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The Intellect

Re-awakening to the
ideals of a Blessed Life

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Surah Nisa – Part 11

Al Hadith
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The Awakening
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The Message and the Messengers

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30-C, Basement 2nd Comm. Street, Phase-4, D.H.A Karachi, Pakistan

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Co-editors Zawjah Farid, Bint Akram

Marketing & Circulation Nabeel Ahmad Shaikh

Design & Concept MAK Innovation
+92 316 8056 863
info@makinnovation.biz

Legal Advisor Mr. Danial

Printer wasaprinters@cyber.net.pk

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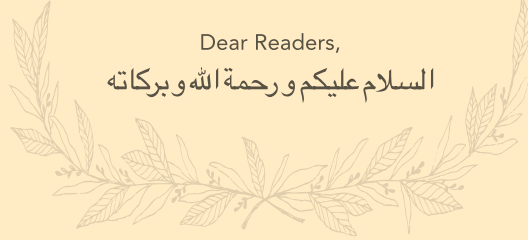


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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته



When children fly in an airplane, their enchantment at how big things gradually become “smaller” as they go up, carries an important life lesson for elders..... If our life is a line drawn from point A to B, the further we move towards B, what may have seemed like a mountain nearer point A, now seems irrelevant and miniscule. Why so? Because perspectives and priorities change over time and fresh experiences open our eyes to totally new realities.

A scholar once described that he could still recall the severe dejection he had felt on losing a simple outdoor game in his childhood; it had seemed like the end of the world at the time! As he grew up, the pettiness of the matter made him laugh at his earlier reaction.

Similarly, when a teenager is restricted from staying out late at night, it seems to him like his parents have hit him with a hammer on the head. His whole world seems to shrink down to this one, solitary prohibition; all his parent’s favours and boundless affection fade out as background noise. It’s only years later, when this youngster becomes a parent himself, that he is able to realize and feel the other side of the picture; and something which hitherto didn’t seem to make any sense at all, suddenly becomes crystal clear.

In *These Fingers don’t Wrinkle* our contributor dwells upon this very reality: how parenthood changes our take on how and what our parents did when we were small.

In *Tell a Tale*, the protagonist learns a similar lesson, albeit the hard way!

A Hadith in Sahih Muslim narrates (meaning) that the one who is devoid of softness in habits is devoid of all good. This serves as a rule of thumb, especially for those involved in *Da’wah* activities; for a thing explained in a wise and kind manner makes home in the listener’s heart, while stringency can turn away people from even the most beautiful of words. Thus, how we say what we say plays a huge role in the efficacy of our speech. This is the take-home point in our Cover Story – *The Message and the Messengers*, and it’s a very important point indeed.

In *Poets’ Panorama*, our inclusion *Unless You Do* is poignant and moving. It is enough to spur many a procrastinating ones into instant action....



When the day dawns, do not wait and dwell upon the approaching evening, nor burn in the fires of the past, rather, focus on the now and present.....

In *Reflections*, Bint e Akram broods over the clouds of general despondency that envelop our youth. Negativism is rife where hope should've taken root; the focus on bygones and the past drowns useful action in the present, like an object tied to a brick weighing down into deeper waters. On parallel footings, it is futile to sink in a daydreaming vortex about the future without exerting in the 'todays'.

What's the way ahead then? The writer has some useful points to share.

"The Mission of Islam was to provide guidance in every dimension of life, to restore humanity to the respect, dignity, and higher purpose for which man was created.....The community of the Companions ﷺ was infused with a powerful sense of mission, to spread this precious treasure, in order to free mankind from the bondage of false gods and earthly powers, and bring them to the liberation of Islam, and worship of the One True God."

These compelling lines are excerpted from the summary of a book that is a must-read for Muslims to connect the dots from our glorious past to our troubled present and into our promising future, (*inshAllah*). Please turn to our *Books for All* section for the complete synopsis.

Let us be trained from the mistakes of our past, till there is still time to do so!

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid



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Surah An-Nisa'

Translation with Arabic Text



The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

سَتَجِدُونَ آخَرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوا بِقَوْمِهِمْ كَمَا رَدُّوا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ أُرْكَسُوا فِيهَا فَإِنْ لَمْ يَعْتَزِلُوكُمْ وَيُلْغُوا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ وَيَكُفُّوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَاذْهَبُوا وَتَقَالُوا هُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾

You will find others who want to be secure from you, and secure from their own people. (But) whenever they are called back to the mischief, they are plunged into it. (42) So, if they do not stay away from you, and do not offer peace to you, and do not restrain their hands, then seize them, and kill them wherever you find them, and, We have given you an open authority against them. [91]

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَأً وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَأً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٢﴾

It is not for a believer (Muslim) to kill any believer, except by mistake. Whoever kills a believer by mistake, then, a believing slave has to be freed, and the blood money must be paid to his family, unless they forgo it. (43) If he (the victim) belongs to a people hostile to you and is a believer, then, a believing slave has to be freed. (44) If he (the victim) belongs to a people between whom and you there is treaty, then, blood money is to be paid to his family, (45) and a believing slave to be freed. Whoever does not find one has to fast for two consecutive months. This is repentance prescribed from Allah's side. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [92]

وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾

Whoever kills a believer deliberately, his reward is jahannam (Hell) where he shall remain forever, and Allah shall be angry with him and shall cast curse upon him, and He has prepared for him a mighty punishment. [93]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا صَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْقَى إِلَيْكُمُ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَبْنَعُونَ عَرَضَ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَانِمَ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَمَنْ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

O you who believe, when you go out in the way of Allah, be careful, and do not say to the one who offers you the Salam (salutation), "You are not a believer" to seek stuff of the worldly life. (46) So, with Allah there are spoils in abundance. In the same state you were before; then Allah favored you. So, be careful. Surely, Allah is All-Aware of what you do. [94]

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً وَكُلًّا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْحُسْنَىٰ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾

Those among the believers who sit back, except the handicapped, are not equal to those who fight in the way of Allah with their riches and their lives. Allah has raised the rank of those who fight with their riches and their lives, over those who sit; and to each, Allah has promised good. (47) Allah has given precedence to those who fight over those who sit in giving them a great reward. [95]

دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾

High ranks from Him and forgiveness and mercy. Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [96]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَقَّأَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾

Those whose souls the angels take while they had wronged themselves, the angels say (to them), "In what business were you (involved)?" They say, "We were oppressed in the earth." They say, "Was not the earth of Allah wide enough for you to emigrate to it?" Those people are such that their refuge is jahannam. It is an evil place to return; [97]

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانَ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾

Except the oppressed men and women and children, who cannot have means (to emigrate), nor can find a way. [98]

فَأُولَٰئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٩﴾

As for such, it is likely that Allah would pardon them. Allah is Most-Pardoning, Most-Forgiving. [99]

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَاغِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

(48) Whoever migrates in the way of Allah shall find on the earth many a place to settle, and a wide dimension (of resources). Whoever leaves his home migrating for the sake of Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, then, his reward is established with Allah. Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [100]

Explanation

(42) This verse refers to a third category of people who, like the ones mentioned in verse 90, would approach the Muslims to seek peace, and pretend that they do not like fighting anyone, neither the Muslims, nor their own people, but they were not honest in their claim. Therefore, if they were invited by the opponents of the Muslims to join them against the Muslims, they violated their pledge with the Muslims. The verse orders that such people should also be killed like the first group mentioned in verse 89 above. Several reports state that some people from the tribes of Asad, Ghatafan and 'Abd-ud-Dar belonged to this category of infidels.

(43) Killing by mistake means that the killer did not intend to kill the victim, but he was killed by his unintentional act; for example, he wanted to shoot an animal, but he missed the target and shot a human being. If both the killer and the victim are Muslims in such cases, the killer has two obligations. Firstly, he must offer kaffarah (expiation) by freeing a Muslim slave. If no slave is found, (as in our days, there is no slave) he has to fast for two consecutive months. Secondly, he has to pay blood money (Diyah) to the heirs of the victim (which will be distributed between them according to their shares in inheritance). If the killer is a Non-Muslim, living in a Muslim country, he has to pay blood money only, as no kaffarah is obligated on him.

(44) If a Muslim lives in a Non-Muslim country, hostile to the Muslims in the sense that Muslims have no treaty with it, and he is killed by a Muslim, blood money is not payable, because he was not under the protection of an Islamic state which has no authority over the hostile country.

(45) When the victim of 'killing by mistake' is a Dhimmi (a Non-Muslim living legally in an Islamic state) or Musta'min, (a Non-Muslim who is visiting an Islamic state with permission), in both cases he is protected by the treaty or the covenant he has with the Islamic state. Therefore, blood money is to be paid by the killer to his family, and if the killer is a Muslim, he has to offer kaffarah (expiation) as well.

(46) In various incidents, some sahabah ﷺ killed various persons, during jihad, who pretended to be Muslims, either by saluting them with the Islamic greeting: As-Salamu-'alaikum (meaning: peace be upon you) or by reciting the kalimah, but the sahabah ﷺ thought that they were doing so to save their lives during the battle. In these incidents, their belongings were taken by those sahabah ﷺ as spoils of war. The Holy Prophet ﷺ expressed his grave disapproval of these incidents, and this verse was revealed to forbid the Muslims from such actions in future. The sentence, "With Allah there are spoils in abundance", is to warn that your desire for spoils of war must not tempt you to commit such acts, for Allah will give you a lot of spoils from lawful sources.

The rule laid down by this verse is that if a person claims to be a Muslim, we have to treat him as a Muslim, unless otherwise is proved. We are concerned with his apparent beliefs and actions. If they are in accordance with Islamic beliefs and actions, we have no right to hold him as 'Non-Muslim' merely on the basis of our guess that his claim is hypocrisy. It does not, however, cover a person who openly professes beliefs against the fundamentals of Islam, and still claims to be a Muslim. He has to be declared and treated as a Non-Muslim, because, not only his inner state of heart, but also his apparent beliefs are against the well-established articles of faith.

(47) This statement relates to a situation in which jihad has not yet become Fard-ul-'ain (obligatory on each and every person). But once it becomes Fard-ul-'ain, no one is allowed to stay behind.

(48) As mentioned earlier, it was mandatory in the early days of Islam that the Muslims living in Makkah emigrate to Madinah. Verse 97 states that those who do not emigrate, despite their ability to do so, deserve a severe punishment. It is mentioned that when such people die, the angels ask them why did not they emigrate. Having no plausible excuse, they will be punished in jahannam. The words, 'wronged themselves' refer to their violation of the command to emigrate. However, verse 98 excepts those who had no means to emigrate. Verse 100 mentions the merits of leaving one's homeland for the sake of Allah.

The Ender of Pleasures

by Maulana Manzoor Ahmed Naumani رحمته الله

(143/3) Abu Sa'eed Khudri رضي الله عنه has said that when the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم came out for prayers one day, he found people enjoying a laugh among themselves (in the mosque). He said, 'If you were to keep much in remembrance of death which is the ender of pleasures, it will distract you from what I see. Keep in remembrance death which is the ender of pleasures, for a day does not come to the grave without it saying, 'I am the house of exile, I am the house of solitude, I am the house of dust, I am the house of worms' (Obviously only those can hear whom Allah wills to). When a believer dies the grave says to him, "Welcome and greeting; you are indeed the dearest to me of those who walk upon me, I have been given charge of you today and you have come to me and you will see how I treat you. It will then expand for him as far as a door to Paradise will be opened for him. But, when a very wicked, evil-doing person or a disbeliever is buried, the grave says to him, "No welcome and no greeting to you; you are the most hateful to me of those who walk upon me. I have been given charge of you today and you have come to me and you will see how I treat you." It will then press on him till his ribs are crushed together." The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم indicated that by interlacing his fingers. Then, he added, "Seventy dragons will be put in charge of him of such a nature that if one of them was to breathe on earth it would produce no crops as long as the world endured, and they will bite and scratch him till he is brought to the reckoning." The Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم also said, "The grave is one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell."

Commentary: The punishment of the grave has been described in detail in the *Book of Faith* and explained enough to dispel doubts and answer questions. We have made it clear there that the use of the word grave implied the *Barzakh*, the intervening period between death and resurrection. We have also made it amply clear that the use of the word 'seventy' or any other figure of number merely conveys largeness or plenty. The point to understand here is that we must not neglect Allah تعالى or the reckoning in the hereafter. We must fight negligence by continually remembering death and the grave. This method is a sure way of correcting oneself. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had prescribed this method to his Companions رضي الله عنهم, and that is how they attained *taqwa*, the fear of Allah, and the concern for the hereafter. Even today we find these characteristics in those slaves of Allah تعالى who continually remember death and the grave. May Allah cause us to act accordingly. Aameen.

Remember Death Much to Keep Negligence Away

(١٤٤/٤) عَنْ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا ذَهَبَ تَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ قَامَ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ اذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ جَاءَتْ الرَّاجِفَةُ تَتْبَعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ جَاءَ الْمَوْتُ بِمَا فِيهِ جَاءَ الْمَوْتُ بِمَا فِيهِ (رواه الترمذی)

(144/4) Ubayy bin Ka'b related to us, "When two-third of the night had passed, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would get up and say, 'O people, remember Allah! Remember Allah! The convulsion of the Last Day [i.e., the first blast of the Trumpet] is near and closely following it is the second [blast]."



Death, with all the things that go with it, is hovering over the head! Death, with all the attendant details, is about to strike" (Tirmidhi).

Commentary: According to the traditions, the usual practice of the holy Prophet ﷺ was to divide his nights into three parts. The first part was spent in attending to his special needs and occupations and in offering the *Isha* prayers,

during the second part he slept, and then, he would get up for *Tahajjud*, and when the final third of the night began, he would wake up, as related by Ubayy bin ka'ab in the above tradition, the members of his household, and the general body of the Believers for prayers and Zikr. In order to drive away drowsiness and lethargy, he used to remind them, at that time, of the terrifying events of the Last Day and the extreme

agony of death which is an unfailing recipe for stirring up people from negligence and sloth to the veneration and remembrance of Allah. Even today, it is most effective for anyone who may be finding it hard to leave the bed for *Tahajjud* to

call to his mind the sufferings of death and of the grave and the Day of Final Reckoning.



Beneficial Knowledge

“Beneficial knowledge is the knowledge of Allah, His attributes, His names, and the knowledge by which one knows how to submit to Him and act properly in regards to His favors. This is the knowledge whose rays pervade the breast... lifting from the heart its veils and dispelling all doubts and misgivings.

From the wisdom of Dawud (Allah’s blessing upon him and all our prophets) is his saying, ‘The knowledge in the breast is like the lantern in the house.’

Abu Muhammad 'Abd al 'Aziz al Mahdawi (Allah be well-pleased with him) said, ‘Beneficial knowledge is of the moment (*'ilm al waqt*), the clarity of the heart, asceticism (*zuhd*) from the world, (the knowledge) of what brings one closer to paradise and further from the fire, fear of Allah and returning (*raja'*) to Him due to such fear, and the pestilence (*aafaat*) of the heart and its purification. It is a specifically designated light (*nur*) that Allah places in the heart of whomever He pleases, not knowledge of the tongue that is transmitted and apprehensible by the mind.’

Malik ibn Anas said (Allah be well-pleased with him) said, ‘Knowledge is not the abundance of narrations. It is only a light that Allah Most High places in the hearts.’

Imam Junayd (Allah be well-pleased with him) said, ‘Knowledge is that by which you know your Lord...’

This statement (of Ibn Ata'illah) is a clear summarization that gathers within it the objectives of the knowledge of the Sufis, which is knowing (*ma'arifa*) Allah and acting in the best of ways with regards to His favors. This is the knowledge which is recommended for a person to submerge himself in – without one masking himself from it, slightly or abundantly.”

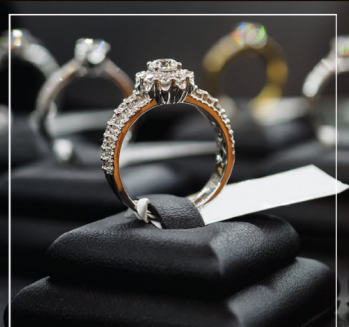
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Marriage Proposal from a Woman's Family

Answered by Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari

Question:

In my culture, it is often considered offensive for a woman's family to propose marriage. I just wanted to know if there was anything wrong in Islam with a woman or her family proposing to the man.

Answer:

Islamically, marriage negotiations can be initiated or marriage can be proposed by either of the two parties. Similarly, there is nothing wrong with a daughter (or son) suggesting a suitable and righteous person to the parents provided it is done with decorum and observance of Islamic guidelines.

Unfortunately, however, there remains a stigma within certain Muslim cultures against a woman's family proposing or initiating marriage talks. It is likewise considered rude and offensive for the daughter to suggest a suitable man to her parents which, in some cases, is automatically deemed to mean that she is involved in an illicit relationship with him. If a girl respectfully offers herself to a suitable man for marriage, it is considered a crime! All these culturally-driven notions and customs are not endorsed by the teachings of Islam.

Imam al-Bukhari (Allah have mercy on him) has a chapter in his *Sahih* collection titled: "A man offering his daughter or sister to the people of good" in which he establishes that marriage can be proposed by the woman's family, and that there is no shame or indecency in doing so. He records the following Hadith:

Abdullah ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) relates that Umar ibn al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him), when [his daughter] Hafsa bint Umar (Allah be pleased with her) became a widow upon the death of Khunays ibn Hudhafa al-Sahmi (Allah be pleased with him) – who was one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and died in Madina – Umar ibn al-Khattab said, "I went to Uthman ibn Affan (Allah be pleased with him) and offered Hafsa to him [for marriage]." He said, "I will think about it." He met me after a few days and said, "It seems

to me that I should not marry at this time." Umar said, "Then I met Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (Allah be pleased with him) and said, "If you wish, I can marry you to Hafsa bint Umar." Abu Bakr remained silent and did not give me any reply at all. That was more painful for me than [what I felt with the reply of] Uthman. Some days later, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) proposed for her and I married her off to him. Abu Bakr met me and said, "Perhaps you were upset with me when you offered Hafsa to me and I did not reply to you at all?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I was only prevented from replying to you [in the positive] in regards to what you offered me due to the fact that I knew the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) had considered her and I am not the one who would reveal the secret of the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace). Had the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) left her, I would have accepted her." (Sahih al-Bukhari, no: 4830)

In the above narration, Sayyiduna Umar ibn al-Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) offered his daughter, Hafsa (Allah be pleased with her), not only to one but two individuals: Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (Allah be pleased with them), with the latter already being married. As such, there is nothing wrong with a woman's guardian (wali) proposing marriage on her behalf to a righteous and suitable man.

Similarly, when the Prophet of Allah, Sayyiduna Shu'ayb (peace be upon him) observed the beautiful character of Sayyiduna Musa (peace be upon him) and his praiseworthy attributes such as trustworthiness, he proposed marriage to him for one of his daughters. Allah Most High says:

"And when he [Musa, peace be upon him] arrived at the waters of Madyan, he found a large number of people watering [their animals] and found, aloof from them, two women withholding their animals. He said, "What is the matter with you?" They replied, "We cannot water [our animals] until these shepherds take [their animals] back after watering them, and our father is a very old man." So he

watered [their animals] for them, then turned to a shade and said, "My Lord, I am in need of whatever good you send down to me." Then one of the two women came to him, walking bashfully. She said, "My father is calling you, so that he may give you a reward for watering our animals." So when he [Musa, peace be upon him] came to him [the father of the women, i.e. Shu'ayb, peace be upon him] and narrated to him the whole story, the latter said, "Do not fear; you have escaped from the wrongdoing people." One of the two women said, "Dear father, hire him; the best man you can hire is someone who is strong and trustworthy." He [the father] said [to Musa], "I wish to marry one of these two daughters of mine to you on condition that you act as my employee for eight years. Then if you complete ten [years], it will be of your own accord. And I do not want to put you in any trouble; you will find me, God-willing, one of the righteous." (Qur'an: 28:23-27)

Furthermore, Sahl ibn Sa'd (Allah be pleased with him) relates that a woman came to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and offered herself to him [for marriage]. He said, "I do not have any need for women right now." A man said, "O Messenger of Allah, marry her to me!" He asked, "Do you have anything [to give as dowry]?" He replied, "I do not have anything." The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Give something to her, even if only an iron ring." He said, "I do not have anything." So the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked, "Do you know any portion of the Qur'an?" He said, "Such-and-such." He said, "I have married her to you for what you know of the Qur'an." (Sahih al-Bukhari, no: 5141)

Sayyiduna Thabit al-Bunani (Allah be pleased with him) relates that I was in the company of Anas (Allah be

pleased with him) while his daughter was with him. Anas said, "A woman came to the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) offering herself to him [in marriage] and said, "O Messenger of Allah, do you have any need of me?" [Upon hearing this], the daughter of Anas said, "How immodest is she! Shame! Shame!" Anas said, "She is better than you! She desired the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and so offered herself to him." (Sahih al-Bukhari, no: 4828)

These two Hadiths clearly establish the permissibility of a woman proposing marriage to a man. Indeed, the females offered themselves to the best of creation (Allah bless him & give him peace); however, it is not specific with him (Allah bless him & give him peace). It is for this reason that Imam al-Bukhari (Allah have mercy on him) chose to name the chapter in which he records these Hadiths: "A woman offering herself to a *righteous* man" signifying that a woman may propose marriage to any righteous and suitable man.

Imam al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (Allah have mercy on him) states in his commentary, *Fath al-Bari*:

"These two Hadiths indicate the permissibility of a woman offering herself to a [righteous] man for marriage and informing him of her desire to marry him, and there is no disgrace in doing so." (Fath al-Bari, 9/219)

As such, in conclusion, it is perfectly acceptable for a woman's family to propose marriage. Likewise, it is not indecent or disgraceful for a woman to desire a man for his righteousness, piety and good character, and thus propose marriage to him as long as it is done through the proper channels and without violating any rules of Shari'ah.

And Allah knows best

Courtesy: ilmgate.org

What the World Lost Due to Decline of Islamic Civilization

By Dr Asad Zaman

This is a brief English Summary of “Ma Za Khasr Al-Alam Bil Inhitatil Muslimeen”, a book which highlights the contributions of Islam to the world, and the loss the world has suffered due to the decline of Islam, and has been translated into many languages. It is essential reading for every Muslim. The English Book authored by Syed Abul-Hassan Ali Nadwi is titled: *Islam and the World: The Rise and Decline of Muslims and Its Effect on Mankind*

This book is of central conceptual importance in serving as a basis for the revival of the Islamic Civilization. It explains the revolution which Islam brought to the world, and how the rise of Islam had beneficial impacts on spreading values of mercy, compassion, justice and tolerance, throughout the world. Similarly, the decline of Islam had adverse effects as these enlightened values were replaced by the darkness of ignorance which currently surrounds us. The history of humanity is seen from an Islamic framework, as the rise and fall of civilizations, governed by rules emanating from Divine Guidance and Justice of Allah ﷻ, based on the laws explained in the Quran, but now forgotten by Muslims.

The book is divided into eight chapters, which are briefly outlined below. Reading through this brief will give the reader an idea of how the book is structured, and its central arguments.

Chapter 1: Darkness in the World, before the Advent of Islam

The book uses historical details to show that darkness reigned everywhere. The empires of Rome, Persia, China, and India, were entrenched in power games, exploitation of power and the weak, perpetual wars, and could provide no hope of improvement for the future of humanity. The light of religion and philosophies which provide higher visions had themselves been corrupted, and held no prospect of providing guidance to mankind. All dimensions of human existence had become corrupt, and mankind had sunk to depths of darkness.

Chapter 2: The Advent of Prophet Mohammad ﷺ

The Mission of Islam was to provide guidance in every dimension of life, to restore humanity to the respect, dignity, and higher purpose for which man was created. This extremely difficult task was accomplished by the powerful message of Islam, realized in the life of the best of human beings, and translated from theory into practical and living reality with the help of the Companions رضي الله عنهم who became fully devoted to this mission. The first step of the mission was to reject false gods, and to re-acquaint the hearts of men with the One True Living and Responsive God (M'aarifat). After suitable training and sufficient efforts, the Companions رضي الله عنهم learned that our God is Kind, Merciful, Compassionate, responds

to our prayers, and is also all Powerful, with complete knowledge of what is observable and what is hidden, as well as the past and the future. This knowledge created an inner spiritual revolution, and led to a complete transformation in their character. This transformation removed divisive tribal loyalties, pride, envy, and a host of negative and harmful characteristics, and replaced them with virtuous characteristics like unity, justice, compassion, and social responsibility, which are loved by God. The community of the Companions ﷺ was infused with a powerful sense of mission, to spread this precious treasure, in order to free mankind from the bondage of false gods and earthly powers, and bring them to the liberation of Islam, and worship of the One True God.

Chapter 3: Era of Muslim Ascendance

After receiving deep training from our Prophet Mohammad ﷺ, the process of spreading this revolutionary message throughout the world to all of humanity created a revolution in World History. Muslims rose to ascendance not for the sake of personal glory or wealth, but to liberate mankind from their chains, and to acquaint them with their kind, merciful, and compassionate God, who is all-powerful and all-knowing. The dominance of the Muslims created a civilization which was a Mercy for all Mankind. There were several unique characteristics of the Islamic Civilization which differentiated it from others:

They had received complete and perfect guidance from the Quran and the Sunnah regarding the good and the bad, the form and spirit of the law in all dimensions of human existence. They did not need to philosophize or speculate on these matters.

The training they had received purified them of the desire for worldly riches and fame. Instead, they sought leadership in order to serve humanity and guide them towards their own welfare.

They had absorbed the idea that all human beings are brothers, without discrimination by race, language, or geography. All were joined in bonds of love and fraternity within the Islamic civilization.

They had learned how to combine concerns of the *Akhirah* (the world to come) with the concerns of *Dunya* (this world). They were not *Rahibs* – who sought to isolate themselves from worldly concerns. Instead they made engagement with this World the means of achieving closeness to God.

Because of these characteristics, the rise, ascendance, dominance, and spread of the Islamic civilization was a blessing for all of humanity. A living model of virtuous living attracted all of mankind towards it. Large numbers of people converted to Islam, not because of any compulsion, but because of the attractive characteristics of Islam. Those who did not accept Islam were nonetheless influenced by Islamic values which appeal to the hearts of men.

Chapter 4: The Decline of Islamic Civilization

It is difficult to determine or date the decline of Islam, since it is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. The ascendance of Islam was due to two principle characteristics. One was *Ijtihad* – that is applying the canonical body of Islamic teachings to the solution of ever-new and ever-fresh problems in a creative way, conforming to the spirit of Islam and also resolving the modern problem at hand. The second was *Jihad* – that was the struggle to implement the teachings of Islam in our personal lives, in our communities, in the nations and the Muslims, and for all of humanity. These principles – the knowledge of Islam, and an engaged commitment to its implementation in the real world – were gradually abandoned by the rulers and the populace. The rulers strayed from the principles, and imported philosophies of Greeks – complex and sophisticated illusions – spread through the land. This decay emboldened enemies, and the Crusades struck at the heart of the Islamic world, capturing Jerusalem. Somewhat later, the Tatars attacked and razed Badghad, and destroyed vast storehouses of knowledge by burning libraries and killing the scholars. In all times there were efforts at revival by many. The leadership of the Islamic world passed to the Turks and the Tartars, but after a period of glory, they also declined, becoming the sick man of Europe. Meanwhile, as the Islamic

Civilization was going into decline, the Europeans were awakening after a long period of darkness and ignorance. (There can be no doubt that this awakening was due to Islamic influence, even though this is suppressed in European accounts, due to severe bias against Islam).

Chapter 5: The Rise of the West and its Effects

Greek and Roman Roots: After the decline of the Turks, world leadership passed to the Europeans. To understand European culture, and its effects on the World, we have to go back to Greek and Roman culture, which was their heritage. Greek culture and philosophy was based on four central ingredients: (1) Focus on the observable sensations and rejection of the unseen. (2) Absence of spirituality. (3) Emphasis on the life of this world. (4) Extreme nationalistic tendencies. The other source of European culture was Rome. While Rome was better organized militarily and in terms of administration and governance, but they were behind Greece in philosophy and culture, and had very flexible religious beliefs. As a result, there was no barrier to the pursuit of pleasure, which became the religion of the elites, destroying all concepts of moral conduct.

Rise and fall of Christianity: The ascent of Constantine and his conversion to Christianity created a change by making Christianity a state religion, but this came at a great cost to the religion. The official religion of Christianity was substantially influenced by other dominant philosophies and ideologies of the time and became a strange and incongruous mix of conflicting ideas. In particular, there was an extreme tilt towards renunciation of this world, and adoption of ideals so high as to be impossible for ordinary mortals. This is in stark contrast with Islam which teaches moderation, and encourages enjoyment of permissible pleasures of life. Setting impossible ideals led to widespread hypocritical behavior among church leaders – seeking luxuries and pleasures while preaching renunciation. This led to a split in the Church, and eventually widespread rejection of religion, first among the intellectuals and later among the general public. This led to the emergence of secular modernity, which is now the dominant religion of the West. This

philosophy confined traditional religion to the personal sphere, and made materialism and pursuit of pleasures the purpose of human existence.

Emergence of Nationalism: The shattered unity of the Catholic Church, and constant religious warfare led to the emergence of Nationalism as a new source for uniting people into a community. Unfortunately, Nationalism is based on hatred and fear of the others, and pride and prejudice for one's own – all of these emotions are strongly condemned and rejected by Islam. The rise of Nations, and the rejection of religion has led to the disappearance of morals on the international arena. The laws of the jungle prevail, where the power to destroy confers the right to destroy. On the world stage, in plain sight, millions of innocents are killed, hospitals, schools, power plants and factories are bombed, and countries reduced to ruins, without any moral outrage. With the heart and morals removed, only cold rational calculations of profit and loss matter, and if it is necessary to kill a million children to achieve your goals, this is permissible, according to modern Western morality. Today we see the effects of degeneration of moral standards in terms of increasing inequality, with trillions being spent on wars and destruction, while billions who could be fed, clothed, housed and educated with these funds are left to spend lives of misery and poverty

Chapter 6: Losses due to Western Leadership of the World

The world leadership of the West has led to the spread of their ideas, philosophies, and ways of looking at the world. This has had extremely harmful and damaging effects.

The complete disappearance of religion from view; the questions of what happens after death; the definition of good and bad; can there be higher purposes in life, above and beyond materialistic concerns – these have been removed from the public intellectual arena. As a whole, the West has lost spiritual sensibilities; just as the blind cannot see, so those who consider spirituality as non-existent cannot develop sensibilities in this dimension. This has had grave

consequences in terms of increases in destructive and barbaric behavior.

Whereas Islam created the desire to search for God, the West has defined this as a meaningless pursuit, and has turned the world to the search for gold as only meaningful purpose of life. In times of Islam, the public flocked to the scholars and Sufis in search of knowledge of the higher ways of the mind and the heart. Seekers of God are few and far between. Living intellectual and spiritual traditions which trained people for excellence and expertise are in danger of dying out, because they do not attract sufficient students.

The worship of gold has become the central religion of the World. Everyone seeks to make more money, and respect for people is in accordance with how much money they have. However, as explained in the Quran and Hadeeth, the search for Dunya is self-defeating, because as you get more, you desire even more. As a result, everyone is discontent; including millionaires, who still do not think they have enough money for financial security.

Massive decline in standards of morality throughout the World

The Western empire is built on colonization and merciless exploitation of all resources human and natural, with incredible cruelty and brutality (colonial atrocities). As they say, "all is fair in love and war", meaning that in pursuit of pleasure, and in treatment of enemies, no moral considerations apply. This is in radical contrast with Islam. Since Jihad is actually a form of worship, extremely stringent standards of moral behavior are applicable to it from the early days of Islam. However, as the West led the way towards moral degeneration, the rest of the World, including Muslims, have followed in its tracks.

As the pursuit of pleasure and luxury became the purpose of life, putting in effort and hardship to acquire knowledge and experience, especially spiritual and moral, was abandoned. People started seeking the easy life, instead of learning austerity and self-denial required for the pursuit of deep knowledge. Even reading on a large scale, which is necessary to benefit from the vast

collective past knowledge and experience of mankind, was abandoned.

Chapter 7: The Revival of Islam

We have seen that in the 6th Century AD, all paths of guidance had been corrupted, and the world was heading towards destruction, the message of Islam came and created a revolution in history. The day and night effort of our Prophet Mohammad ﷺ transformed the Companions رضي الله عنهم, and created a community which spread the light of Islam throughout the world. Their efforts changed the course of history, and their ideals enlightened the world. Gradually, decay and degeneration set in, and the light of the message began to dim within the Islamic Civilization. As Islam declined, the West gained power and ascendancy over the world. However, the West had no Message or Mission regarding the welfare of the mankind. Their sole message was selfish pursuit of pleasure, power, wealth, under the savage laws of the jungle, with cut-throat competition as the mechanism for survival of the fittest. Today, the vast majority of the population in the planet is living in poverty and misery, downtrodden and oppressed, with no voices to speak for them.

The message of the West, pursuit of power and pleasure without moral constraints, is spread throughout the world, without any opposition. Today, there is no ideological warfare going on – all have succumbed to this poisonous message. The continuous warfare which envelopes the planet is being carried out by the rich and powerful against the weak and powerless, according to the laws of the jungle. What is surprising is that bearers of the last message have also accepted these ideologies, directly contrary to Islamic values, and are enthusiastic admirers and supporters of the West. Today, an individualistic search for material welfare, wealth, and luxury, has become universally accepted. Muslims lead lives focused on the same goals as the non-Muslims.

In this era of darkness, if there is any hope of revival from humanity, it is from the message of Islam. Despite time and distance, the message which revolutionized the world is still alive in the hearts of the Muslims. The philosophies of the West have led to wars, looming environmental

catastrophes, breakup of families and communities, billions living in extreme poverty while a handful hold extreme wealth. Islam offers the only solution to the problems facing all of humanity today. But there are many preliminary steps required to effectively implement these solutions.

Allah T'aala does not change the condition of nations until they change themselves. The first step must be to create an inner transformation within ourselves. Spiritual progress depends on purifying our hearts of the love of worldly things, and re-awakening the flame of the love of Allah T'aala, His Messenger ﷺ, and His Deen. It is not sufficient that a few individuals have these qualities; rather spiritual strength must be created on a large scale in the general public. Furthermore, self-sufficiency must be created to eliminate material dependence on the West. The most important requirement is the re-vitalization of flames of Islamic knowledge, based on the Quran and the Sunnah, which have been lost and forgotten.

Chapter 8: Arab Leadership

The original book was written in Arabic, and the

last chapter was a special appeal to Arabs to revive those characteristics which led Allah T'aala to choose them, from among all the nations, to be the bearers of His Final Message. They sacrificed everything – homes, comfort, families, businesses – for the sake of this precious Deen. Their sacrifices enlightened the world and ended the age of darkness and ignorance. Syed Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi رحمه الله exhorts the Arabs to pick up this burden once again, as the whole of the Ummah is looking towards them for leadership. Those hands which have built and guarded the Ka'ba are called upon to once again save humanity from the precipice it is facing by sacrificing their all to revive the traditions of Islam and to spread it to the world. This message remains just as powerful today as it was 1400 years ago, and awaits our efforts to understand and implement it.



Love

Dhu'l Nun al Masri رحمه الله was asked about love. He responded:

“It is to love that which Allah loves,
to hate that which Allah hates,
to perform all good,
to reject everything that busies you from Allah,
and not to fear any blame for the sake of Allah,
while being gentle with believers, stern with disbelievers,
and to follow the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) in matters of religion.”

The Reality of Trials

Allah's ﷻ Prescription (Wazeefa) is Better,

These days everyone is impatient, so charmers remain crowded. Their business of selling charms and amulets is doing great. Lots of people visit them to get 'paid-for' solutions to their problems. My friends, Allah has also given us a prescription, which is to become patient, and Allah's ﷻ help will come alongside. Is this prescription difficult to understand? Another prescription given by Allah ﷻ is:

"...And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty)."

(Surah At-Talaq 65: 2)

Take stock of yourself and proclaim liberation from sins, Allah ﷻ will show you a way out of every difficulty. Since these are times of impatience, trust in Allah ﷻ has diminished; the resolve to weed out sins has weakened; today's Muslim wants that he should keep sinning and alongside, Allah's blessings shall shower upon him.

This is what he reflects through his practice. Oblivious of consequences, he keeps sinning, but still believes that a few prescriptions (of the charmer) will get me through. That is why these charmers are flooded by people.

No one cares if any of such a 'Pir' (priest) is a polytheist or an infidel, whether he promotes heresy and is fiddling with his religion, whether he

is destroying both his worldly life and his faith – no one cares about these things. All they care about is getting a prescription.

The Holy Quran is packed with prescriptions and its actual prescription is 'following it' – one has to follow the Quran and change one's life. Since we live in times of impatience, no one tries to analyze whether a problem that comes about is a consequence of my sins? That is why we keep regressing, no one thinks about these things.

So Hazrat Ayub عليه السلام said to his wife: *why did you say I will ask and let you know? Why didn't you display the honour of your faith? Once I get well, I will surely punish you with a hundred lashes.*

After seventeen years, Allah ﷻ returned him his good health, children and wealth. Now he planned to fulfill his vow.

When Allah ﷻ accepts someone's *Taubah* (repentance), He shows them solutions too. Allah ﷻ told Hazrat Ayub عليه السلام *to forgive her and collect a hundred bits of straw, make a bundle of them and hit your wife with it once, so your vow will be fulfilled.* Hazrat Ayub عليه السلام was one of Allah's most favoured people, yet, he spent his entire life in patience.

Hazrat Imran Bin Hasain's Exemplary Patience

Hazrat Imran Bin Hasain عليه السلام remained lying in bed for thirty-three years. He couldn't turn left or right, he relieved himself there and he prayed there. But, whenever someone visited to inquire

about his health, they would see his face shining like the moon. People would say: you, in this condition? He ﷺ would reply: If Allah ﷻ wishes this for me, then I am content with His wish through my heart and soul.

When Hazrat Ayub ﷺ recovered, people would ask him, how did you find your condition of illness? And how do you like it now? He said health is a favour from Allah ﷻ and so is sickness. But there is one thing: when I was ill, Allah ﷻ would ask me in the morning: how are you, Ayub? I miss the pleasure and elation I felt at this inquiry.

Trials of a Momin are a Sign of Faith

This world is a combination of these good and bad situations; we will face both kinds in this world. It isn't possible to remain healthy or to have conditions that suit you all the time; adversities will surely and definitely occur but I need to think about how to foster my relationship with Allah ﷻ in both these states?

A Sahabia ﷺ (Companion) had heard through her husband that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had said: *whoever loves me should get prepared to face trials; because trials will come upon him like water rushes forth towards a slope.*

This lady got married, spent a long time with her husband; she lived a happy life – her husband loved her and she him. She would take good care of him.

One night, her husband asked her for water and she brought it. Her husband asked: *tell me what you want?* This Sahabia replied: *I want you to give me one divorce! (Allah-u-Akbar!) Now, the husband got worried and asked: are you facing any problems? Am I not fulfilling your rights properly? Please tell me what is the matter? She said, no, nothing is the matter. Since you asked me 'what do you want', so I said I want divorce.*

Now, both of them decided that they will go to the Prophet ﷺ and ask him what to do and take his advice. The next day, this lady and her husband started out of their home to meet the Prophet ﷺ. On their way, her husband tripped and fell and blood oozed out of his leg. The lady quickly wiped out her husband's blood with her shawl and told him, *let's go back home, I don't want divorce.* The husband said: *fine, if you don't want it then let's go back.* On their way back, the

husband asked: *at least tell me why did you change your mind? The wife said: the truth is that since the day I have come to your house, I have not seen you face a single trial in your life and you had told me that the Prophet ﷺ has said whoever truly loves Allah's Prophet will face trials; I felt apprehensive, that if Allah doesn't love you, how will I spend my life with you? And if you truly love Allah's Prophet then why have you not come across a problem? Now that a trial has come upon you, I am satisfied that your love for Allah's Prophet is true.*

Incredible Thinking

What I am trying to say is that this too is a way of thinking. Who thinks in this incredible way? Where is that woman who thinks that if her life is purified of sins, then trials too are a source of elevation, for attaining nearness to Allah ﷻ, and triumph in the Hereafter.

The Prophet's ﷺ Precious Advice

When this verse of the Holy Quran was revealed: *"...whosoever works evil, will have the recompense thereof,"* (Surah An-Nisa 4: 123)

Hazrat Abu Bakr ﷺ said:

"O Allah's Prophet! Happiness is no more because Allah ﷻ has said that whoever errs or blunders, he will be punished. O Prophet of Allah! There can never be happiness after this verse. Who is free of faltering? Mistakes do happen."

The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied:

"Siddiq! When you fall sick, then too your sins are forgiven, when you trip, then too your mistakes are forgiven, when you are pained, then too your minor mistakes are forgiven. Against every problem that you face, one or the other of your mistakes is forgiven so that when you go to Allah ﷻ, you go completely purified from all sins." (Tirmidhi, with reference to Ahya-ul-uloom, Vol.4, Pg.175)

The Real Standard of Allah's ﷻ Pleasure

Let me relate a happening.

One person is obedient to Allah and another is disobedient. Both go for fishing. One throws in the fishing net with the name of his idols and gets

a lot of fish; the other mentions Allah's name and flings the net and he doesn't get a single one. He keeps trying till the evening. The one disobedient to Allah, who pleads to others than Allah, brings back a bag full of fish and the one who believes in Allah, comes back with an empty bag. Allah's Angel ("Karaman Katibeen" – The angel that notes people's deeds), becomes sad and says: *O Allah! The one who takes Your name is returning empty-handed and the one who mentions names of Your enemies is bringing back a bag full of fish.* At this, Allah ﷻ shows the Angel the final abode of these two in the Hereafter and says: *See! The one who is bringing the bag full of fish, his resting place is Hell. What use are his fish? And the one who is returning empty-handed, his abode is Paradise, and nothing can better it.*

Tanbeeh-ul-Ghafilien, Pg.120)

Just like we say: 'they are so disobedient, yet they are having fun'; 'these ones are very obedient, yet they face hardships. Allah's standard of favour and appreciation is different, He ﷻ is Al-Hakeem, The Wise.

Fulfillment of Wishes Does Not Indicate Approbation

An incident is quoted in books: a Christian and a Muslim were on their death beds. In his state of illness, the Christian wished in his heart to have some fish meat. Allah ﷻ told an Angel, *go and put a fish in the pond of this person's home, so that his wish is fulfilled.* In the last moments of his life, the Muslim craved in his heart for some olive

oil. Allah ﷻ ordered an Angel: *go spill the olive oil that is placed in his cupboard.*

Allah ﷻ has commanded that the Christian's wish be fulfilled and the Muslim's olive oil be spilled! The Angel said: *Your command is for the Ummah's ease. Please elaborate on its rationale too so that the Ummah learns a lesson, humanity learns a lesson.*

Allah ﷻ says: *This Christian, one good deed of his remains unpaid, from a worldly point of view. I want to repay him for this good deed in the world and when he comes to Me, there should be nothing save Hell for him. And as far as this Muslim is concerned, there remains one ill-deed in his account; I want to raze his wish. And he endures it and when he comes to Me, there should be nothing save Paradise for him.*

The Need for Self-Accountability

This is Allah's system. That is why we must take stock of ourselves to classify upcoming problems. If with Allah's Grace, your life is patterned on seeking forgiveness, you are not disobedient to Allah SWT and yet you face trials, then no need to worry: Allah is 'granting' you through this mode too. Then you should thank Allah ﷻ, that despite our wickedness and sinfulness, Allah ﷻ keeps showering His blessings upon us; we can't thank Allah, The Rahim, enough.

I pray, that more than what we hear and say, Allah ﷻ blesses us in practicing it. (Aameen)

Patience

Dhul Nun رضي الله عنه said, "Patience is to keep away from acts of disobedience to God, to be calm while swallowing pangs of distress, and to show independence even when poverty afflicts you in your daily life."

Ibn 'Ata رضي الله عنه said, "Patience is to dwell in tribulation with the best of conduct."

Yahya ibn Mu'adh رضي الله عنه said, "The patience of lovers is harder than that of ascetics. I am amazed at how they keep patient!"

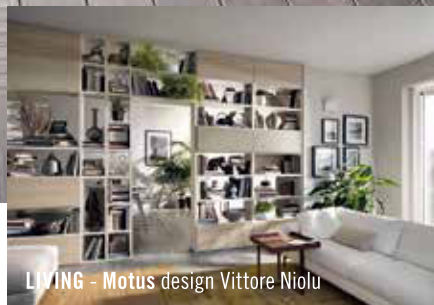
Ruwaym رضي الله عنه said, "Patience is to cease complaining."

Abu 'Ali al Daqqaq رضي الله عنه said, "The definition of patience is that one does not resist what destiny has ordained."

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The Message and the Messengers

By Zawjah Zia

A friend recently suggested having a look at a certain blog which cites inspirational stories of people who reverted to Islam or those Muslims who had taken the 'good' turn in life and had become more 'deen-wise'. It indeed was an exposure packed with loads of inspiration and nutrition for one's *Iman*; *SubhanAllah*, the tremendous ways Allah ﷻ guides His slaves in.

Something remarkably similar about all those beautiful stories of change was that the inner awakenings of the hearts of all these people, without fail, coincided with external (human) factors. It was always a friend, a teacher, a neighbor, a family member, a professional preacher or just a stranger they came across who played a key role in that process of their transformation; sometimes in favor of the process and at other times against it too.

Quran *Majeed* mentions a *du'a* made by Ibrahim عليه السلام:

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Our Lord, make us not [objects of] torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise." (Al Mumtahanah: 5)

The books of *Tafseer* point out one of the ways to understand this *du'a*; it is that the believers are taught to seek Allah's refuge from showing such a character which becomes a (fitna) trial for the non-believers in a sense that it drives them further away from Allah ﷻ and His *deen*. It sure is an important *du'a* to make, especially in today's intermingled world.

But then, don't most of us Muslims have our own stories of change too? Don't we all have some events, some moments, some people and some ideas that have moulded us into who we are? Sure we do. But interestingly, while the effect of Muslims' demeanour upon non-Muslims is easily highlighted, that of a Muslim upon a fellow-Muslim is often easily muted and ignored. Not to say, it is an extremely stressed upon *Sunnah* teaching.

Mu'adh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه would pray with the Prophet ﷺ and then go to lead his people in prayer. Once he was leading the prayer while reciting Surah Al-Baqarah. A man left the prayer and offered his prayer separately and he went away. When Mu'adh رضي الله عنه heard about him, he said, "He is a hypocrite!" Later, the man heard what Mu'adh had said about him, so he came to the Prophet ﷺ and he said, "O Messenger of Allah, we are people who work with our hands and irrigate with our camels. Last night Mu'adh led us in prayer while reciting Surah Al-Baqarah for such a long time that I offered my prayer separately, so for that he accused me of hypocrisy." The Prophet ﷺ called Mu'adh رضي الله عنه

and he said to him three times, "O Mu'adh! Are you putting people to trial? (Why don't you) recite: By the sun and its brightness (Ash-Shams). Or recite: Glorified is the name of your Lord the Exalted." (Al-A'la)" (Bukhari)

Though this person here committed the fault of fleeing from the congregational prayer, still, according to the beloved Prophet ﷺ, the mistake of this revered Companion رضي الله عنه was greater in gravity as it could make these common people flee from the *deen* of Allah ﷻ. Who so lovingly invites us to flee towards Him.

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ

So run to Allah....(Ad-Dhaariyaat: 50)
Sending off Sayyidina Mu'adh ibn Jabal (RAU) and Moosa Ash'ari (RAU) to Yemen, the beloved Prophet ﷺ instructed:

يَسِّرَا وَلَا تَعْسِرَا، وَبَشِّرَا وَلَا تُنْقِرَا

....make it easy (for people) and do not make it difficult (for them), give good tidings and do not run people away.....(Bukhari)

In a similar incident, a man complained to the Prophet ﷺ saying that he went to the Fajr Salah very late because their Imam lengthened the Salah so much. Upon this too, the beloved Prophet ﷺ, the speaker of the words that 'the most difficult prayer for a hypocrite is the morning prayer', and someone who was extremely passionate about Salah and professed the same for us, became visibly annoyed and then began addressing people saying:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُنْقِرِينَ -

O people, indeed amongst you are those who chase people away (from the *deen* of Allah).....(Bukhari)

The question might arise here that what should then be the criterion for the ones genuinely wishing to call people to Allah ﷻ or to at least

not be a reason that someone draws away from Allah ﷻ? Should the actual message be compromised upon just to lure people in? Shouldn't the power of this noble message called Islam, over-power the tools it is transferred through? Not really.

Allah ﷻ addresses the best of all His creation; the mercy for all the-worlds:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have dispersed from about you. (Al-e-Imran:159)

What's noteworthy here is the order of two words *fadhhan* and *ghaleez-al-qalb*. The priority of order has been given to being rude in speech and then comes the harshness of the heart. This is the sublimity of *Kalaam-Allah*; of course if there's rudeness in someone's speech, no matter how supreme is the message that they are carrying and how noble the intentions in their heart, the bitter words won't let anyone come near them, let alone benefit from the message they wanted to deliver. Similarly, the outward manners are the very first tools of interaction. If a person is ill-mannered outwardly, it would be next to impossible to bring people to pay heed to what he has to say.

Allah ﷻ Says:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good advice. (An-Nahl: 125)

It is the mannerism of the messenger that this verse is talking about, not the message itself. The power of this message is not even debatable. But the thing is that eventually, people are not really able to differentiate between the message and

the messenger. The image of the messenger becomes the image of the message.

The material reality of a human being is merely that 'clinging clay' or 'stinking mud' as the Quran puts it. It was only after Allah ﷻ breathed into him of His Spirit, that even the angels were commanded to bow down in respect before Adam ﷺ and he and his progeny were honoured with the title of being *Khaleefatullah*. Advancing this same thought, the *Ulama* have explained that the actual nobility of a human being lies in valuing the spirit within and trying to be like his supreme Lord ﷻ; trying to attain His attributes. And what attribute of Allah ﷻ could ever supersede His mercy and compassion? Surely, gentleness, mercy and compassion need to be the most dominant attributes of a *Momin* too.

If, Allah-forbid, I am one of those people whose manners and character drive people away from Allah ﷻ and His deen, then who shall be the first people I'd repel? My family, my children and my near and dear ones of course! And then the effect would expand and widen into the successive circles of my life, seeping into each and every role that I play.

Psychologists deem that the way a person views and relates to the figures of authority in one's life, is the very way he'd subconsciously be viewing God. So whether I am a parent, an elder, a teacher, an imam or a *mufti*, my gentle manners can be my automatic *da'wah* and my harshness can be pushing people away from Allah ﷻ without anyone realizing it. And the damage done is humungous. Just imagine, for example, the amount of social pressure our youth is facing lately; with the world demonizing their religion, calling it brutal, insensitive and obsolete *Nauzubillah*. The same youth, when he returns home, he finds that dad is antagonistic; mom is really hard-to-please and remains itchy even after you've said sorry for your mistake; that certain

'religious' relative thinks everyone disagreeing with him is going to Hell; the Imam at the Masjid never smiles and it is so convenient for people with religious knowledge to brand others as disbelievers, innovators and deviants – do you think then that any lecture about Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem and Al-Wudood can undo this damage?

If this beautiful Quran is given to people in an angry way instead of helping them view it as their solace in life, if Salah is put upon children like a scary burden instead of a loving connection with the Lord, if going to the *madrassah* is made to sound like revenge on a rebellious youth, if *Shari'ah* and *Sunnah* only mean a set of restrictions instead of a beautiful shelter from the

evils of the world and if *Fatwa* becomes a mere tool for authority over the masses, then who is going to bridge the gap between these attitudes and the ever-smiling noble face of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his immensely merciful and compassionate mannerism?

Each one of us is a messenger, carrying forward the message from the Messenger ﷺ, about whom the worst of sinners and even the animals knew that they could lean on him!

May Allah ﷻ help us to be the best messengers of His noble message, and may we always be milestones of someone's journey towards Allah ﷻ, not away from Him. Aameen.

Perfect Repentance

Hakim al Umma Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Allah have mercy on him) said instructing a seeker,

There are five components of perfect repentance (*tauba-e kamila*),

1. Acknowledgement of the wrongdoing
2. Feeling remorse for this
3. Asking forgiveness
4. Reaffirming determination not to do it again
5. Planning for rectification (*Islah*) [of the blameworthy morals that led to indulgence in it].

- *Husn al Aziz*, volume 1, part 2, p 152



Education: Islamic Concepts and Modern Society

By Prof. Syed Ali Ashraf (Late)

Modernization and Muslim Society

In a modern society it becomes difficult to plan education on the basis of this metaphysics because people doubt, challenge and even break down the age-old assumptions of society. A society exists as a unified body only for so long as its members give unquestioned assent to those assumptions and regard them as the basis of their code of life including a code of beliefs and ethics. This code or set of doctrines they become accustomed to. T.E. Hulme says society regards them as 'inevitable categories of the human mind'. Men do not evaluate them merely as correct opinions, for they have become so much a part of the mind, and lie so far back, that they are never really conscious of them at all. They do not see them, but see other things through them. It is these abstract ideas at the centre, the things which they take for granted, that characterize a period.

It is this focal centre which has been shattered in the West. 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' as W.B. Yeats predicted in *The Second Coming* as early as the early thirties (of the Twentieth Century). The main cause of this state of affairs is the prevalence and the dominance of the scientific attitude in all spheres of life. With a 'gaze as blank and pitiless as the sun,' to quote Yeats again, this mysterious sphinx had attacked all concepts of God, Man and Nature and created a nightmare of confusion. This scientific attitude is very different from that of the ancient Greeks and early Muslim thinkers. The Greek and Muslim approach to knowledge including all sciences was ontological. Science, according to Aristotle, is 'knowledge not only of fact but of reasoned fact'. Its aim is not merely to record observable connections in nature and calculate them in mathematical terms, but also and mainly to

account for observable phenomena and throw light on their relations to their causes. Metaphysics reaches this end when it explains the universe through God, Mathematics, when it defines the properties of a triangle through its definitions, and, natural philosophy when it explains change through efficient and final causes. Modern science aims not at ontological but at empirical knowledge. A modern scientific attitude is the product of controlled observation and analysis, spread over several centuries, of the processes of external nature and, of the last one and a half century, into the characteristics of Man's inner nature. It denies the validity of the method of ontological sciences and believes in controlled observation, experimentation and generalisation. Hence a scientist depends on observable reality for his material for investigation and on his intellect alone for his conclusions. He is sceptical towards any kind of subjective and emotional realisation. That is why Freud's psychological theories are the results of an intellectual systematization of observable human behaviour.

Because of this method, a scientist cannot conceive through his methodology a supreme being who can intervene in time and space and whose will is manifested in this universe. Though he acknowledges the fact that results of scientific investigations are still incomplete, the sum total of achievements does not indicate that the universe is entirely dependent on the mercy of an omnipotent being. On the other hand science has discovered that there are 'fixed laws in the universe which no omnipotent being seems to disturb'. Scientific attitude and methodology, therefore, cannot help man in accepting relevance as the basic source of knowledge about God, Man and Nature and their interrelationship.

Similarly, the universality and permanence of Man's nature as a human being are not acceptable from a scientific point of view because of the application of the theory of evolution to all spheres of life. The spiritual aspect of Man's nature is ignored and rejected. Man is regarded as a biological and a social phenomenon. Biologically he is treated as an animal and predictable data are collected and sorted out regarding the evolution of this species and its

behaviour. Sociologically he is treated as a quantifiable unit which goes on changing along with changes in the external circumstances that govern a society. All values are considered as relative and not absolute. They are the products of society therefore they cannot be examined from a reformer's viewpoint. A reformer has a point of reference, a universal and an objective norm. A sociologist does not believe in any such norms. God is eliminated from consideration, therefore the immutability of the attributes of God are regarded as some metaphysical theories formulated by Man in some period of human history. The modern sociologist terms this change in society as secularisation which he believes is the greatest contribution of modern science to human history. Secularisation they define as the deliverance of Man 'first from religious and then from Metaphysical control over his reason and his language. Secularisation has thus brought about 'the disenchantment of nature', 'the desacralisation of politics' and 'the deconsecration of values'. Just as Nature is separated from the will of God, Man is 'freed' from the restrictive demands of religious laws and has the power in the West to make and remake laws according to the changing conditions of the society. By separating values from their religious source (God and His attributes), the process of secularisation has destroyed the concept of Man's nobility and grandeur, his idea of Kalifatullāh and the objective and universal norm by which Man could be judged. A true secularist-modernist does not draw any distinction between the universal and absolute and the local and relative; between revealed knowledge (that a Muslim regards as a direct gift of God) and acquired knowledge (that human intelligence and imagination have succeeded in accumulating). For such a secularist even accumulated knowledge of the past, as Professor John Vaizy has shown in *Education in the Modern World*, however graded and classified it may have been, is wanting in relevance in modern society. This lack of relevance is what the secularist-modernist tries to justify.

To be continued, insha'Allah.

UNLESS YOU DO

By Eeman Zubair

Mind not those hours lengthy and onerous
Which utmost efforts have engaged
Mind not periods of exacting rigor
Which led to legacies being made

Mind not such moments which demand
The entire beings' concentration
Mind not those arduous days that stretch
Without promise of vacation

The hands of man were created so
For his endeavours to be sewn
His legs and feet were created so,
For perilous paths to be worn

The very mind in his head resides
To puzzle out challenge or query
The consistent rhythm of struggles it beats,
Makes his very heart weary

Fear not, thus, your encounters with hardship
The crusades of your soul
For honest attempts and resolution combined
Allows man to reach his goal

Subdue not, hence, your spirit with tensions unneeded
Or with notions of fruitless toil
For the beads of sweat trickling down your back
Will plant fragrant blooms in the soil

Yet has humankind to behold someone
Whose prosperity came before the pain
The man tripped with hurdles who stood upright,
Is the man with the ultimate gain

The voyage to excellence is rarely smooth
So hard work you must imbue
In your spirit always, for the law of life is
Summits cannot be scaled unless you do

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These Fingers Don't Wrinkle

By Hafsa Kamal

The first time it sinks in is when you have to hold them. Their soft satin skin glides on the tip of your fingers and you think, *'So precious. So fragile. All mine.'*

Those were the first thoughts I had when I looked at the scrunched up face of my first born. His eyes were crinkled with his gaping mouth widened in worry. The innocence flashed in his face as the oblivious obscurity of the orbiting world didn't register in his mind. It'd take time.

Those weren't the only words which ran through my head. I was mostly musing about my mother. At a time like that, my mother came into the center of my vision.

I was transporting myself into her being while she saw me for the first time. She often used to say I was like a

rosy white flower every nurse rushed in to see. I'm sure she thought the exact same thing which I did for Muhammad. *So precious. All mine.*

A lot of women, I'm sure, will understand where I'm coming from when I say that all it takes is for one to become a mother for them to truly realize the worth of their own parent. And we're talking about back in the days when diapers didn't exist and people didn't have the comforts of many technologies which exist today. We're talking about women that lived in a comparatively more conservative society comprising of joint-families and the system of *"bahus"* cooking for the family (which exists even today but has branched out a lot in liberal-minded families). Maids who were rarely kept to look after children but for the daily dusting, sweeping and mopping rituals often rushed right out as soon as they were done. There was little to none of the two-second refuge to the toilet for mothers with screaming toddlers running around and a stew left steaming on the stove. Let's not forget the daily hassles of weddings, attending

parties and arranging them at home with no one but the mother left to do everything from selecting which dishes to cook and then actually cooking them. Then the eye-shadows had to match the getup, the hair had to be perfectly coiled in place while the children were donned in a matching dress and everything had to stay spick-span clean for the next forty minutes. And the dishes were left yet to be set.

I am envisioning the whole situation which used to take place when I was about seven. That's as far as I can go back in time to remember anything at all. And I often wondered how my wonder-woman in the form of my mother, managed to do it all. But she did.

Long after we become too big to be carried in her arms, a mother carries us in her heart.

The pain of a child is felt manifold by the mother. My eldest brother, her first born, had several health complications through the years which started from birth and went on till his teenage life.

I have witnessed my mother praying through the night and then waking up to clothe us in the morning, sending us off to school and tending to chores throughout the day. She had long waits in the hospitals while simultaneously ensuring the others didn't miss out on childhood. My younger sister was an inquisitive being. She was the sort that needed running after and still managed to break things despite the constant vigilance. My youngest sibling and the darling of us all- grew up in a house spiraling towards spiritual reawakening. The television set was thrown out and he is the only *Haafiz-e-Quran* amongst us four. I can recall her sitting in front of him for hours listening to his recitation. It's not easy when there's a lot of other work piled up on one's shoulder, let me tell you that.

And now, at the age of 25, being a mother- I am still my mother's child.

I still call her up to ask for advice, sometimes pleading her to cook my favorite meal (I know that's so wrong, and I'm often reminded of that by my husband, but what can I do? I crave my mom's cooking) or helping me with household stuff. She's my inspiration, my role model. And I desperately wish that I turn out to be one of those blessed people who see their parents even when they're approaching half a century.

I guess the point of my entire article or story revolves around one moral. Appreciate your parents. Appreciate your mom. It took me a whole lot of time and experience to reach that point where I can see that my mom was and always will be- correct. Back in the days when I was young, impressionable, and school-going, I couldn't see any of that. I could only see a figure that held me back from having fun most of the time. I couldn't visit my friends sometimes, I couldn't wear everything I wanted to in order to fit in, I couldn't enjoy my leisure time with the constant restrictions on play time and reading time. I was constantly told to hit the bed as soon as I turned ten. Sometimes, I nagged my parents to eat out but the answer was always a resounding, 'no.' I could barely understand any of that. My mom's lectures often fell on deaf ears.

Everything changes when you're standing on the other side of the spectrum. As soon as I started changing diapers, I started imagining this little child telling me he wants to do something. I tried to rack my brain on how I'd tackle a situation where I'd ever have to say 'no' to my little one. And that's when I realized how things must've been for my parents.

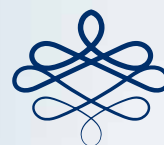
Empathy is an art. A person can never show empathy until and unless they put themselves in another's shoes and walk around in it. Walking around in my mother's shoes has become the most eye-opening experience for me. Every so often, I call her to apologize for my infuriating adolescent past. Listening to her and obeying her has become so much easier. I can actually understand where she comes from whenever she

tells me to do something- even when it comes to how I should handle my baby.

Dear readers, I know your friends, peer pressure, the captivating cell phones and basically the world wide web seems to make far more sense than what your parents often dictate, but that dictation is a direction that can never guide you towards wrong. They speak from wisdom, foresight and sense which may scoff the fleeting fulfilment through time-wasting devices and company. They wish nothing but the best for those who they invested so much in. From sacrificing herself through sleepless nights of when you were a mere child to becoming more than just a mother but also a multi-tasking cook, councilor, teacher, designer, nurse and driver- she is more than entitled to lecture you and direct

you. She doesn't have to say 'I love you' to prove it to you that she does. She doesn't have to succumb to your nags and frowns to become your best person. She has already become that by providing you with the care and love you never knew you'd ever want- and unfortunately take for granted.

Do your mom a favor, go and give her a hug and ask her to forgive you. Press her legs, help her, talk to her, become her student, her listener, her best friend. That's all that a mother would ever want. Trust.



Correction!

"Shaykh al Hadith stated: I have heard the practice of my teacher's *shuyukh* was that if a student brought up a point of disagreement during a lesson whose answer was inexplicable to him, he would go up to the teacher for an explanation and deliberate with him.

Maulana Thanawi (Allah sanctify his secret) used to say that I have established the system of *tarjih al rajih* (i.e. giving preference to the preferred) so that if someone notices a mistake in my works then he may inform me, and if I am convinced of my mistake I will publicly proclaim it. Therefore, I have, in the past, wholeheartedly affirmed places where I have committed errors or lapses. When I am not convinced of my mistake, I reproduce the opinion of the one differing and so one may follow whichever position appeals to his heart. This is what I have always done, never imposing my own opinion on anyone.

This is due to the blessing of Maulana Muhammad Ya'qoub (Allah have mercy on him), for although this blessed disposition was in all the *akabir* it was not quite like that of Maulana Muhammad. If something was mentioned that did not give him full conviction, he would jet-off during his class to get a book and would, without hesitation, state, 'I have not understood this. Please, if you may discuss it with me.' Then, after the discussion he would return and recapitulate to the other students what the teacher said, stating 'Maulana explained this part in this way...'

Further, if on a specific point a student discusses something with the teacher and turns out to be correct, the teacher would immediately during the class go back on his position, stating in clear words that he had made a mistake..." ('*akabir ka taqwa*', pg 56-57, *Maktaba al Shaykh ed.*)

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The Adventure Ahead

By: Ateefah Sana Ur Rab

The living room showed no sign of human inhabitation; the familiar old couch that he had witnessed since he started remembering things, at one corner seemed to weep in silence, its worn-out state and feeling of abandonment. Black etched onto the once-so-lively screen that was known best for entertaining its audience, be it young or old. With mind at full alert, he anxiously tiptoed towards the table where the keychain in his hand belonged to. In a blink of an eye, it rested with the set of car keys and he had broken into a sprint. A sigh of relief was about to celebrate liberty as he felt the cold metal against his palm

when the inevitable smirked out a greeting, laughing inwardly at his helplessness.

‘Ahmed!’

‘Yes, Dad?’ The bright smile on his face upon turning around somehow didn’t ward away the serious expression of the elderly man.

‘I want to talk to you, privately.’

‘Ah... Sure.’ He opened the door, stepping to the side and preparing himself for whatever that awaited its arrival. The situation was grave; the atmosphere’s temperature dropped a



degree or two and the tension in the room felt three times thicker than before. Rashid took a seat on the bed and his son followed track after closing the only entrance. He looked at his father who now appeared to be in a worried state.

'Son, do you know what I came to home today?'

Ahmed remained silent, waiting for Rashid to continue. He had absolutely no idea of what could have happened. It was neither a special occasion nor he could think of anything he had done wrong. Except that he had arrived past 10:30 pm but that wasn't an issue as his parents knew about how late he worked at his office.

'A call from a relative it was and do you know how it made me feel when I got to know that my only son has started racing motorcycle? And to serve it with a big cherry on top, he is pulling off dangerous techniques on the roads with traffic all around him?'

'I...uh...' Ahmed scratched the back of his head nervously and averted his eyes. He didn't know what to do apart from staring at the tiled floor and finding hidden images in their intricate

patterns. Who could have seen him and reported immediately? Their family sure had a fair share of detectives and spies as its members and relatives. It made him angry. What was wrong with having fun with friends? It wasn't like he'd hurt himself. He knew very well what he was doing. His parents needed to stop taking him too seriously; he was no longer a juvenile with no sense of responsibility.

'Stop making that face and listen to me for a moment. You are all that we have; your mother and me. It is not that we want to restrict you from having the time of your life nor do we want to control you. What this is about is your safety. There is no guarantee that you will not injure yourself or anybody else. You are an adult now and a responsible one at that. But you do not show much sensibility when you act like this. I cannot stop you, I know. But there's one thing I can do. Please, think this through. I beg of you.' Rashid stood up and glancing once at his son, he left the room.

Ahmed sighed to himself and went to sleep after dinner.

Sunday usually meant a whole day to relax for

most of the working men associated with Ahmed's family tree and he too loved to spend at least one day a week, enjoying the softness of his comforter. Although, this time, it was quite different as he had a major competition approaching after breakfast. How excited he was, to finally execute the newly learnt skills of his in front of the unbeatable Hamza; who happened to show off a lot. As he said greetings and sat down at the table joining his parents, he felt weird. There was something unusual which he could not pinpoint or address. It was as if the atmosphere had already anticipated, what still appeared to him, a part of the unknown.

'Ahmed, what's wrong, beta?' Sumaira, the loving mother, interrupted Ahmed's reverie which made him notice the untouched bread on his plate.

'I cannot understand myself but, something just doesn't feel right today. It's as if there is a blanket of melancholy hovering above us... Don't you think so?'

'I have noticed, too.' Rashid took a sip of his tea and glanced at the other two.

'May Allah protect us all,' Sumaira let out a prayer and recited verses of protection.

Silence ruled once again as they focused on the food at hand but Ahmed wasn't able to sit in peace. He could feel it in the air, the nerve-wrecking calm before the storm or perhaps it was the calm afterwards. It was one of those days when you continuously get the sensation that some calamity is about to hit and knock you off the ground. The clock struck 10 am announcing that it was time to leave now if he didn't want to arrive late at the meeting place. Dumping all concerns in the bin, he excused himself from the table and prepared for the fun that lay ahead.

'I got you!' Hamza laughed aloud, taking over

Ahmed's motorcycle that soon followed behind with speed increasing with the passing seconds. He could faintly hear the noise in the background made by his friends who had become the match's enthusiastic audience.

'Oh no, you didn't. I won't let you win.' Ahmed whistled when he drew closer to Hamza. The final moment had arrived! That was it! One spin and he'd...

The screeching sound of tyres and the blowing horns reverberated in his ears. Everything happened slowly as if he was stuck in a trance of time. He witnessed a heavy truck appear in front as he hastily reached for the breaks while a shout erupted from his lungs. Three words uttered in profound agony. 'Hamza! Watch out!'

And then everything went black.

His eyes flew open to Sumaira sitting beside him with a hand gently resting on his forehead. As his vision's blurriness faded away, the sight became very clear. Her face was ghostly pale and tear-streaked, with red eyes and moist lashes. She noticed that he had regained consciousness and an apparition of a smile hovered over her dry lips. How long had she been crying by his side, waiting for him to wake up?

'I thought I had lost you too... Your friend did not—' A sob escaped her lips when she clasped his hand and rested her cheek against it. The emptiness in her eyes seemed to pick at the strings of his heart. How awfully wrong he had been... playing with life as if it wasn't really worth anything...

What he called 'fun' and 'adventure' brought his mother to a miserable state. She had always been so strong and yet, at that moment, he felt as if she were the weakest woman alive. Allah had indeed saved him and his family too. What would have happened if he weren't amongst those who breathed at that very moment? How would it have affected his parents? Would they have been able to overcome the grief and

continue with their lives? The realization of his actions sent shivers down his spine.

Within his heart, Ahmed pledged to never go against his parents' words ever again and to make himself a good habit of thanking Allah Almighty for His blessings every day.

"But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with me others of which you

have no knowledge, then obey them not; but behave with them in the world kindly..."

[Holy Quran 31:15]

"Shall I not tell you about the worst enormities? They are three: idolatry against Allah, disobedience to parents, and false witness."

[Sahih Bukhari: 2511]

True Legacy: Mawlana Muhammad Badr Alam Miruthi's love for books

By 'Allamah Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah
Translated by Abu 'Asim Badrul Islam

'Allamah Shaykh 'Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghuddah (rahimahullah) writes:

'When I was honoured and blessed with the opportunity to visit the illuminated city of Madinah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon it's inhabitant) for the second time after Hajj toward the end of 1384 AH (1965 CE), I had completed the publication of the book, *al-Ajwibat al-Fadilah li'l As'ilat al-'Asharat al-Kamilah* by Imam 'Abd al-Hayy al-Lucknowi al-Hindi that same year. I had edited and annotated the book before publication. I took a few copies of the book with me to Madinah so that I could present them as gifts to some of my eminent Shuyukh residing in the illuminated city.

At the forefront of these eminent Shuyukh was our Shaykh al-'Allamah al-Muhaddith al-Faqih al-Shaykh Muhammad Badr 'Alam al-Miruthi al-Hindi who had chosen permanent residence in the abode of hijra [the illuminated city of Madinah]. I went to visit him in his house. He had been, at the time, incapacitated by illness and was permanently confined to his bed. Due to this poor health he was unable to study, research and satiate himself with knowledge the way he desired.

I presented a copy of *al-Ajwibat al-Fadilah* which he accepted with much joy and appreciation. He praised the book and said to me: "I had purchased the book as soon as it had arrived in the bookshops of the illuminated city of Madinah. As you can see, I do not have the strength or the health to be able to read and study the way I would have wished to. But my intention in purchasing this book was to leave books of knowledge for my children and family. This is better for them as inheritance than wealth." These words were for me a priceless lesson. I learnt a lot from them and have benefited, therefore, I have related this incident regarding the Shaykh – may Allah have mercy on him. He passed away in the illuminated city of Madinah during 1385 AH.'

-Safahat min Sabr al-'Ulama 'ala Shada'id al-'Ilm wa al-Tahsil, 7th edn, (Aleppo: Maktab al-Matbu'at al-Isamiyyah, 2003, p.325)



Relating *to* *the* **Quran**

By Khalid Baig

The Qur'an is the living miracle of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. From beginning till end it contains nothing but the Word of Allah as revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, through angel Jibreel (Gabriel) alayhis-salam. It tells us where we are coming from and where we are going. It tells us what will happen after death. It shows the Straight Path that will lead to the place of eternal bliss called Paradise. And it warns us about following the crooked paths

that lead to the place of eternal doom called Hell. It gives moral code for individuals as well as states. It gives the Law or Shariah for them as well. It addresses both the heart and the intellect. It educates; it inspires; it heals. It shows the Path and it gives us the energy and motivation to follow it. No one can go wrong who makes it his guide. No one can succeed who ignores its guidance.

The companions were the first group of people who followed it as it must be followed. They were transformed from being the lowest of the low to being the highest of the high. They established personal standards of piety and virtue that no other group of people since then can match. They established a society based on justice, fairness and goodness that no other society can match.

"Then came their successors who deserted this Qur'an," says Shaikh Yusuf Qardawi in his book "Kaifa nata'amal ma'al Qur'an-ul-Azeem" (How Should We Interact With the Great Qur'an). "They preserved its words but lost its injunctions. They understood it poorly. They did not put first what this Book puts first. They did not put last what this Book puts last. They did not give eminence to what this Book gives eminence to. They did not belittle what this Book belittles... There is no way for deliverance of this Ummah from its loss, backwardness and ruin except by turning back to this Qur'an. We must make this Qur'an as the guide and the leader (to find our way out of our current misery)."

This turning back to the Qur'an requires many steps.

1. We must learn to read it in its original Arabic and we must teach our children to do the same. This learning to read is part of the knowledge referred to in the oft-quoted Hadith that specifies that seeking knowledge is a duty of every Muslim male and female.
2. We should memorize it as much as possible.
3. We must recite it regularly. Not a day should go by in our life in which we forget to read the Qur'an.
4. We must understand its message and ponder over its teachings.
5. We must mold our life based on its commands.
6. We must invite the entire humanity to the path of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is guidance for all humanity but not everyone who reads it will get guidance from it. Qur'an reserves its guidance for those who sincerely seek it and approach it in the proper way and the right attitude. Many who have ignored these basic requirements have gone astray in their study of the Qur'an.

Interpreting the Qur'an requires expertise in several areas. First, one must have a firm command over classical Arabic language including its vocabulary, grammar, metaphors, and idioms.

Second, one must know the history of the Qur'an including where and when a verse was revealed; what other verses deal with the same subject; which of those, if any, supercede others. We must remember that the Qur'an is the first resource for its own interpretation.

Third, one must have good command over the Hadith literature, as it was the Prophet's job to explain the Qur'an to us and no other interpretation of a Qur'anic verse is acceptable in the presence of an authentic Hadith that explains it.

Fourth, one must have knowledge of the comments of the Companions and their successors. After Qur'an and Hadith, they are the third most important resource in interpreting the Qur'an.

Fifth, one must have knowledge of the rich tafseer literature produced by the most reputed scholars of this Ummah.

Sixth, one must have sound knowledge of Shariah since no interpretation of the Qur'an is acceptable that violates accepted Shariah principles.

Seventh, one must be leading a life of taqwa and piety, as the Qur'an does not open doors to its understanding on those who are not serious in following it.

We cannot just open the Qur'an and start interpreting it as if we are starting on ground zero. Anyone taking this road must be reminded of this grave warning: Sayyidna Abdullah bin Abbas, Radi-Allahu anhu,

reported that Prophet Muhammad said, "Whoever says something in interpreting the Qur'an based on his own opinion should find his place in the Fire." [Tirmidhi Hadith No. 4023]

Unfortunately, today a lot of well-meaning people are doing just this. They start, say, a Qur'anic study group, and start giving lectures on Qur'an. If the person is a good speaker, he might also get warm reception from an audience that confuses eloquence with scholarship. Soon, they start giving expert opinions about Shariah and Qur'an without having even the minimum qualification for it. Many a time, the audience participates equally excitedly, discussing the Words of Allah and delicate issues of Shariah with the same assumed expertise that is normally reserved for discussion of latest current affairs.

This casual attitude must be contrasted with that of the Companions. They not only knew the language of the Qur'an better than anyone else, they were witnesses to its very revelation. Yet, they did not dare interpret it without first

learning it, verse by verse, from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself. And even then they exercised extreme caution in making comments about the Qur'an. Sayyidna Abu Bakr, Radi-Allahu anhu, said: "Which land will give me protection and which sky will give me cover if I say something in interpreting the Qur'an without knowledge." Similarly, Yazid bin Yazid reports: "We used to ask Sayyidna Saeed bin Al-Musayeb, Radi-Allahu anhu, regarding Halal and Haram. And he was the most knowledgeable person regarding it. But whenever we asked him to give tafsir for a verse he would keep quite as if he had not heard us."

They knew that Qur'an declares that it has been made easy for remembrance, but they did not misinterpret it as a license to give personal opinions in areas of belief or law. Their caution stemmed from their realization that to say that a verse means such and such, is to attribute a statement to Allah!

It is our duty to study the Qur'an. But the only proper way of doing it is by seeking a reliable Tafsir and/or a qualified teacher.

Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ in the Presence of his Teacher

Mufti Mahmud al-Hasan Gangohi, may Allah shower His mercy upon him, related:

"A [daily] gathering would take place in the company of Shaykh al-Hind [Mawlana Mahmud Hasan Deobandi] (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) after Fajar prayer in which tea would be served. Attendees would be involved in conversation with one another. However, 'Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) would remain seated quietly, his head bowed. He would not partake in conversation. Gradually, people would finish drinking tea and leave. Then, Shaykh al-Hind (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) would enquire, "Shah sahib, do you wish to say something?" He would then raise his head and answer, "Yes, I have a query regarding a particular Hadith." Shaykh al-Hind (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) would answer his query and thereafter, the Shah (may Allah shower His mercy upon him) would leave."

-*Malfuzat-e-Faqih al-Ummat*: p. 231, Vol 3 (Karachi: Dar al-Huda, September 2005 ed.) by Mufti Muhammad Faruq Mirathi.

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The Road Taken...

By Naeema Akram

There is a teacher who has a peculiar way of greeting his students: "How are you and how are things?" He asks. The query is immediately followed by, "I hope you all are fine and things are fine too, but does your being fine depends upon the things being fine?" He thus poses another question to his students. And I believe this is not merely a question. It is the first stone dropped into the stream of the students' thought process and yes, it does create a ripple too...

Circumstances do play a significant role in our lives but more significant is our attitude towards them. Life, in this post-modern era is nothing but dreariness for many. A burden that burdens the souls of countless people around the world. What is more alarming is the fact that this dreariness is fast creeping into the attitudes of our youth. A friend and I were recently talking about this matter. Being a journalist, who works for a youth magazine, she told us that there is a feeling of hopelessness in the writings of today's youth. As compared to the olden days, people have become more inclined towards sharing their bleak experiences – the phases of depression that they go through, their attempts to commit suicide etcetera. I was surprised at hearing this because a suicide attempt is the height of pessimism. The kind of pessimism that takes us to a point from which there is no turning back. A pessimism that renders the most precious gift of God – Life – futile. And what happens when the youth of a nation turns pessimistic? Let alone this nation's

progress and prosperity (which by the way, is not only material), its very survival is put to stake!

The most important things...

A sage once remarked, "The most important things in life are not things!" This seemingly weightless phrase indeed carries a lot of weight. An entire philosophy of life, if I may be allowed to say so. The cobweb of materialism, in which we are presently stuck, is imperceptibly doing a great harm to all of us. We do not realise but with every passing day our desires are taking the form of necessities. Once these 'necessities' are not met, we tend to get restless. 'Asking for more' means 'wanting' more. And once we begin treading the path of 'wanting' more, we end up in a boundless main of desires – an ocean in which, once submerged, it becomes extremely difficult to emerge. There is no harm in wishing for an 'easy' (in the literal sense of the word) life. But then again, there has to be a demarcating line between an 'easy' life and a 'commodious' life. Most of the time, we tend to mistake commodious living for easy living and this is the root of the problem. When we do not get all that we desire, we begin treating life negatively for we mistakenly start believing that it is life, which has a negative attitude towards us!

Thus, the need of the hour is to set our priorities straight. A realisation must dawn upon us that mostly it is the intangible elements of life that shape the tangible ones!

Past-passed!

Past – time that has passed! Time that no more has any reality. However, thinking too much about it makes it real enough to affect our present. Obsession with what has passed is another major factor that has contributed to the lowering of enthusiasm for life in youth. A wrong that took place in the past cannot be amended. And what is 'wrong', anyway? Every experience, either good or bad, unfolds before Us a unique facet of life that we had never seen. Thus there is no need to keep on fretting over the past, which is no more there nor would it recur. In order to move ahead in life, we must focus on the road that lies before us and not the one we have already travelled. This, in no way suggests that we should completely ignore what we experienced in the past for it is always the realisation of mistakes that help us avoid them in present. Conclusion: realisation of the past is fruitful, obsession; fruitless!

Future, what thou art?

'Securing the future' is a common phrase used by many. The curiosity to know what future holds in store is inherent in human nature. However, this is not something over which sleep should be lost. It is very much a fact that the decisions we take in life do affect our future but then what shall be, shall be! The years unborn cannot be perceived, so why worry about something that has no existence. They say, "Hope for the best, prepare for the worst". I ask, why? Why should not we only hope for the best? Does not 'preparing' for the worst negate the idea of hoping for the best? Does not this very phrase places hopelessness and hopefulness side by side? Can these two opposite traits ever exist together? So why not only hope for the best and perform our actions accordingly? A teacher once remarked that it was absolutely true when said, 'tomorrow never comes' for when tomorrow does come, it ceases to be 'tomorrow'. It is 'today'!

A poet once said:

*Look to this day!
For it is life, the very life of life.
In its brief course*

*Lie all the verities and realities
of your existence.
The bliss of growth
The glory of action
The splendour of beauty,*

*For yesterday is but a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision,
But today well-lived makes every yesterday a
dream of happiness
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day!
Such is the salutation to the dawn.*

Purposefulness

Now this indeed is a vast topic to handle and its significance – in my opinion – is such that it requires to be discussed separately. However, we must include it in the discussion, which is at hand for a life without purpose is a Life that actually lacks life!

How easy it is to state that life is distressing. No wonder it is if led purposelessly. How often do we wonder who we are? Why are we in this world? Where are we heading to? Did we have a beginning? Do we have an end? These are some of the most vital and equally perturbing questions. Lucky are those who have been blessed with a thought process which takes into account these essential questions of life. I often wonder as to what would have been Ghalib's state of heart and mind when he said: "*Duboya mujh ko honay ne, na hota main tu kya hota.*" A haunting line, indeed!

No, I have not digressed from the idea of purposefulness because these seemingly very basic questions can actually give a meaning to our lives. They can lead us to the road of self-discovery. And believe it or not, discovering oneself is accomplishing the greatest feat in life. 'Know thyself', said Socrates. And knowing oneself is the most difficult thing to do in life. Once we come to know ourselves, we have already given a meaning to our life and a purpose to our existence!

Optimism versus pessimism

Dale Carnegie, in his book *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*, writes: "Napoleon had everything men usually crave – glory, power, riches – yet he said at Saint Helena, "I have never known six happy days in my life"; while Helen Keller – blind, deaf, dumb – declared: "I have found life so beautiful.""

Can optimism and pessimism be described more aptly? This very example of Bonaparte and Keller is enough to tell us that it is primarily up to us whether we consider life to be ugly or beautiful. Happiness lies within and not

without. Hope comes from within. And what is optimism but this very hope which resides somewhere deep down inside us. Every single being sent into this world is equally capable of fostering hope within them. And every single being is directed on to this road of Hope, provided there is a desire to do so. This universe is for us. It is not at all dark as it may appear to be. It is just how we look at it. Thus, it is the road taken which matters most. Think... and think hard...

If You Knew!

The Prophet (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said:

"Verily, if you knew what I know you would laugh less and weep more."

(Bukhari, *Kitab al Riqaq* #6004)

Ibn Hajar `Asqalani (Allah have mercy on him) states in his *Fath al Bari*:

"What is meant by "knowledge" here is what is related to the greatness of Allah and His vengeance against he who disobeys Him, the states that arise with extirpation, death, in the grave, and the Day of Judgment. The appropriateness of weeping much and laughing little within this context is clear, and what is indicated by it is fear.

It is narrated from Hasan al Basri (Allah have mercy on him) that, 'He who knew about death and its furnishing, the Day of Judgement and its appointed time, and the spectacle of standing between the two hands of Allah (a reference to Allah's mercy and wrath), then it is proper and right that his sadness and anxiety (due to his knowledge of these events) arise in this world.'"

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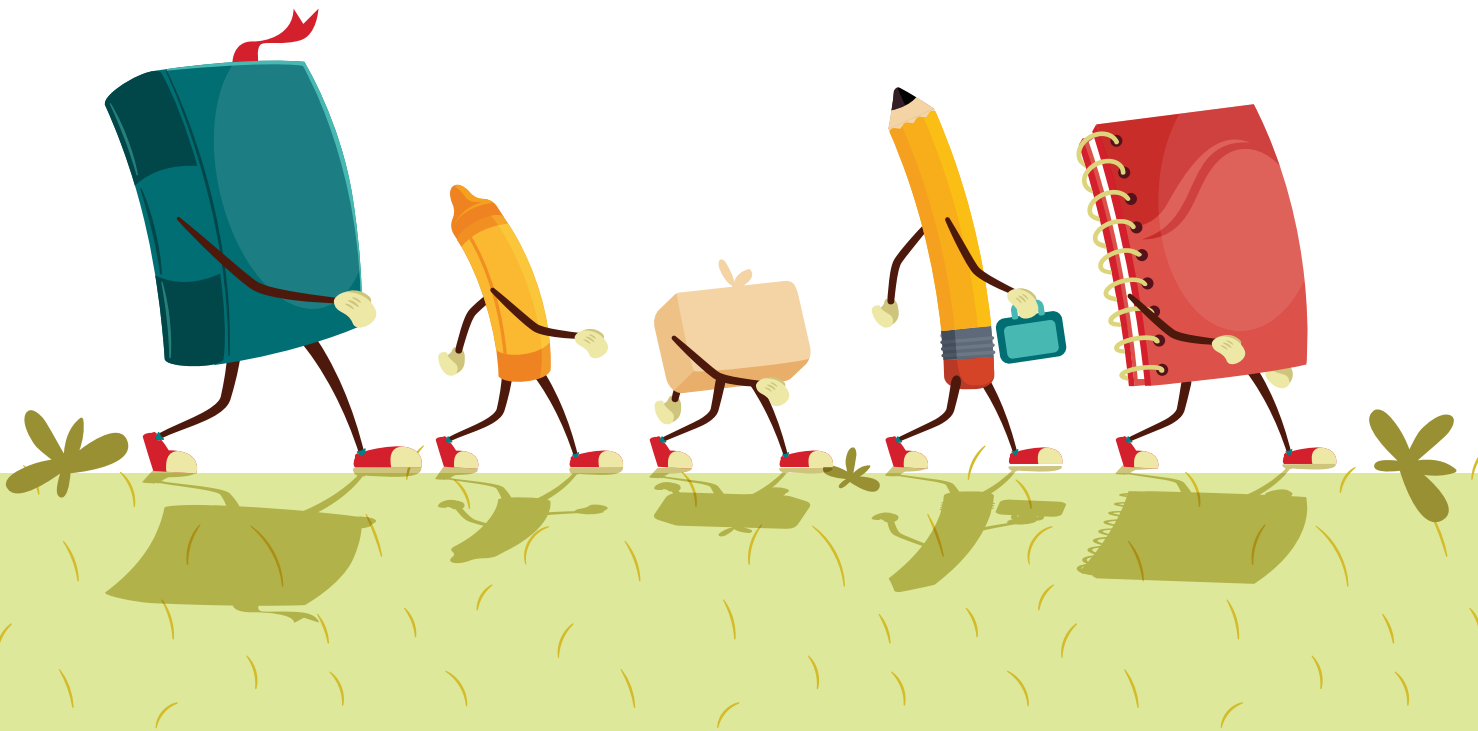


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Thoughts *on* Education and Character Building

By Dr Asad Zaman



The idea that the west is the model for us to follow is widespread, and actively advocated by the elite and the powerful in Islamic societies. Two key social structures required to build character are the family and the school. Both have broken down almost completely in this direction in the west.

Family: The breakdown of this fundamental unit of society has been documented in many places, such as a recent report on “Fractured Families” put out by the Social Justice Foundation (2006):

This Report paints a worrying picture of family breakdown in the UK. We now have one of the highest divorce rates in the Western world and the fabric of family life has been stripped away in the past thirty years. This study also shows more clearly than ever the destructive effects of family breakdown upon millions of children, as well as the links between family breakdown and addictions, educational failure and serious personal debt.

Consequences of this breakdown are apparent in the Josephson Institute survey (2008) which shows that more than 30% of the 30,000 USA high school students admitted to having stolen from a store, parents or friends. According to the Center for Disease Control, USA also has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the world. The vast majority of approximately a million such pregnancies per year are unintended and have devastating social, economic and health consequences for both the unwed mother and the offspring.

Schools and Universities: In *Against School: How public education cripples our kids, and why*, John Taylor Gatto, a well-known and experienced teacher in US writes about “an educational system deliberately designed to produce mediocre intellects, to hamstring the inner life, to deny students appreciable leadership skills, and to ensure docile and incomplete citizens.” Lack of character education in universities is documented by Julie Reuben, discussed below.

The family and the educational institutions are the two places where character is formed. Neither is able to perform this function in the west. Furthermore, there is no chance of the west finding a path out of the mess they are in – the resources required to build character are no longer there with them, since religion is the basis for morality and character.

By and large, Muslims are following in western footsteps, and imitating their ways in culture and education. We are at risk for the same collapse. However, we do have resources in our Islamic heritage which can be used to combat the incoming flood of corruption. Here is an action plan.

1: The first step is to get rid of our inferiority complex. This prevents us from looking beyond Western models, where there are no solutions to be found. Allah ﷻ tells us that He has perfected His gift to us (Islam), and that we should rejoice in the blessing of the

Quran that has been given to us. The widespread feeling in the Ummah that Western knowledge is superior to ours is a serious spiritual obstacle to progress.

- 2: Western wealth is not something to envy or strive for – Qaroon is not a model for us. When Umer رضي الله عنه asked the Prophet ﷺ to pray for a share of riches of the Persians and the Romans, he was told to be content that we have been given the treasures of the *Akhirah*, while they have been given the *Dunya*. The Quran mentions that but for our weakness, Allah ﷻ would turn the houses of the *Kuffar* into gold and silver. He says elsewhere that do not let their (luxurious lifestyles) deceive you [*La yaghurranakum taqallabalazeen kafaroo fil bilad*]. Unfortunately our leaders are focused on increasing GNP per capita as the sole route to progress, and this is not where the problem lies.
- 3: The key to progress is to build character on the individual level, and build unity (that is the Ummah as one body, which feels the pain of all) on the group level.
- 4A: To build character, we need to strengthen the family, and teach families the Islamic arts of bringing up children of excellent character. Hajra, the wife of Ibraheem عليه السلام



provides a model for us: she trained her child so well that when Ibraheem ﷺ said that I saw a dream in which I am sacrificing you, the ten year old responded by saying that do as you are commanded, you will find me among *the Sabereen* (the patient ones), *insha'Allah!* Amazing training! It is my personal belief that this is why all men and women must imitate her footsteps in Hajj until the end of time. There is wealth of information about training children available in Islamic sources which are gathering dust in remote and neglected libraries in the Islamic world. Unfortunately, most Muslims believe that learning about chemistry and biology is the route to progress, without stopping to reflect on how useful the calculus that we learnt has been to us in our own lives, and how harmful lack of character has been both on a personal level and on a social level.

4B: To build character, we need to thoroughly re-vamp our educational institutions and design them explicitly for this purpose. Julie Reuben in *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual transformation and the marginalization of morality*, has described the history of university education in the USA. She explains that character building was a central goal, but could not be achieved due to difference among protestant sects. Numerous alternatives to religion were tried and failed before the whole mission was abandoned, and the universities restricted themselves to providing technical training only, without worrying about character development. There are several important lessons for Muslims in this book. The **first** is that many of the routes that were tried and failed are currently being advocated by Muslims in Islamic countries – we should learn from the western experience. The **second** is that they have given up on the effort to build character, so they do not have any models for us to follow. Therefore we must look to our own

sources.

4C: The problem that arose in the west was that they could not agree on what character means. Morality is defined by consensus. If we agree that homosexuality is bad, then it is a sin and a crime (up until the 70's). If the consensus changes, then it becomes normal behavior, and to speak against it becomes a crime (currently). Fortunately, Islam provides us with a solid foundation on which to build here, one which is not available in the west. The basic elements of character are:

- A strong faith in God and consequents.
- Trust in God – *Tawakkul*.
- Contentment – *Ghana*.
- Integrity, Honesty, Truthfulness.
- *Amanah* – Trustworthiness.
- Compassion for the weak and the oppressed.
- Generosity
- Courage
- Strong sense of justice and the desire to struggle for it.

There may be additions as well as different ways to categorize items, but with minor variations the above list would command consensus among Muslims. That we can agree on what character is, is a tremendous asset for the Ummah, and makes the path to achieving goals in this direction substantially easier.

5. On the group level, it is essential to build up unity in the Ummah. Allah ﷻ has stressed the unity of the Muslims as a basis for their strength in the Quran. Whereas the Meccan period concentrated on building of individuals, the Medinan period shows how to build society. The first task of the Prophet ﷺ was to establish brotherhood among the *Ansar* and the *Mohajireen*, and to eliminate tribal rivalries. Allah ﷻ says that the love among the Muslims was such that it could not have been purchased with all the treasures of the world. It is this love that is needed to unite the Muslims. Again our blind imitation of western models gets in the

way of correct understanding and implementation of Islamic ideals. Western thought assumes a secular society with different individuals having different religions and goals; thus the only possibility for collective action occurs at the nation-state level. Muslim leaders have implicitly absorbed this analysis, ignoring the warning of Iqbal:

Among these newly minted Gods, the biggest is the Nation

The dress it wears is the coffin of religion.

Many of the currently existing nations were explicitly designed and created to sow disunity

among Muslims. To accept this as a basic framework within which we must work, is to abandon the possibility of genuine Islamic collective efforts. It will require creative and visionary thinking to plan actions at the level of the Ummah; models for concerted action at this level are neither available from western sources nor even from our own history. The early Muslims faced many situations which had never before arisen in history and solved them creatively with the inspiration of Islam. We also face circumstances, which are unique in the history of Islam. We need to rise to the challenge.

Between Myself and My Servant!

Imam Muslim رحمته الله recorded that Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah (blessing and peace upon him) said

"Allah, the Exalted, said,

'I have divided the prayer into two halves between Myself and My servant, and My Servant shall have what he asks for.' If he says, 'Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds' Allah says, 'My servant has praised Me.' When the servant says, 'Most Gracious, Most Merciful'. Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me.' When he says, 'Master of the Day of Judgment.' Allah says, 'My servant has related all matters to Me.' When he says, 'Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.' Allah says, 'This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he sought.' When he says, 'Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.' Allah says, 'This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.'"

(Muslim 1:296, and An-Nasai in Al-Kubra 5:11, 12)

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دوست برکاتہم

The sister younger to the respected Naeema Apa is Ateeqa Khatoon Sahiba. She is a very devout and disciplined woman. She is fortunate enough to have given her *bayah* to Hazrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. No one, at least to my knowledge, is alive in the world today (23 Feb, 2017, 25 Jamadi ul'ula, 1437) who was fortunate enough to give direct *bayah* to Hadhrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ.

It was a norm for my respected father and the whole family to spend Ramadan Mubarak at Thana Bhawan in the company of Hakeem ul Ummat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. We used to stay in a room on the first floor. Stairs at the far end of the yard located in front of Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ room also led to this room. As the bathroom had to be shared, an oil lamp was used to signal the availability of the bathroom. If a lamp could be seen placed outside, it meant two things – the bathroom was vacant and there were no men around. If the lamp was not there, it meant the bathroom was occupied.

My sister told me that our father was always very particular about maintaining decorum during his stay. He advised kids not to make noise at all, lest they should cause inconvenience to Hadhrat Saheb. Being a little girl she did not need to observe *pardah*. She narrates that one day father called her and asked her to go to Hadhrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and request him for *bayah*. She thought father was not serious till he reiterated. She asked, "Can children give *bayah* too?" Our respected father رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

responded, "Yes, they can." She made the request to Peerni sahiba, who conveyed the request to Hazrat Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. He asked her if she would deem *bayah* a play. When she said she would not, Hazrat Saheb gave her a piece of cloth to hold, the other end of which he held in his blessed hands and took her *bayah*. Thus, she was blessed with this honor in her childhood only.

Sister Ateeqa Khatoon Sahiba got married before I was born. One of her daughters' birth preceded mine and her other daughter was my age-mate. She used to live with her husband and daughters in a house close to ours. Though I was an uncle to respected Naeema Khatoon Sahiba's son and two daughters as well as respected Ateeqa Khatoon Sahiba's one daughter but these nieces and nephews were elder to me. All four were ahead of me in Ammat ul Hannan Sahiba's Maktab (which I will talk about in sometime). As there was not much age difference between us, my nephew was more like a friend to me. He later came to be known as Mawlana Hakeem Musharraf Hussain Saheb. In fact he was my only friend who used to lead me in play and I would follow.

Owing to the age difference that existed between me and my two sisters, their children were elder to me and, therefore, instead of frankness that one usually enjoys with sisters, I esteemed them as guardians.

My eldest brother, Muhammad Zaki Kaifi Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, who was called "Bhai Jaan" ranked third in

the order of siblings. He had studied Dars e Nizami from Darul Uloom Deoband. He was half way through his studies when such circumstances arose that interrupted his studies. He ended up managing our father's publishing house, Dar ul Ishaat. He was so well read in History, Seerah, Tasawuf and the lives of Ulema e Deoband and their writings that even very capable ulema could not be at par with him. He also gave bayah to Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and was in good books of all pious people. Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Hassan رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Hazrat Mawlana Muhammad Idrees Kandhelvi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, Hazrat Mawlana Dawood Ghaznavi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Hazrat Mawlana Rasool Khan Saheb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ all loved him dearly, visited him and blessed him by their presence whenever they passed by his book shop in Anarkali. Bhai Jaan loved reciting Quran e Kareem and used to complete its recitation ten to fifteen times in Ramadan Mubarak. He was a remarkable poet


and his work titled 'Kaifiaat' , the foreword of which I wrote, is very popular. In 1946 he got married to the daughter of Hazrat Mawlana Muhammad Mobeen Khateeb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ who was a student of Hazrat Shaykh ul Hind رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and *khateeb* of Deoband's *Eidgah*; I was three years old at that time. I remember that our father got two rooms constructed before his marriage. At that time Bhai Jaan was the *nazim* in our father's bookstore, Darul Ishaat. He was fourteen years elder and I revered him as I revered the two elder sisters.

He was fond of calligraphy and would satisfy his passion by writing any couplet or aphorism beautifully on a paper or sheet. Once when he left his writing endeavor unfinished to attend to something else, I tried to copy him and spilled the ink in the process .Though I used to be in awe of Bhai Jaan, there never had been a reason to fear him. After spilling the ink, however, I was



sure this would no longer be the case. In order to prepare myself for the impending thrashing, I remember asking my siblings, "How hard does Bhai Jaan hit?" My brothers and sisters, who did not know what I had done, could not figure out why I needed to know that. When I told them, they all laughed. When Bhai Jaan got to know of this, he too thoroughly enjoyed. The question I had asked my siblings was added to the repertoire of anecdotes which indicated my intelligence and was often shared in gatherings.

Later on, Bhai Jaan made me so comfortable with him that we became friends and sometimes,

after cracking a joke, I would wonder if I had crossed the limit. The time I got to spend with him was a blessing for me. He used to keep an eye on my activities in Darul Uloom, and would bless me with very precious advice. Since I started writing, he would eagerly read what I wrote and share his opinion. I wrote, 'Hazrat Muawiya  and Historical Facts' on his wish. I will talk about it in detail, *Insha'Allah*.

To be Continued, insha'Allah.

A Mosquito's Wing

"Get yourself out of this limited world of diseases to the wide world of the hereafter, which has what the eyes have never seen. Nothing is impossible there, and love is not lost. O you who sold yourself for the sake of something that will cause you suffering and pain, and which will also lose its beauty, you sold the most precious item for the cheapest price, as if you neither knew the value of the goods nor the meanness of the price. Wait until you come on the Day of mutual loss and gain and you will discover the injustice of this contract. "There is no God but Allah" is something that Allah is buying. Its price is Paradise, and the Messenger is its agent, and you will be pleased to part with a small part of this worldly life to obtain it. The part you lose is a small part of something that as a whole is not worth a mosquito's wing."

- Imam Ibn al Qayyim al-Jawziyyah 

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