones and arcades. If you, however, allow your children to visit the sick and needy, it will make them value their own health; by seeing the pain in the eyes of the orphans, they will begin to acknowledge the respect they owe to their parents; by watching the beggar in the street sift through the trash to grab a morsel of bread will make them appreciate the warm meals they are served with. This is why our religion encourages that we look at those who are less fortunate than us so that we may be thankful.

(5) Work with children to sponsor an Akhirah-Project

This means that as a family you should sponsor a project that will reap benefits in the Hereafter. As a way

of *Sadaqa-e Jariya*, the family must invest financially, physically and socially into projects like supporting an orphan, helping at old age homes, looking after an elderly or sick neighbor, arranging for meals to be given at orphanages, helping at hospitals in tending to the patients, etc. Seeing the plight of others and being able to help them in any way possible will make hardened hearts tender.

(6) Showing gratitude for smaller things

It is almost always easy to be grateful for the "big things" but even the smaller things are just as important. When was the last time we sipped cold water in scorching heat and thanked Allah ﷻ? When was the last time we woke up and saw the sunrise and thanked Allah ﷻ for having been blessed with the sense of sight. We have taken so many things for granted that they have lost their value in our eyes.

(7) The Shukr time

Have a ten-minute slot fixed every day in which the family gathers and verbally mentions what they are thankful for that day. Remembering Allah's ﷻ blessings in this way will make them appreciate the infinite mercy of Allah ﷻ that in spite of all our flaws and disobediences, He ﷻ still provides for us and is always eager that we turn to Him ﷻ in repentance. Another similar concept to the Shukr time is to gift your children a "Gratitude Journal" where the child is encouraged to enlist what he is grateful for on a daily basis. He should be advised also to go over what he writes once a week. This will fill up one's person with tremendous amounts of positive energy. There will be days in our life when all will seem dull and gloomy and by sifting through the pages on one's gratitude journal will make one feel that there is so much to thank for.

(8) Thank you note and Thank you calls

Children should be encouraged to write thank you notes or make thank you phone calls to those who had given them gifts or had invited them over for a meal. Many children assume that being given gifts is what childhood is all about but it is the parents' responsibility to teach them otherwise. Many times, the gifts a child might receive may not be very expensive and parents sadly become the worst critics in disparaging the gift. Parents should make the children realize that it is not "physical" value of the gift that matters - it is the emotional value attached to it that matters, i.e. the heart with which it is given.

Raising households based on the principles of shukr will produce individuals who will be grateful for even the little they might have. We must always remember that lavish homes and lifestyles will never bring peace of mind to a discontented and dissatisfied soul!

Thankless Children

Dr. Yusra Shabbir





سَلَامٌ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَبَرَكَاتٌ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى آلِهِ
وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى رَجُلَيْهِ
وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ

Sall-Allahu Alayhi Wa Sallam

By Khalid Baig

They were circumambulating the Ka'ba, when Ka'ab bin Ujrah asked Abdul Rahman ibn Abi Lailah: "Shall I not give you a precious gift?" A gift in the middle of that act of intense devotion? Abdul Rahman was a prominent tabayi, i.e. from the generation that came after the generation of the companions. Ka'ab, may Allah be pleased with him, was one of the 1400 Companions who were part of the Covenant of al Ridwan, a covenant to live or fall together to avenge the blood of Uthman bin Affan, Radi-Allahu anhu, who had been feared to have been murdered by the Quraish. To know this background is to get a clue to the special gift.

While Muslims were stationed at Hudaibiyah, where the covenant took place, many delegations of Quraish had visited them. Among them was Urwah ibn Mas'ud al Thaqafi. It was he who reported the extra-ordinary relationship of the companions with the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ: "I have seen Caesar and Chosroes in their pomp, but never have I seen a man honored as Muhammad is honored by his comrades."

The gift that Ka'ab gave to ibn Abi Lailah was the hadith that gives us the salawat (benediction) that we use in regular prayers. The companions asked the proper way of sending the blessings, when the verse requiring them

to do so was revealed.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

"Lo Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation." [Al-Ahzab, 33:56].

Then the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ, taught them the exact words, as they themselves were revealed to him by Allah.

A prophet of God is a unique person. He acts as the link between the people and their Creator. He is a human being, yet he speaks for God. The most difficult task for followers of a prophet has always been that of dealing with the prophet as a prophet. It is so easy to go to extremes. Make him divine, God-incarnate, Son of God. Or make him just another man, attributing all human weaknesses and sins to him. Religious literature of major religions in the world is testimony to these tendencies. It is a story of abject human failure in this matter.

For centuries Muslims lovingly added the benediction, whenever they mentioned the name of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ. The hadith literature is a good example of this labor of love. For here the name of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ, is mentioned repeatedly. Yet the muhadithun never tired of writing the benediction. That was at a time when every book was written by hand, and all its copies were also made by hand. It was never considered a burden or an unnecessary interruption.



One must contrast that with the beautiful and delicate balance presented by Islam. Here the Prophet is the perfect human being, but he is not Divine. He speaks for God but he is not God. He is the object of our gratitude, ardent love and devotion, unswerving allegiance, and deference. But he is not the object of our worship. We ask Allah to send His blessings on him which at once makes two very important statements. First, he needs Allah's blessings. Second, we cannot bless him, only Allah can. It is not possible for those who always invoke Allah's blessings for the Prophet, to degrade him to the level of other human beings, or to elevate him to the level of divinity. The benediction, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ, is a magic formula that fights both tendencies equally effectively. It also strikes at the roots of shirk, the tendency to associate partners with Allah. For we have met the perfect human being, the example to follow. And we found him to be a servant of Allah. Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ.

For centuries Muslims lovingly added the benediction, whenever they mentioned the name of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ. The hadith literature is a good example of this labor of love. For here the name of the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ, is

mentioned repeatedly. Yet the muhadithun never tired of writing the benediction. That was at a time when every book was written by hand, and all its copies were also made by hand. It was never considered a burden or an unnecessary interruption. A brief recent statement from a professor of hadith at one Islamic religious school captures the spirit. "The merits of studying hadith are innumerable and those interested can read Ibn Abdul Bar's book on the subject," he said. "But it is sufficient to note that through this study we get plenty of opportunities for saying the benediction, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ."

And so for centuries this practice has continued unabated throughout the Muslim world. Also, realizing the importance of a "worthy benediction" Muslims always used the Arabic expression in other languages, be they Urdu, Farsi, Bangla, or others. For the first time in history, we find a break from this practice, and this spirit, when reviewing the Islamic literature in English.

Initially some one substituted "peace be upon him" for "Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ." But it is not

even a proper translation. Then some one thought of abbreviating it to pbuh. It, of course, did not improve the translation or the readability. Others came up with innovations of their own. One Islamic text book in English notes in the beginning: "After using the name of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims should write or say the honorific phrase, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ...Due to limited space this honorific phrase has been omitted.. but should be inserted when reading the book." Another book goes a little further by acknowledging the "long established and cherished tradition", but then announces bluntly: "To avoid interrupting the flow of ideas, especially for non-Muslim readers, I have not followed the customary practice." A majority of recent Islamic books published in the U.S. and U.K. by reputable Muslim organizations, though, do not feel the need for any excuse or explanation, whatsoever. They simply mention the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ, as they would any ordinary person.

It is time we moved beyond our hesitations, confusions, or inferiority complexes. This is the Ummah of the Last Prophet. In every language of the world, our Prophet is Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam ﷺ.

The dramatic shifts of fortune experienced by Muhammad Ali, who died on June 3, reflects the chequered fortunes of the minorities he represented. It requires effort for contemporary mindsets to visualise the Civil Rights era of the 1960s where black Americans were fighting not just for social, economic and political equality, but most fundamentally, the right to lead lives with human dignity. Ali was among the most colourful champions of equality in a now nearly forgotten era of black liberation. He came to prominence on the world stage after a surprise victory against reigning heavyweight champion, Sonny Liston, when seven to one odds were given against Ali. He earned the anger and ire of the white public when he publicly announced his conversion to Islam, and renounced his "slave name" of Cassius Clay.

Ali's status as world champion provided him with the platform to express and articulate the sentiments of the oppressed black minority regarding the Vietnam war. He refused to "drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam" while the black people in Louisville were "treated like dogs and denied simple human rights". He was well aware that his protests would put "my prestige in jeopardy and could cause me to lose millions of dollars". But he was prepared to pay the price for his principles: "The real enemy of my people is right here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality." He confronted those who accused him of cowardice by linking them with the oppression of the brown races abroad, along with that of the blacks within the US: "If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to twenty-two million of my people they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow."

The words of Ali posed a deep and existential threat to a state undergoing a transformation from the democratic principles of majority rule to the Machiavellian rule by fear. According to Machiavelli, the main weapon of public control is the ability of the state to define the

enemy. This method remains effective today in frightening the public into spending trillions on fighting terror, while budgets for social welfare programmes are being slashed at a time of record unemployment, homelessness and hunger. Ali redefined the enemy in a powerful punch to the establishment. His message was an inspiration to the oppressed throughout the world: "... Get used to me – black, confident, cocky. My name, not yours. My religion, not yours. My goals, my own." He was duly punished for transgressing beyond the boundaries of acceptable dissent, stripped of his championship title, and stopped from pursuing his career in the prime of his life. Though eventually the Supreme Court exonerated him, he paid a heavy price, and was banned from boxing for five years at his absolute prime.

The global outpouring of love and respect bears witness to the multidimensional and exceptional qualities of Ali. His strength of character is shown by

the difficult choices he made in challenging situations, renouncing popularity for principles. His daughters described their father's perseverance and strength in handling his prolonged Parkinson's disease as extraordinary and an inspiration to those around him. He used to say that his disease was a reminder that Allah, and not Ali, was the Greatest. In 2002, he refused the honour of a star on the world famous Hollywood Walk of Fame. "I bear the name of our beloved Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him), and it is impossible that I allow people to trample over his name," he said. In a break with tradition, the star was mounted on the wall instead of the pavement at the Kodak Theatre entertainment complex. Every morning he rose at five to pray and to study the Holy Qur'an. It seems appropriate to conclude with his inspiring message - "Everything I do now, I do to please Allah," he said in, somewhere around, 1990. "I conquered the world, and it didn't bring me true happiness. The only true happiness comes from honouring and worshipping God."

"I know where I'm going and I know the truth, and I don't have to be what you want me to be. I'm free to be what I want."

"I hated every minute of training, but I said, 'Don't quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.'"

"Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee."

"Only a man who knows what it is like to be defeated can reach down to the bottom of his soul and come up with the extra ounce of power it takes to win when the match is even."

"It isn't the mountains ahead to climb that wear you out; it's the pebble in your shoe."

"The word 'Islam' means 'peace.' The word 'Muslim' means 'one who surrenders to God.' But the press makes us seem like haters."

"What keeps me going is goals."

"It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen."

"To be able to give away riches is mandatory if you wish to possess them. This is the only way that you will be truly rich."

"I'm no leader; I'm a little humble follower."

- Muhammad Ali

Dr Asad Zaman

Remembering an ICON

Power

Cement

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What Constitutes the World?

Dr Asad Zaman



The second part of the article, "Is Development Accumulation of Wealth?" further dispels conventional 'myths' in explaining the reasons behind real development and advancement, by replacing these with alternative, eye-opening 'truths'...

Myth #2: The World is Built of Stones, Mountains and Rivers

The materialist worldview tells us that we live in a world constructed out of mountains, rivers, oceans and continents. There are physical laws which bind every particle to a determinate trajectory. These are concrete hard realities, written in stone, which constrain the scope of our possible actions. As individuals, we have very little power to change things. An individual weighing 80 Kilograms cannot make much of a dent in a world massing thousands of metric tons.

While no one can deny the existence of the world out there, it is also true that we all have a picture of this world in our own minds. This picture is a very rough approximation of the true reality out there. When we think about the world, we have no access to the "true reality" - we only have access to the mental representation of this reality within our minds. Nearly all the furniture in my mental landscape -- Hiroshima, Africa, the Mongols, the Steam Engine, Red Indians, Baghdad - consists of accounts that I have read and absorbed, rather than experienced in reality. Our lives and actions are far more strongly influenced by this mental representation of the world, than by the real world.

The materialist world view is based on the idea that the mental representation of reality is a close and accurate match to the true reality. Or, if it is not a close match, then it ought to be. If there is no close correspondence between the real world and our mental model of it, then our mental model is flawed. We must fix the model to bring it into correspondence. This means that there is only one good mental model of reality, and that is the actual reality, which is unique, fixed, and the same for all. These widely believed materialist ideas de-emphasize the role of the mental models that we have of the world we live in. They also lead us to believe that it is only the hard and fixed concrete reality out there which matters.

For every collection of facts, there are a large number of theories which fit all available facts. That is, the collection of facts does not uniquely determine a single valid theory. This is called "under-determination" and has been discussed in great detail by Salim Rashid (2009). Thus we always have available to us different theories which will fit all available facts. Thus we have substantial amounts of freedom in creating a representation of the world which is faithful to all available facts.

As Keynes (1936, p 383) said:

"The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who be-

lieve themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influence, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist."

We have a large number of ideas about the world we live in. We are used to thinking in binaries - this idea is true and that one is false. We also believe that there is only one set of true ideas which describes accurately the world we live in. A collection of ideas which shapes the world we live in may be called a worldview. There are many alternative worldviews possible, all of which provide explanations of the facts we see. We have a free choice among worldviews, which is not constrained by facts. Choice among worldviews must be made on other grounds. Believing that there is only one possible view which is factual, objective and concrete leaves us in ignorance of other frameworks and worldviews. When we are not aware of the extremely important choice of how to organize the world we see into a coherent and understandable reality, then this choice is imposed upon us by others. That is, without any conscious awareness of having made a choice, we accept a worldview implicit in the ways that the world is described to us by others. In support of these ideas, Eribon (1992, p. 282) quotes Foucault:

There are more ideas on earth than intellectuals imagine. And these ideas are more active, stronger, more resistant, more passionate than "politicians" think. We have to be there at the birth of ideas, the bursting outward of their force: not in books expressing them, but in events manifesting this force, in struggles carried on around ideas, for or against them. Ideas do not rule the world. But it is because the world has ideas (and because it constantly produces them) that it is not passively ruled by those who are its leaders or those who would like to teach it, once and for all, what it must think.

Truth #2: The World is Shaped by Human Choices

In opposition to the materialist view, we would like to argue that the mental representation of the world we live in is extremely important. The world out there is not "knowable". The geography and history of this world is far too rich and complex to be grasped by any mind. This means that the materialist ideal of a perfectly accurate model of reality is impossible to achieve. This corresponds to the Quran [17:85]: "And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little." Our experience of the world we live in will be strongly influenced both by the small number of facts that we know, and also by the large number of facts that we never learned during our lives. This places tremendous premium on learning the important facts, since we can never know all of them. But how can we learn what is important, and what is not, without knowing all of them? This is the dilemma of human knowledge.

Our mental models of the world, and our normative conceptions of the good and the bad determine the choices we make in the course of our lives. Our lives are far more deeply affected by the collection of human choices than by the material forces around us. It is stated in a *Hadeeth* that Allah *T'aala* creates circumstances in response to human actions - if we make good decisions, then good outcomes result. The Quran (30:41) (see also 42:30) shows that bad actions lead to bad outcomes:

30:41: "corruption has appeared on land and in the sea as an outcome of what men's hands have wrought"

Our ideas about the meaning and purpose of life, as well as appropriate strategies for achieving these goals influence our actions. A huge portion of the world we live in is constructed by social conventions - human ideas about how we should live which command consensus of large communities. For example, we live in Pakistan. Pakistan is an imagined community; it does not exist, except in the minds of men. Suppose that we could achieve consensus tomorrow that nations should not exist, and that mankind should live in harmony and peace with no artificial national boundaries. Then nations would cease to exist tomorrow. The mental representation of the world does not consist purely of rocks and stones which are concrete and unchangeable. It also consists of powerful ideas, which have acquired concreteness and substance through our consensus and acceptance. Changing our mental models can change the world we live in.

Imagine a world in which all human beings are kind, considerate, compassionate, truthful, responsible, and have the characteristics described as good in the Quran. Alternatively imagine a world in which people are selfish, competitive, ruthless, power hungry, and have the characteristics praised by Machiavelli, Friedman and Samuelson. Which world would you rather live in? Would it make a difference if there was a huge amount of wealth in the second world, while people lived simply in the first one? Clearly our lives are strongly shaped by the choices, good or bad, that people in our society make. Islam teaches us to prefer the simple life of our Prophet ﷺ and the Companions, over the luxury and ostentation of Qaroon and Fir'awn. The Quran (3:196) tells us not to be deceived by the apparent luxury of the unbelievers. This is in opposition to dominant western teachings which place selfish pursuit of luxury above any concern for the fate of the poor and the oppressed. These teachings influence humans to choose evil courses of action leading to the current state of the world, where tremendous amounts of wealth concentrated in the hands of a few co-exists with huge amounts of misery and poverty for the masses of people. Islam teaches us to care for others over and above our self. The Quran (59:9) praises those who feed others, even though they themselves are in need. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ demonstrated that teaching people to make the right choices can change the course of history and the nature of the society we live in.

Lesson #2: Choosing the Good

To build a better world, we do not need more factories and fertilizer. Rather, we need to change the choices that human beings are making during the course of their lives. The Quran (90:10) states that Allah *T'aala* has "shown him the two highways [of good and evil]". That is, this world is a test, and man has a choice between good and evil. The Prophet Mohammed ﷺ came to teach mankind good and evil, and how to make good choices in preference to evil ones. Today, the world is in a bad state because humans are constantly choosing evil over good. The Quran exhorts us to prefer the good, even though our desires favor the evil. To improve the state of the world, we must carry out the mission of the *Ummah* to spread the good and prohibit the evil.

Myth #3: Objective History is Possible

Another important way in which our mental models influence our lives is in our choice of history, which shapes our identities. The materialist view holds that there is only one unique objective history. In contrast, I would like to argue that history cannot be understood without a point of view. All points of view are automatically biased, and there is no such thing as an unbiased point of view. As a Muslim, I identify with Muslims who came to India to spread the benefits of the religion of Islam to the people living here. However, this same history could be entirely different if told from the point of view of the Hindus, Buddhists, or neutral third parties. What Indians call the War of Independence of 1857 was a rebellion from the British viewpoint, and it could be called a battle between British and Indians from the Chinese viewpoint. The crucial point here is that there are no neutral, objective, and factual standpoints available. To minimize or legitimize British atrocities committed during the war is to deny validity to the native point of view. To fail to understand that exigencies of war necessitated harsh measures is to deny validity to the British point of view. Understanding requires simultaneous comprehension of alternative conflicting and contradictory narratives, and not that of a single unbiased and objective history. This is radically different from the conventional perspective that there is only one "true" and objective history.

History can never be objective because of many reasons. The complete historical record of all events that have occurred since the dawn of time is beyond the capacity of any human being to absorb and comprehend. Only a tiny portion of this history has been recorded, and there is strong evidence that only partisans record historical events - those to whom it matters. Even if we select and learn a hundred thousand facts, these will be a small and insignificant portion of the available historical record. There is no chance that such a small collection of facts will be representative, or provide some sort of an objective picture of the totality, which will remain forever inaccessible to humans. Typically we can know or learn only a very tiny percentage of relevant historical facts within the span of a lifetime. As a result, our knowledge of history is automatically biased, and this is a problem which cannot be remedied.

Truth #3: We Choose Our Past, which Shapes Our Future

It is only after giving up hope of achieving a perfect, objective and complete record of history that it becomes possible to understand what history is about. Our past is not engraved in stone and unchangeable, as we imagine it to be. Rather, we choose the stories we will tell about our past. There are so many stories that it is impossible to tell them all. We are free to choose the stories we tell about our past, and our choices create the world we live in - they become part of our mental representation of the world. The vast majority of what I consider my history is events that I have read about, not ones I have experienced. So we choose our past by choosing what to learn about our past. The stories we tell about our past will determine what we consider worth striving for, and also delineate the space of actions open to us.

We find three different schools of thought regarding Islamic history - all three believe in the possibility of objective history, and hence dispute among themselves as to which is the "true" history. One school of thought projects the past glories of Islamic civilization, and refuses to look at the dark side. Another school of thought finds only darkness, and virtually no saving grace. A third school believes that objectivity requires that every time we tell a good story about the Islamic past, we must balance it by telling a bad story. Which is the right approach? To answer this question we must consider why we want to tell stories about our past.

A naïve answer is that we want to tell the "true" story of the Islamic civilization. As already discussed, this is impossible. It is not humanly possible to present the true story of fourteen centuries of an infinitely diverse and complex set of social, cultural, economic and political interactions within the vast Islamic empires. The available materials are too vast to be studied within a lifetime of any human being, and what is not known is far greater than what is known.

Going beyond the simplistic "search for truth," history serves a varied and complex set of purposes which we cannot adequately summarize in a few paragraphs. Instead, we will just focus on a few points of relevance to what follows. History serves to define our relation to other human beings, and to the large scale human projects and visions which shape the world we live in. It provides meaning to our lives, by putting them in the context of a bigger picture. It provides a purpose and direction for our struggles.

Lesson #3: History as a Tool and Weapon

To understand the functions of history, imagine forgetting our history for a moment. Then we become just one anonymous individual, a drop in the ocean. History is what ties us to the past and connects us to the future, giving our life meaning beyond its finite span. To give a concrete illustration, consider the following summary of Islamic history by Marshall Hodgson (1977, P.71):

Muslims are assured in the Quran, 'You have become the best community ever raised up for mankind, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, and having faith in God.' Earnest men have taken this prophecy seriously to the point of trying to mould the history of the whole world in accordance with it. 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.

... Those who have undertaken to rebuild life in Islamic terms have ventured on an enterprise with a high potential reward - that of winning through to the best that is open to mankind; but with correspondingly great risks of error and failure.

Understanding and absorbing this history makes us a part of an enormous enterprise to spread the good to the entire human race. This enterprise has spanned centuries and taken billions of people within its fold. We can identify with its successes and feel sorrow at its failures. Such a history provides courage, vision, perspective, and allows us to be philosophical, put up with short term defeats without losing hope. This is radically different from the bleak perspective of the single individual without history, who is necessarily confined to a single lifetime of experiences with no past and no future.

This is why we must tell stories of heroism and valor, instead of despair and defeat, so that our generations have the courage to face adverse circumstances. We must tie in our lives to bigger projects of mankind so that they acquire meaning. To select exceptional stories from our past, extraordinary examples of good behavior, is not "biased" history. This must be done to create inspiring role models; to allow us to persist in enjoining the good even against overwhelming odds. It is our tremendous good fortune that Islamic history has such extraordinary events. Our ancestors have done things which no other civilization can match. We just give one example, out of a thousand and one possibilities. The way that our Prophet Mohammad ﷺ forgave bitter enemies, and celebrated the conquest of Mecca with humility, and a night of worship at Ka'ba, has been an inspiration for all Muslim conquerors. It stands in stark contrast with the idea that "all is fair in love and war," and the rapine and loot associated with conquest that is considered part of human nature by some writers.

Fahmedeen Publications

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From Principle to Practice Justice in Islam

By Shaykh Mohammed Amin Kholwadia

People often question whether Islam is a tolerant religion, whether it tolerates diversity of thought among its adherents and in its interaction with different worldviews. This question is easily answered when one considers that Allah ﷻ created diversity, it is an expression of His ultimate creative power; He is the Ultimate Creator. This fact must be brought to the foreground.

Universal application of Allah's ﷻ Lordship

All worlds and all things are under the sovereignty of Allah ﷻ; even the devil is under His Lordship. The mere fact that He has created something (even the Devil) gives a sense of His lordship over everything. Of course, there are levels of Mercy – but we must acknowledge the Universal Mercy of Allah ﷻ through which everything exists. For this, perspective is essential in understanding Islam.

Medieval painters believed that if you had a scene with mountains in the distance and a house in front of you, the mountains should be drawn very large and the house very small, in order to accurately depict their absolute sizes. It was only when they discovered that perspective in painting did not minimize reality,



that perspective was measured according to the focal point of the painting. Then, they began painting the house larger and the mountains smaller in the background (Muslim painters did not adopt the use of perspective until later still).

Likewise in Islam, there is a background or backdrop and a perspective or focal point. Allah's ﷻ universal lordship is the background and Muhammad ﷺ is the perspective. Without Muhammad ﷺ, there is no perspective with which to understand and practice Islam. However, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ must also be understood against the backdrop of Allah's ﷻ universal lordship. In this picture of Islam, the two cannot be separated. The truths in Islam can be understood in the light of these two principles. Applying them outside of this would be to take them out of the context (perspective).

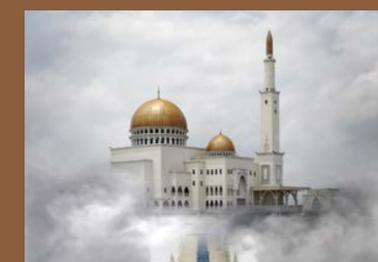
In the animals and plants, even in the dirt and soil, He created diversity (Surah Al-Fatir). When He created such diversity in plants and animals, it is not surprising to see that it exists in humans. His lordship is over all this. In Surah an-Nas, the final chapter of the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ states that He is the Lord of all mankind. In

the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the disbelievers (*kuffaar*) of Makkah said that they owned their gods; Muhammad ﷺ taught them that no one owns God, He owns all. Everything you see in Islam must be in front of this backdrop. Accept Allah ﷻ as He is, not as you want Him to be.

There are some universal truths about human beings. These truths must be appreciated by Muslims if they are to engage in dialogue with others. For example, Allah ﷻ tells us that man is created from haste. We all want quick and instant results all the time. This is haste.

Also, when Allah ﷻ created humans, angels predicted humans would cause corruption and bloodshed. Allah ﷻ did not deny them this observation, but responded by telling them, "I know that which you do not." All humans, Muslims and non-Muslims, have proven the angels to be absolutely correct in their observations. The truth is that all humans can and do fall below expected human standards and hence, the corruption and bloodshed. When someone falls below such stan-

It is only through Muhammad ﷺ that we know Allah ﷻ and the other prophets ﷺ. One of his ﷺ primary duties was to establish justice, in accordance with Divine revelation, in the spiritual and interpersonal dimensions of our lives. In the spiritual realm, he ﷺ came to show the universal application of Allah's ﷻ lordship, to eliminate *shirk* (associating partners with Allah ﷻ because *shirk* is injustice, and to replace it with *tawheed* or awareness of Allah ﷻ. In the social and political realm, he ﷺ enjoined people to be just, a justice that extended to everyone in the society.



dards, the actions they commit are not reflective of any faith, but of their failure to maintain those human standards. No religion has been or is immune from breeding humans who judge people in haste and who have no second thoughts about bloodshed. This is the saga of humans – religious or otherwise.

It is essential for Muslims to introduce Muhammad ﷺ into the American picture (directed to the American audience but means 'modern culture' in general). It is only through Muhammad ﷺ that we know Allah ﷻ and the other prophets ﷺ. One of his ﷺ primary duties was to establish justice, in accordance with Divine revelation, in the spiritual and interpersonal dimensions of our lives. In the spiritual realm, he ﷺ came to show the universal application of Allah's ﷻ lordship, to eliminate *shirk* (associating partners with Allah ﷻ because *shirk* is injustice, and to replace it with *tawheed* or awareness of Allah ﷻ. In the social and political realm, he ﷺ enjoined people to be just, a justice that extended to everyone in the society. For example, when he ﷺ told people to feed the poor, he ﷺ did not mean feed only the poor Muslims (there were only fifteen or so Muslims at that time in Makkah), he ﷺ meant feeding the hungry of humankind. Islam came to eradicate injustice on all levels. Justice is not discriminate; it is indiscriminate. Muslims were

champions of justice, wherever Muslims went, justice traveled with them. Piety makes no sense if you are unjust; you cannot even be unjust to animals!

Human life

Life is very central to a Muslim's existence. Under severe duress, a Muslim may be allowed to conceal his faith if he feels his life will be taken from him. Allah ﷻ gives life and only He has the right to decide when to take it.

It is through Allah's ﷻ universal lordship that we read in the Qur'an concepts like: Killing one person is like killing the whole of humanity; saving one person is like saving all of humanity (Surah al-Maidah). The verse comes after narrating the story of Abel and Cain – the first two humans who encountered a violent struggle. Abel – or Habel – came out victorious – even though he died. Cain – or Qabeel – came out as a proverbial villain – even though he survived. According to Islamic principles, Abel was the first martyr on Earth. But it wasn't through warfare.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: If you defend yourself, protecting your life, and die, you are a martyr. If you die defending life, honor, wealth and property, you die a martyr. In these scenarios, there is a holy war or jihad – against oppression and injustice. This is on an individual level. The office of Jihad in Islam is nothing except an extension of this principle on a state level.

Critics of Islam say if Muhammad ﷺ and his message deal with Allah's ﷻ universal lordship, how come he ﷺ engaged in war? Isa – Jesus – ﷺ did not attack others. When the principle of Jihad is put into perspective, it is not too difficult to appreciate it. But before the perspective, let's have some background.

In the first thirteen years of his mission, Muhammad ﷺ had to overcome immense hurdles and social pressures. Thirteen years of struggle and persecution in Makkah brought him but fewer than a hundred followers. Muslims had to migrate to another town called Madinah (Yathrib) in order to practice their faith. This was a migration from death to life. The total number of Muslims in Madinah at the time of the first holy war in Islam (Badr) may have been around five hundred at best. Three hundred and thirteen of them participated in the battle. Everyone else in Arabia was openly hostile and antagonistic towards the Muslims, even the Jewish tribes in Madinah. For thirteen years, Muham-

mad 9 was not given permission to defend himself. It was in this context that permission for jihad was granted. Muslims had no money, armor or resources and were being violently persecuted throughout this period. Jihad came, after thirteen years of such persecution, as permission for the Muslims to defend themselves. Jihad is a defense strategy.

Muslims do not need to apologize or deny the basis for jihad, but we do need to give it its proper perspective. Jihad is assault based on defense, not on aggression. Defense to uphold justice, not injustice. It is all from the point of view of defense, even if it is a very aggressive campaign. If jihad were an offensive military strategy, rather than a defensive one, Muslims would never have spared so many lives, protected so much property or freed so many people during their campaigns. It is important to realize that Muslims have ruled as a minority and this could not be possible if they were oppressive to the people they ruled over. Besides, is this office of Jihad any different from what we call the Department of Defense – which actually engages in building a huge nuclear arsenal and fights wars overseas?

The rewards of death in jihad, or martyrdom, are there to motivate soldiers. This is no different than what generals would say to their soldiers prior to a battle. Muslims do not fight in jihad because we want to die, but fight in order to gain life or freedom from injustice.

The Prophet 9 used to warn people not to pray for death in jihad. Death is not something you yearn for. Suicide has no place in Islam, it is an unforgivable sin that is almost as bad as shirk.

Lastly, it is important to remember that jihad has nothing to do with terrorism. In fact, Islamic civilization was the first to compile laws against terrorism. Terrorism is to take civilian life in non-war situations, no matter what your reason. Even in war situations, Islam strongly condemns the loss of innocent (i.e. civilian) lives, euphemistically termed “collateral damage” in modern times.

Islamic governments were extremely anti-terror and that was why people were safe to travel everywhere. You can even give *zakat* (a required form of charity for Muslims) to a traveler so he can return home, even if the traveler is rich in the country from which s/he came. Muslims have always wanted safety and security in their countries.

In conclusion, against the backdrop of Allah’s 6 universal lordship – which creates diversity – and through the perspective of the Prophet Muhammad’s 9 mission to promote and maintain justice in all aspects of life, we must appreciate that Islam stands for a universal diversity which is established upon the principles of respecting life and justice for all.

Courtesy: ilmgate.org



Learning to Forgive

Contributed by Muhammad Haris

Always forgive! Your heart cannot afford not to do that. Teach what you know and learn what you don't. Stay open to all.

Allah 6 says in the Qur'an:

It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have gone away from you: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs (of the moment). Then, when you have taken a decision, place your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who place their trust (in Him) (3:159).

Lessons from this verse:

- It is not the snake bite that kills, it's the venom that flows through the blood. The antidote is forgiving people. Don't let anger rent space in your mind and heart. Forgive and pass over people's faults.
- Strength of character means the ability to overcome resentment against others, to hide hurt feelings, and to forgive quickly.
- To love means loving the unlovable. To forgive means pardoning the unpardonable. Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.
- To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.
- Love as much as you can. It may hurt but it helps us grow. Give all you have! You may be poor but you will be content.

Source: 'Khazain-e-Quran' by Maulana Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar r

Burger Shack

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Meat One

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