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Vol 9 / Issue 1 / Dec-Mar 2019

The Intellect

Re-awakening to the
ideals of a Blessed Life

Al Quran
Surah Nisa – Part 12

Al Hadith
Fear and Anxiety

The Awakening
Repentance-the Right Way

Tests: Their
Purpose,
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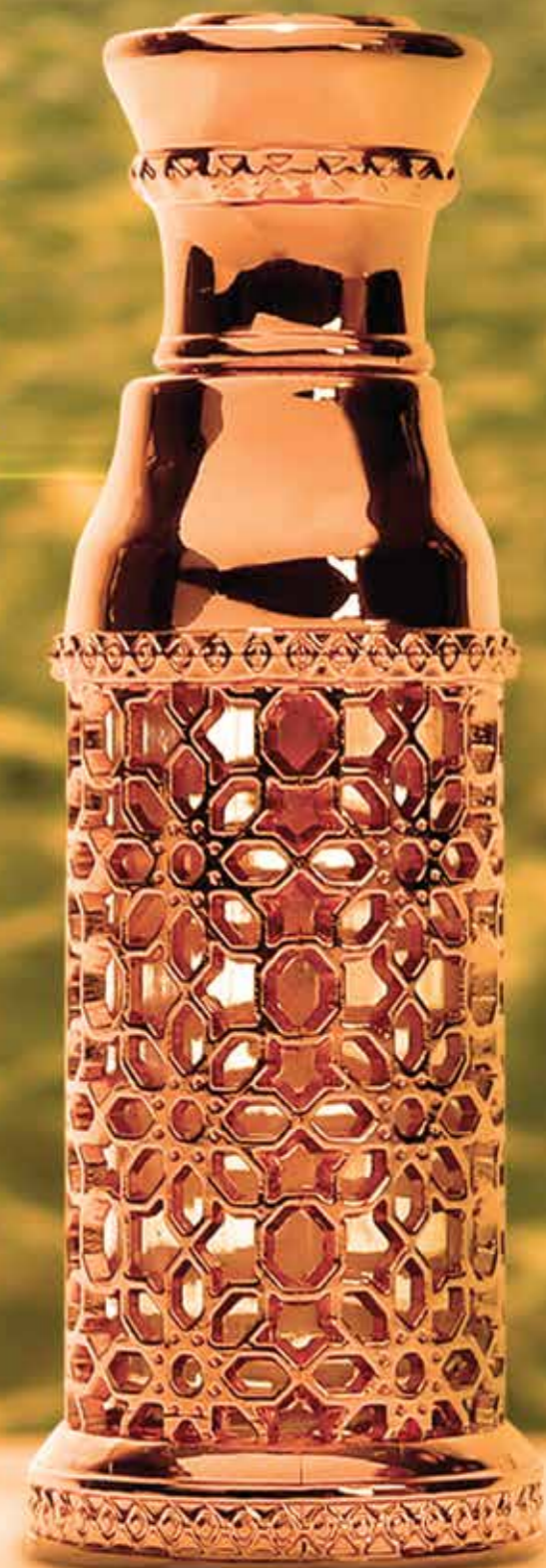
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TABLE OF

Contents

06 | Editorial

By Zawjah Farid

09 | Al Quran

Surah Nisa – Part 10
Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

12 | Al Hadith

Fear and Anxiety (*Kitaab-ur-Riqaaq*)
Maulana Manzoor Naumani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

14 | Fatwa Forum

Wasawis: Satanic Whispers
Answered by Mufti Shafiq Jakhura
and Mufti M.D. Mangera

16 | The Awakening

Repentance – the right way (Part 1)
Maulana Abdus Sattar Sb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

20 | Cover Story

Tests: Their Purpose, Significance and Reality
By Zainab Wasay

24 | Education 101

Education: Islamic Concepts
and Modern Society – Part 3
By Prof. Syed Ali Ashraf (late)

27 | Gems of Wisdom

Kitab e Zindagi (The Book of My Life)
Translation by Zainab Wasay

28 | Urban Pangs

Ethically Successful
By Ateefah Sana-ur-Rab

Poets' Panorama | 34

Void of the Soul
By Emaan Zubair

Marital Bliss | 36

The Blame Game
By Zawjah Zia

Sweet 'n' Sour | 38

Unorthodox Matchmaking
By Bint e Aftab Ahmed

Tell a Tale | 42

The Wheelchair
Translated by Zainab Wasay

Of Parents and Parenting | 46

Remembering my Father
By Dr Asad Zaman

Action Alerts | 50

Seeking Halal Earning
By Khalid Baig

Reflections | 52

It Begins with You!
By Emaan Zubair

Special Feature | 54

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb رحمۃ اللہ علیہ – Part 7
Translation by Bint Zahid



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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

By the Lord of the Ka'bah, I am victorious!

These were the words pronounced by Sayyidina Anas Bin Malik's ﷺ maternal uncle when a man attacked him from behind with a spear that pierced him. He was amongst a party of seventy Qurraa' (reciters) who had been sent by the Prophet ﷺ with some people who had requested to be taught the Qur'an and *Sunnah*; but these treacherous people pounced and fell upon the Qurraa' and martyred them!

Just ponder upon these words: "I am victorious"; this, from a dying man ﷺ who is leaving behind his whole family; from a person whose material belongings would now be passed on to others; from a man who knows he is leaving the world in a matter of a few moments/ *am victorious*. What kind of victory solicits such a peaceful, seemingly premeditated response in a moment of complete shock and urgency?

This special gift: triumph in martyrdom, success in leaving the world, felicity in obvious physical pain, has amazed, attracted and won over many people to Islam throughout the ages. It can only come to the lips of those who ardently believe that life is naught but a test.

In our *Cover Story*, a new contributor to *The Intellect* dwells convincingly upon the real meaning of *Tests, their Purpose, Significance and Reality*. This is a very important topic not just because Allah ﷻ pronounces our whole life a test (for example in Surah Mulk) but also because in this age of *Fitn* (strife), we are yet to face an extremely big trial as an *Ummah* in the form of Dajjal and the *Dajjalian* philosophy and way of life. (No wonder we have been asked to recite Surah Al-Kahf regularly, to safeguard us from the four prominent trials that Dajjal will bring forth and that connect it intimately to the teachings in this Surah: the trial of religion, the trial of wealth, the trial of knowledge and the trial of power).

In *Fatwa Forum*, the question asked in this issue deals with a problem that impacts many amongst us: *wasawis* or satanic whispers. These detracting thoughts are not just irritants but also impact the quality of our *ibadah*. The readers would thus find the answer quite useful *InshAllah*.

Our minds are so shackled by the chains of foreign ideas seeping into our societies that at times, even plain logic occupies the back seat of our thinking processes.

A lady once related that in her sister-in-law's wedding, she was discouraged from sitting next to the bride on stage. Curious, she tried to find out the reason, only to discover through a well-wisher that it was because despite several years of marriage she had been issueless.



Shocked, she inquired what connection her being childless may have with sitting next to someone and the reply made her stagger, literally: she was told that there was a possibility her “bad luck” may pass on to the bride! Sheer *jahiliyah*.

In *Unorthodox Matchmaking* (see our *Sweet n Sour* section), another such cultural import is discussed. It carries the anatomy of a sub-continental ‘proposal’ meeting and how, in general, such instances disregard a girl’s privacy and make a dent in her self-esteem.

Our *Parenting* section features writings by two prominent and accomplished educators cum thinkers; essential readings for parents and parents-to-be.....

In our regular feature *Action Alerts*, the focus this time is on the importance of *Halal* earnings and we leave you to think over a short and interesting incident that highlights the significance of halal income and describes the feelings of bliss that can emanate from even a single morsel of food:

Abdullah Shah, a grass seller in Deoband, India, used to divide his meager earnings into three parts: one part he gave away to his mother, one, he spent on Allah’s ﷻ path and the final part he kept for his own (negligible) expenses.

One day, he invited Maulana Yakub ﷻ along with other scholars for food. Maulana Sb. asked him how he would be able to afford to serve them in his inadequate means. Abdullah Shah replied that he intended to invite them with the part of his income he spent on *khayraat*. This amounted to just five *aa’naas* (an *aa’naa* being one sixteenth of a Rupee!) He handed over the coins to Maulana Sb., and asked him to get the food cooked himself! (*What refreshing informality*).

The scholars brainstormed and decided upon the cheapest option: sweet *gur* rice; hence, the supplies and cooking utensil were ordered carefully and the cook was asked to perform ablution prior to cooking. The end result was not more than two to three morsels per person!

Maulana Yakub Sb. later related that he felt the blessings and *barakah* of those two morsels of food in his heart for a whole month! *SubhanAllah*.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid



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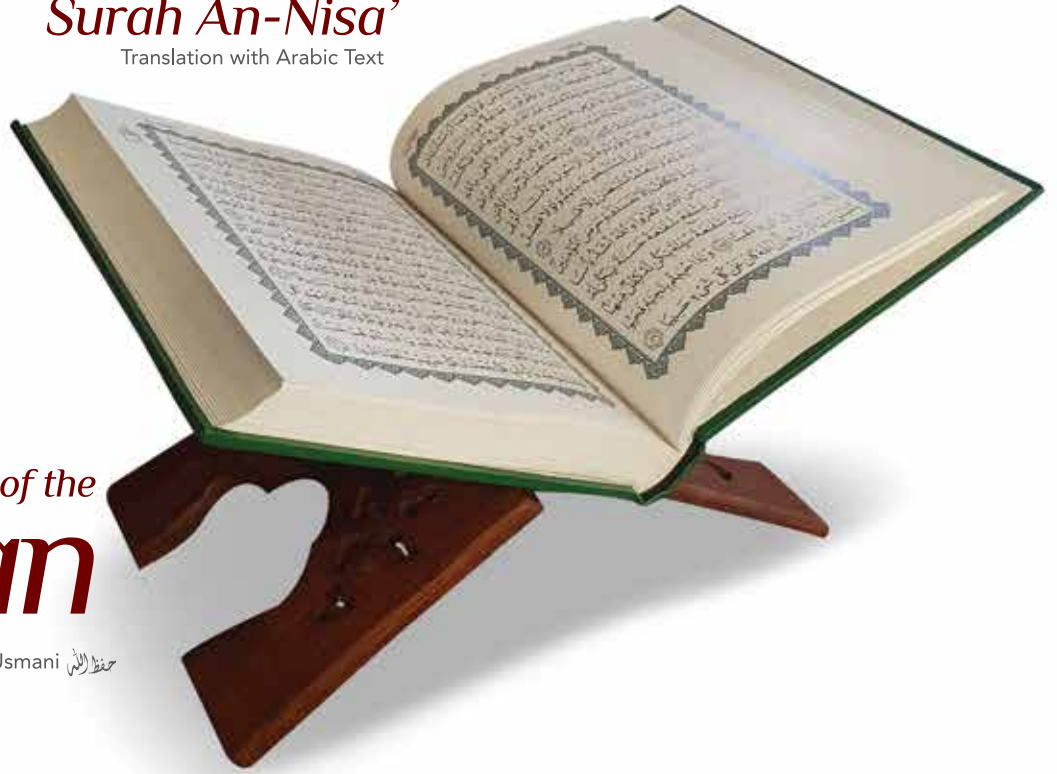


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Surah An-Nisa'

Translation with Arabic Text



The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾

When you travel on the earth, there is no sin on you in shortening your *Salāh*,⁴⁹ if you fear that the disbelievers would put you in trouble. Surely, the disbelievers are an open enemy for you. [101]

وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ أذىٌ مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

When you (O prophet) are in their midst, and arrange for them the *Salāh*, then, a party from them should stand with you, and should take their arms along. Then, once they performed *Sajdah*, they should move away from you, and the other party, that has not yet performed *Salāh*, should come and perform *Salāh* with you, and should take their precautionary measures and their arms. Those who disbelieve would want you to become heedless to your arms and your belongings, so that they come down upon you in a single move. There is no sin on you, if you have some inconvenience due to rain, or you are sick, in putting your arms aside, but take your precautionary measures. Surely, Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. [102]

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَرُكُوعًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ : فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ : إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْفُوتًا ﴿١٠٣﴾

Once you have finished your *Salāh*, then, remember Allah while standing, sitting and reclining. As soon as you are secure, perform *Salāh* as due. Surely, *Salāh* is an obligation on the believers that is tied up with time. [103]

وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِن تَكُونُوا تَأْلَمُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْلَمُونَ كَمَا تَأْلَمُونَ وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

Do not show weakness in pursuing these people. If you are suffering, they are suffering as you are suffering, while you hope from Allah what they do not hope. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [104]

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَائِبِينَ خَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾

Surely, We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, so that you may judge between people according to what Allah has shown you. Do not be an advocate for those who breach trust. 50 [105]

وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

Seek forgiveness from Allah. Surely, Allah is All-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [106]

وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾

Do not argue on behalf of those who betray themselves. Surely, Allah does not like anyone who is a sinful betrayer. [107]

يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ إِذْ يُبَيِّنُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾

They feel shy before people, but do not feel shy before Allah. He (Allah) is with them when they make plans at night to give a statement He (Allah) does not like. Allah encompasses whatever they do. [108]

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ جَادَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَمَن يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَمْ مَن يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

Look, this is what you are! You have argued for them in the worldly life, but who shall argue for them with Allah on the Day of Judgement, or who shall be their defender? [109]

وَمَن يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾

Whoever acts evil or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness from Allah, shall find Allah Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [110]

وَمَن يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾

Whoever commits a sin, commits it only against himself. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. [111]

وَمَن يَكْسِبْ خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾

Whoever commits a vice or a sin, then shifts its blame to an innocent person, he indeed takes the burden of a false imputation and a glaring sin. [112]

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَهَمَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ أَن يُضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ ۗ وَمَا يَضُرُّونَكَ مِن شَيْءٍ ۗ وَأَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ ۗ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾

If the grace of Allah and His mercy had not been with you, a group from them had resolved to mislead you, while they mislead none but themselves; and they can do you no harm. Allah has revealed to you the Book and the wisdom, and has taught you what you did not know. The grace of Allah on you has always been great. [113]

لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّن نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَمَن يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾

There is no good in most of their whisperings, unless one bids charity or a fair action, or reconciliation between people. The one who does this, to seek Allah's pleasure, We shall give him a great reward. [114]

﴿ ١١٥ ﴾ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

Whoever breaks away with the Messenger after the right path has become clear to him, and follows what is not the way of the believers, We shall let him have what he chose, and We shall admit him to Jahannam, which is an evil place to return. [115]

﴿ ١١٦ ﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

Surely, Allah does not forgive that a partner is ascribed to Him, and forgives anything short of that for whomsoever He wills. ⁵¹ Whoever ascribes a partner to Allah has indeed gone far astray. [116]

﴿ ١١٧ ﴾ إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنَانَا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا شَيْطَانًا مَرِيدًا

They invoke none, besides Him, but feminine objects; ⁵² and they invoke none but Satan, the rebel [117]

﴿ ١١٨ ﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَأَتَّخِذَنَّ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا

Whom Allah has cursed. He (the Satan) said, "Surely I will take an appointed share ⁵³ from Your slaves, [118]

﴿ ١١٩ ﴾ وَالضَّلَّاتِ لَهُمْ وَالْمَغْرِبِيِّمْ وَالْمَتَّيِّنِينَ أَذَانِ الْأَنْعَامِ وَلَا مَعْرَهُمْ فَلْيَعْرِزُوا خَلْقَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطَانَ وَلِيًّا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ خَسِرَ خُسْرَانًا مُبِينًا

and I will lead them astray, and I will tempt them with false hopes, and I will command them, whereby they shall slit the ears of cattle, and I will command them, whereby they shall alter the creation of Allah." ⁵⁴ Whoever takes the Satan for friend, instead of Allah, incurs an obvious loss. [119]

Explanation

49) 'Shortening the prayer' from four Rak`at to two is called Qasr, which is a concession available in every travel, even in a peaceful journey, but the concession of performing congregational prayer in two parts is called Saleit-ul-Khalif which is explained in verse 102. This type of 'shortening' is restricted to the state of war where prayer cannot be performed in a single congregation. Since the verse was revealed in the context of war, the words 'if you fear...' are added as a matter of fact, because the Muslims in this situation needed both types of concessions. These words are not added as a pre-condition for availing the concession of the first type of Pair.

50) Verses 106 to 113 were revealed in the context of an incident. Ibn Ubairiq, probably a hypocrite, committed theft in the house of Rifa'ah, and deposited the stolen property with a Jew. When asked about the theft, he attributed the theft to the Jew from whose possession the stolen property was recovered. Rifa'ah, the victim of the theft, and his family were accusing Ibn Ubairiq, the real culprit. Since the property was recovered from the Jew, and some of its traces were found all the way from the house of Rifa'ah to the house of the Jew, (which were artificially created by the culprit) the Holy Prophet *4 was, in the beginning, inclined to hold the Jew guilty. He also reprimanded Rifa'ah for accusing Ibn Ubairiq. The present verses were revealed to disclose the real facts. The Jew was, accordingly, acquitted, and Ibn Ubairiq was convicted. But he managed to escape to Makkah, and after joining the infidels died in a miserable condition. Though revealed in the background of this incident, Verse 106, 107 and 109, through their general language, lay down fundamental guidance to the judiciary and the bar. It enjoins upon judiciary to adjudicate subject to the rules and principles revealed by Allah, and upon the pleaders to plead only for rightful persons. It has been forbidden to become an advocate for wrongful litigants. Verse 108 warns the culprits that they cannot hide themselves from Allah.

51) See note on verse 48 (published previously).

52) The pagans of Makkah mostly treated their idols as feminine in gender.

53) That is, 'a share of obedience', in the sense that they will obey Satan.

54) It refers to the pagan custom whereby they used to dedicate animals to their idols, and slit their ears as a mark of dedication. 'Altering the creation of Allah' refers to altering the figure of a creature. It includes what they did with the animals as a token of dedication, and according to an authentic hadith, it also includes tattooing the body, or some similar acts that change the look of the face permanently.



Fear and Anxiety

(١٤٥/٥) عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ خَافَ
أَدْلَجَ وَمَنْ أَدْلَجَ بَلَغَ الْمَنْزِلَ إِلَّا أَنْ سَلَعَةَ اللَّهُ غَالِيَةً إِلَّا أَنْ سَلَعَةَ اللَّهُ الْجَنَّةَ
(رواه الترمذی)

(145/5) It is related by Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger of Allah صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم said: "He who has fear sets out at the beginning of the night and he who sets out at the beginning of the night reaches the destination safely. Remember, the bargain of the Lord is not cheap, but extremely dear. Remember, the bargain of Lord is Paradise." (Tirmidhi)

Commentary: In Arabia, the caravans, generally, started in the last part of the night and, therefore, the highwaymen too, made their raids during the early hours of the morning. The travellers who were careful, however, preferred to begin their journey in the earlier part of the night so that they reached the destination without being attacked by the robbers. The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم, accordingly, says

that just as prudent travellers forgo the night's sleep and start on the journey soon after dusk, those who are keen to attain Paradise should also proceed energetically towards the goal and be ready to suppress their desires and give up comforts for the sake of it. He further emphasises that what the bondsman is looking forward to obtain from his Lord is not a thing of poor quality, which could be given away without a price; Heaven, the abode of celestial bliss cannot be gained without making a sacrifice of the most valued things like life, property and carnal appetites. Says the Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ (التوبة 9: 11)

Lo! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth because the Garden will be theirs. [At Tawbah 9:1 | 1]

Wise and Farsighted

(١٤٦/٦) عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا نَبِيَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ أَكْبَسُ النَّاسَ وَأَخْزَمُ النَّاسَ قَالَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ ذِكْرًا لِلْمَوْتِ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ إِسْتِعْدَادًا أَوْلَيْكَ الْإِكْيَاسُ ذَهَبُوا بِشَرِّ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَامَةِ الْآخِرَةِ. (رواه الطبراني في المعجم الصغير)

(146/6) Abdullah Ibn Umar narrates that once a person said to the Prophet ﷺ. "O Messenger of Allah! Tell me who is the wisest and most farsighted of men." The Prophet replied, "He who remembers death much and makes the greatest preparation for it. They alone are wise and prudent who are like that. They earn respect in this world as well as glory in the Hereafter." (Tabrani)

Commentary: When real life is the life of the Hereafter, then the wisest and most farsighted and most farsighted among the bondsmen are those who keep death permanently in the mind and prepare earnestly for it. On the contrary, they, surely, are the greatest fools who know that death is certain and, yet, make no preparations for it and remain engrossed in worldly pleasures.

(١٤٧/٧) عَنْ شَدَّادِ بْنِ أَوْسٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ وَالْعَاجِزُ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ نَفْسَهُ هَوَاهَا وَتَمَنَّى عَلَى اللَّهِ. (رواه الترمذی وابن ماجه)

(147/7) Shaddad Ibn Aws related to us that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "The wise and the strong is he who keeps his inordinate appetites under control and strives for life after death [i.e., for deliverance and felicity in the Hereafter], and the foolish and the weak is he who subordinates himself to sensual pleasures [i.e., follows the biddings of the flesh instead of the commands of Allah], and hopes [for the best] from the Lord." (Tirmidhi and Ibn-i-Majah)

Commentary: In our world, he is considered to be clever who makes a lot of money and is in a position to do whatever he likes, while a person who fails in these objectives is looked down upon as weak and foolish. With the men of the world who believe the earthly existence to be

everything, it has to be so. But in this tradition the Prophet ﷺ tells that the real life is not of the present world which, in any case, is transitory, but of the Hereafter which is everlasting. Success in the life to come is for them alone who remain loyal and obedient to Allah during their stay on earth. Hence, the truly wise and successful bondsmen are those who hold themselves in readiness for the life to follow and make their carnal selves subordinate to the Divine Will. On the other hand, they are lacking in the wisdom and doomed to punishment who have made themselves slaves of their worldly desires and ambitions and instead of observing the laws and ordinances of Allah, follow their own whims and inclinations, and still cherish in their hearts the expectation of a happy sequel in the Hereafter. However clever they may be in worldly affairs, people who indulge freely in sensual pleasures and make no preparation for the after-life are a miserable lot, imprudent, unwise and unblest. A special warning has been administered in this tradition to those who care nothing in the practical life for what awaits on the other side of death and give a free rein to their desires and earthly propensities, and yet rely upon Allah's Benevolence and Forgiveness and when anyone admonishes them they say that the Mercy of the Lord is boundless. Such people are sadly mistaken and are bound to be disillusioned in the end. The hope of compassion and kindness from the Almighty is commendable when it is supported by action otherwise it is nothing but Satanic deception.



Wasawis: Satanic Whispers

Answered by Mufti Shafiq Jakhura and Mufti M.D. Mangera

- Q. I've been suffering from very strong *wasawis* for a long time. Recently it has caused me a lot of stress. A lot of times I think things or say things in my mind, and then feel guilty afterwards and say 'astagfirullah.' I have become very paranoid lately and keep wondering if I have uttered any words of *shirk*. I am unsure if I have, and also very scared of how I will face my Lord when I die. Please advise me.
- A. Completely ignore these doubts and suspicions. Never allow this to overtake you. In spite of these thoughts occupying your mind just execute the obligations of that time. Don't ever delay the obligation on account of any thought, no matter how serious it may be. After having practiced this for some time, by the grace of Allah ﷻ, you will find some form of ease. We also suggest the following and, *Insha'Allah*, you will experience beneficial results:
1. Make abundant *taubah* and *Istighfaar* for the past and beg Allah's ﷻ assistance and guidance after every *salaah*. Be grateful to Allah ﷻ that he didn't allow you to be ruined and destroyed in this sin beyond a point of no return and without repenting.
 2. For approximately 25 to 30 minutes every day conduct *ta'leem* and read up the lives and books of the pious. *Fadhaail A'maal*, *Fadhaail Sadaqaat* and *Bahisti Zewar* are very beneficial books in this regards.
 3. Avoid all types of *haraam* and doubtful foods, places, literature and people, especially the media and its evil influences like television, immoral magazines, newspapers, novels, videos/movies, etc. Don't ever undertake suspicious works and never frequent places of suspicions, etc. like malls, clubs, cinemas, etc. Always guard your eyes and protect your chastity.
 4. Increase the recitation of The Qur'an at home together with *Zikr* and *Durood Shareef*.
 5. Try to improve one's ways and habits and follow the *sunnat* as closely as possible.
 6. Keep in contact with a pious especially a Sunnat adhering and experienced Shaykh or pious elder. Adhere to his teachings and advises. Alternately one may join the activities of the *Tablighi Jamaat*.

7. Beg Allah's ﷻ forgiveness sincerely with complete remorse 20 times after every Salaah and read the following dua, "Alahumma Innee Astaeenuka alaa Taa'atik" meaning "O Allah assist me towards your total obedience," with Durood Shareef thrice before and after, and thereafter cry, ask and beg Allah ﷻ especially after *Fajr* and *Maghrib* after reciting *Surah Yaseen*.
8. When troubled by such doubts recite "Aamantu Billahi wa Rusulihi".
9. Do not allow yourself to remain idle. Occupy yourself with

some permissible activity all the time. Especially, ensure that your mind remains occupied in permissible thoughts.

(Courtesy: albalagh.net)



Repentance – The Right Way

by Maulana Abdus Sattar Sb دوست سائر

“O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance!” (At-Tahirm 66: 8)

“Verily, Allah loves a person who (repeatedly) falls into the sedition of sins, then (repeatedly) seeks Taubah.”

(Mishkaat, Bab-ul-Istaghfar wa Taubah, Pg.206)

Allah ﷻ ordains in the Holy Qur’an:

“O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance!” (At-Tahirm 66: 8)

In the Arabic language, pure, unadulterated honey free from any kind of impurities is called *عسل ناصح*. Allah ﷻ thus says that we should become Allah’s in an untainted, pure way. *نَصَاحَةُ التَّوْبِ* in Arabic refers to a cloth that is sewn; put back together after being torn. Hence, Allah is saying, O you who believe! Sow back your torn relationship with Allah. Repair the dent in your life of *Iman* (faith) by seeking *Taubah* to smoothen it.

Allah has kept an urge and attraction towards sins in humans. But, the best person is the one who feels ashamed after committing a sin, feels guilty and asks for forgiveness with the conviction and promise of not committing it again. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:



All of Adam's children are errant and the best errant are those who seek Taubah again and again

(Mishkaat, Bab-ul-Istaghfar wa Taubah, Pg.204)

Categorization of the Sinful

Three different kinds of people are included in the sinful:

1. A person who sins and totally refuses to accept it and says that 'I haven't sinned at all; this isn't even a sin'.
2. A person who sins and then finds excuses for validating it. He accepts that he has erred but makes excuses by presenting a plethora of reasons and 'causes'. Satan too, made an excuse, presented a philosophy, made up a story for his disobedience.
3. A third kind of person admits his sin; accepts to be an offender and acknowledges his mistake. Hazrat Adam AS made a mistake; he accepted it and cried and pleaded before Allah ﷻ in a state of utter despair: *O Allah! You tell me Yourself how should I seek forgiveness? What a state of helplessness: 'how should I seek reconciliation? What appeases You, please let me know. I will do whatever appeases You.'*

When Hazrat Adam ﷺ pleaded by expressing his utter helplessness and asked Allah (for teaching him) modes of appeasement, Allah ﷻ Himself taught him words and phrases of seeking forgiveness: *Appease Me with these words.*

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"Then Adam received from his Lord Words. And his Lord pardoned him (accepted his repentance)..." (Al-Baqarah 2: 37)

And the words taught are actually a prescription for Hazrat Adam's AS children to purge sins. Hazrat Adam AS brought along the antidote for sins when he came to the world; that antidote being:

رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

"...Our Lord! We have wronged ourselves. If You

forgive us not, and bestow not upon us Your Mercy, we shall certainly be of the losers."

(Al-Araf 7: 23)

Allah ﷻ is Al-Hakeem, The Wise. When He placed an urge to sin in us, He simultaneously gave a cure for it too; if humans have an inherent urge to err, they have been given a system to heal as well; sins are there, but so are its antidotes.

The Reality of Sins

Hazrat Adam ﷺ erred but he admitted his mistake, accepted his wrongdoing, so Allah ﷻ forgave him. Thus sinning is intrinsic to human nature, a human is inclined to sin but just like it is important to recognize *Haqq* (the truth), it is important to be able to identify sins too, what really are sins?

What are Sins?

Sinning simply means 'Allah's disobedience'. Today's wayward human considers sins to be those only that other humans and our society label as such.

You must have seen at morning time in any park, some lady taking a stroll. She is rolling her prayer beads, but without observing *Purdah*. Why? Because being without *Purdah* is no longer considered bad in the society; men holding on to a rosary while going to collect their installment of interest. Because taking interest is no longer considered bad in our society; a person being exhaustingly involved in notable welfare work but holding up, for years, payments that are due to others. Lying would have become his habit and second nature. Why? Because lying and depriving others of their rights is no longer considered bad in our society. Outwardly, he seems very religious but, there is no *Shariah*-ordained *Purdah* at his home. Why? Because it isn't considered bad in the society.

That is why I say that we need to know the reality of sins; what really are sins? A sin is not one that is considered bad by our society or people: society considers adultery bad but not backbiting even

though the latter is a much bigger sin. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

الْغَيْبَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الزِّنَا

"Backbiting is a much more severe (sin) than adultery."

(Mishkaat, Bab ul Hifz-Al-Lissan wal Ghyeebate wa As-shitam, Pg.415)

One's sons and daughters at home are involved in backbiting, even though it is a sin graver than adultery. Consider this. Just think about adultery! Think about its severity! Think about its foulness and consider the words of our Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'backbiting is worse than adultery,' but since our society doesn't categorize it so, we don't even regard it as a sin. If one's daughter is involved in immorality, everyone is concerned but when she is involved in backbiting, no one gets worried. It is so because our society doesn't consider it wrong.

We need to understand the truth about sins. Once we understand the reality of sins, we would be able to grasp and attain the reality of *Taubah* as well.

The problem today is that though I consider myself a repentant person, I have excluded many sins that I commit in my life out of the list of sins altogether. The reason is that the list I have compiled is poles apart from the list of sins identified by Allah ﷻ.

A sin is one which can be referred to as 'Allah's disobedience'; one which has been forbidden by our Holy Prophet ﷺ. That alone is a sin, no matter if people in the society like it; no matter how entrenched it is in our society; no matter if those committing it hold nice titles; it will still be a sin, and it will remain so.

A Paradigm of Sin

An example of a sin is like a person who laces sweetness on poison and swallows it. Superficially, it would seem sweet, but inside it is poison and death. Similarly, sinning gives

pleasure on the surface, but it actually amounts to spiritual death.

A sin is like when a person itches himself and derives momentary delight by doing so but later, the scratched spot releases pus, becomes a wound and burns. A sinner's case is exactly the same: temporary enjoyment, then unease sets in, sleep flies away, peace of mind diminishes, contentment finishes, the heart feels banished, thus all pleasure escapes his life.

Hence, we must understand the reality of sins that a sin is basically 'Allah's disobedience'.

The Reality of *Taubah*

Now after this, we come to the stage of seeking *Taubah*.

Once Hazrat Ali ؑ was sitting somewhere and a villager came and said:

استغفرُ الله، استغفرُ الله

Hazrat Ali ؑ responded by saying:

هذه توبة الكذابين

"This is the *Taubah* of liars"

(Ahya-ul-Uloom ud Deen, Vol.4, Pg. 63)

(Just like we are busy staring at *non-mehrams* and saying استغفرُ الله . One would need to do *Taubah* for this *Taubah* itself! One would need to do *Astaghfar* for such an *Astaghfar* itself!)

The villager was a simpleton so he asked Hazrat Ali ؑ: You please tell me what is the reality of *Taubah*, what is *Taubah*?

Hazrat Ali ؑ replied: "The reality of *taubah* is النَّدَامَةُ i.e., remorse."

Once a person asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

O Prophet of Allah! What is *Taubah*? (i.e., what is its reality?)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: النَّدَامَةُ

(Ahya-ul-Uloom, Vol.4, Pg.4)

Remorse (i.e. the reality of Tauba, or repentance, is remorse).

The first component of Taubah is that the person should feel regret; he should feel remorseful and repentant at his past. He must realize how negligent he has been today towards his Benefactor. He keeps showering His blessings on me and I only 'disobey' in return. One must feel sorry and shameful.

A tradition relates that on the day of the *Qayamah*, there would be a person with many a sin, but he would be repentant; thus, Allah ﷻ will bless him with entry to *Jannah* (Paradise) just because of his remorsefulness; repentance being a big source of forgiveness.

- *To be Continued, insha'Allah*

Strength or Will

By Bint Akram

"People do not lack strength, they lack will"

We often tend to confuse strength with will. Will, which precedes strength is often ignored or neglected by many of us. Strength, undoubtedly, plays a vital role in achieving most of the things we aspire for in life, but before we are able to make use of our strength, we need to have a strong will. In simpler terms, it can be said that strength is a physical manifestation of our willpower. However, what brings our strength into action is our will. "What is now proved," said William Blake "was once only imagined." This is the power of possessing a will which, although abstract in nature, guides one to struggle for achieving their goals.

Saying no, for example, to unlawful temptations of the world requires will before strength. First, one needs to be clear about one's priorities in life. Lawful earning, leading a life of piety and not getting carried away by 'everyone's-doing-it' syndrome are all situations that actually show the strength of your willpower, that is, how passionate you are in achieving your goal, and how serious you are in letting your will become your strength.

Shakespeare aptly said, "'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are our gardens to which our wills are gardeners." Look around yourself and you will find your own life rife with examples where only letting your will dominate leads you to exert your strength. Clichéd it may sound, but there is no doubt that 'where there is a will, there is a way.' One who lacks in possessing a strong will keeps the pathways leading to his strengths forever closed. The choice is ours.

Tests: Their Purpose, Significance and Reality

By Zainab Wasay

It is said that a person first becomes a Muslim from the inside then on the outside. Our bodies and limbs merely manifest the state of our hearts and minds. An important aspect of a believer's ideological state, which the Quran too has mentioned several times, concerns tests and being tested.

In the Quran, Allah ﷻ tells us repeatedly that He created us to test us. Allah ﷻ says in Surah Mulk:

"He who created life and death so that He may test you as to which of you is better in deeds."
(Al-Mulk: 2)

Allah ﷻ also mentions this concept in Surah An'aam (6:165), Surah Hud (11:7), Surah Kahf (18:7) and a few other places. But before we get into the details of this test, we'll first stop to understand a few things.

During our lives we spend countless hours, days

and nights, studying for endless strings of tests and exams. Only then do we move ahead, progress, and are promoted. If we put our child in school on the condition that he will not be tested, our child will then sit in first grade for the next ten years. But when it comes to the hereafter we're not willing to take any exams or be tested in any way.

Although, like any valuable thing, Paradise too has a price. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Behold, Allah's trade is an expensive trade. Behold, Allah's trade is Jannah." (Tirmidhi) When we can't even get to the beach by merely wishing for it, should we expect to get to Jannah without lifting a finger for it? If schools don't take tests and exams we get worried. But if Allah ﷻ tests us we cry, "Why me?" We should ask Allah ﷻ for easy tests, but we should expect to be tested and prepare accordingly.

Tests are what differentiate between the pure and the impure and between levels of individuals. There was a Sahabi رضي الله عنه who was immensely tortured by the disbelievers when he accepted Islam. While beating him they would scream, "Where is your Lord and why doesn't He save you now?" The Sahabi رضي الله عنه would respond, "Even when you buy a cheap earthen pot you knock on it to test it and see if it is any good or not. My Lord too is testing me to see whether I qualify for Jannah or not."

Now we'll take a look at the details of this test.

The examiner is Allah ﷻ and it is He who revealed the Quran for us which is the textbook for this exam. There's no doubt that the Quran's recitation is rewarded by Allah ﷻ, but the problem is when we limit ourselves to its recitation. Textbooks are read but without properly understanding their content, exams cannot be successfully attempted and its questions leave us bewildered and taken aback. Plus the Quran is a book of action. Just as knowing a recipe isn't enough to feed me and I have to use my hands, only a conscious effort to implement the Quran's teachings in my life will get me through the minefield of this life and the

stages of the Hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ is our teacher and guide for this exam. The Prophet ﷺ himself said, "Indeed, I have been sent as a teacher." (Ibn Majah) That is why the Prophet ﷺ was an embodiment of the Quran (Bukhari). One who appreciates a teacher's accomplishments will learn from him and the more we learn about a wholly beautiful person and their astonishing accomplishments the more we love them, and so we study the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ. But until we emulate him and learn and benefit from his guidance in every walk of life, our exam of life will not be cleared. "And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you from, abstain from it." (Al-Hashr: 7)

What is the test on? Houses and cars? Or grades and looks? No, it is on:

"Which of you is better in deeds." (Al-Mulk:2)

Good deeds are the currency of the Hereafter and it is for them that we should strive. "Strive, then, to excel in good deeds." (Al-Maidah: 48)

When will the result come? The result will come in the Hereafter. Success is entering Jannah and failure is to end up in Jahannam. "So whoever is drawn away from the fire and admitted into Paradise, he indeed is successful." (Aal-e-Imran: 185). When seventy Sahabah were martyred in the incident of Bir-e-Ma'unah a person from Banu Amir martyred Haram bin Milhan (RDA) by stabbing him in the back. When Haram (RDA) saw the point of the spear coming out of his chest he immediately exclaimed, "By the Lord of the Ka'bah, I have won." (Bukhari). On hearing this the assassin was left wondering why his victim had said that he had won when he was dying. Then when he came to know that Islam's concept of failure and success encompasses the vastness of the Hereafter and isn't confined to this limited world, he embraced Islam and submitted himself to the Lord of the Worlds.

This world is the examination hall, Allah ﷻ says:

"Surely we have made what is on earth an

adornment for it, so that we test them as to who among them is better in deeds.” (Kahf: 7)

Once the test is over this world too will come to an end:

“And surely, we are going to turn whatever is thereon into a barren land.” (Kahf: 8)

If this world is an examination hall then what should I be worried about? While sitting in an exam does anyone ask, “How am I looking?” “Is my hair okay?” “How are my clothes?” No serious student does so. Before or during an exam everyone is occupied with passing honorably.

Everything present in this world is a means of testing and an exam for us. Our spouses, siblings, wealth, homes, education...: “Your wealth and your children are but a trial.” (At-Taghabun: 15) Our duty is to solve these tests as best as we can to achieve our ultimate goal: Allah’s ﷻ pleasure and Jannah. Would anyone extol the virtues of their stationery during an exam, then how sensible is it to boast of one’s wealth, education, family and children during our exam of life? Aren’t they only the means of our testing rather than our goals? Rather than focusing on the exam and solving the given questions if a student spends all three hours showing off his pencil and sharpener, the resources he was given to take the exam, how will he fare?



Similarly, if we have had a dispute with our brother or sister, we should reconcile with them because they too are tests for us which we need to pass. Also, if someone else is failing their test that doesn’t mean that we fail ours. While writing an exam if the student sitting next to me is doodling on her exam sheet, what should I do?

Should I protest that since she’s not working on her exam neither will I? Should I tear my exam up and storm out of the room? Nobody does that. But in real life when others wrong us and fail their tests we often insist on failing ours too.

In an exam, we only solve what’s assigned to us. Suppose we get a test that we don’t like one bit. Does anyone tear it up and make a new test for themselves and then proceed to solve their self-made one? What grade should anyone expect to get if they do so? Even a student with zero preparation can hope to secure some marks on an assigned test but not on a self-made one.

Similarly, Allah ﷻ has honored women with a very high status in society. Women aren’t Prophets – they are in fact the mothers and up bringers of Prophets! Women are precious, protected gems for it is they who provide society with its most precious commodity - human beings. Allah ﷻ provides her with utmost rewards for every difficulty she faces in this path. She is the most important person in each individual’s life as without her, he/she wouldn’t exist as a healthy, emotionally and psychologically sound individual. Allah ﷻ has freed her from the task of breadwinning because of this role that can only be hers. But many of us today don’t like our assigned test. We compare ourselves with men and compete with them for everything except Allah’s ﷻ pleasure. In Islam, men and women are equal in their rights and rewards, but equality doesn’t imply that they necessarily perform the same tasks despite their physical differences. Am I exhausting myself in something that was never required of me, and that too at the cost of my home and family?

After every little while, a new batch of students

After every little while, a new batch of students comes to take the same set of exams. Similarly, generation after generation comes and is tested. When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ passed away many tribes apostatized. One may wonder that the grief of the demise of the Prophet ﷺ was more than enough, then why so many more troubles and difficulties? The answer is that indeed the Sahabah  had already earned high levels in Jannah with their sacrifices with the Prophet ﷺ. But now there was a new generation of Muslims who too needed to be tested (while the Sahabah  continued to climb to ever higher levels of Jannah).

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In preparation for exams, students usually practice from past papers. These are helpful to get the feel of the exam and also because questions are often repeated. Likewise, Allah ﷻ mentions the stories of Ibrahim عليه السلام and Nimrud, Musa عليه السلام and Fir'aun many times in the Quran because similar people exist in every age. The repetition of these stories informs us of the traits and fates of these different humans. We are

strengthened from the good and take heed from the bad.

Those who spend their lives realizing that it is an exam are at a different level altogether. This single concept allows us to sail through the peaks and troughs of life. Knowing that we can earn Jannah no matter what our circumstances, allows us to remain positive, hopeful and productive.

Even the situation of the Muslims today, If Allah ﷻ willed He could fix it in no time at all. But all that's happening around us is actually a test for us as much as it is a test for the sufferers; Allah ﷻ is seeing which of us is playing their role and which of us is merely looking on as a bystander:

“Had Allah willed, He would have made a single community of people, but (He did not), so that He may test you in what He has given to you.” (Al-Maidah: 48)

May Allah ﷻ grant us all success in our real exam. Ameen.

A Book: An Easy-Going Companion

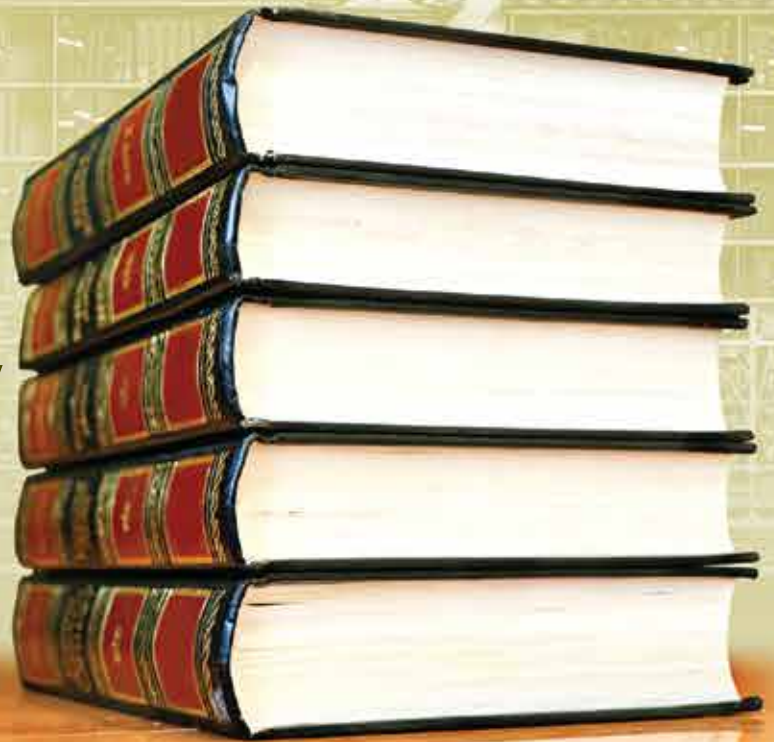
By Mufti Zubair Bayat

A book does not dictate the pace of learning. It has no fixed times. It is not limited or restricted to space or venue. Books do not make any demands nor do they get tired. Books can be studied in the privacy of the home at one's own leisure and pace. Books are not limited to just one person; the whole family can benefit from a single book and for many years on end.

Today when a deluge of filthy and unsavory reading material is flooding the homes of the world, it is time that Muslims turned quickly towards good, authentic Islamic literature to fill their homes and adorn their bookshelves. Remember, a vacuum does not remain void for long. It has to be filled sooner or later. Rather than letting it fill with the wrong, let it be filled with what is right and wholesome! (Authentic) Islamic literature is a little candle of light and guidance in the pitch dark night of misguidance outside.

Education: Islamic Concepts and Modern Society

By Prof. Syed Ali Ashraf (Late)



Even those secularist-humanists who believe in the relevance of accumulated knowledge for the education of children, deny the necessity of the concept of 'revealed knowledge', not because that concept is wrong, but because they cannot believe in God and revelation and the purpose of existence that the knowledge gives. According to professor Peters, 'life has no one purpose, man imprints purposes upon it.' The aim of education, he says, is to cultivate the 'quality of living'. The spiritual world or the world after death does not have any relevance in that process. 'Humanistic thinking,' as a humanist has said, 'is the cultivation of man, his self-cultivation and self-unfolding into full humanity.' Self-cultivation has been further explained as the cultivation, preservation and transmission of values as

justified by society and accepted by 'free' people. By 'free people' is meant people who have cultivated a scientific attitude of mind and have thus freed themselves from the control of dogma, the reverence for absolutes, the guidance by faith.

A humanist depends on reason alone. Whereas a secularist-modernist rejects all metaphysics and any kind of ideology, a humanist justifies an ideology of some fixed values within the context of social change. This kind of humanism stresses the complementary role of science and human values, and draws up a scheme of human values which is similar to the religious scheme. But the source of this scheme is intellectual rather than spiritual. Because of the lack of this permanent

source and also because of no essential and permanent concept of the 'self' there is no underlying principle establishing a final purpose, no focal center to control and guide mankind. All sociological investigations into the religious consciousness of advanced countries like England and America indicate a common malady: people are confused and puzzled. It was also found that this conclusion led to an increase in juvenile delinquency. Because of this confusion and the fear of further deterioration of the morals of younger generations, religion was introduced as a compulsory subject in secondary English schools by the Education Act of 1944. This introduction has not solved the problem nor has it led English society back to its original religious moorings. If religion is taught as one of many subjects and not as central subject governing the approach to all branches of human knowledge, one cannot hope to reassert the moral basis of a society. At the same time, if we take English society formulating and actively implementing secular laws that are at variance with and even opposed to religious laws, how can religious ideals be upheld? How can the integrity, nobility and unity of family life that religion enjoins be maintained when permissiveness becomes an accepted principle? How can people consider the Qur'anic story of the creation of Ādam as true when the theory of evolution is taught as the final truth? Similarly, how can there be an interest-free economy when the whole economic structure of society is rooted in interest? It is impossible to compromise between Islam and secularism. Where secularization means a modern scientific approach to knowledge and way of life no adjustment is acceptable. What the Qur'ān says, in a similar context is true. Muslims cannot be modern in the above sense. There cannot be a compromise between *kufr* and *īmān*, faithfulness and faith, secularism and Islam. Muslims cannot believe in the basic assumptions of Islamic culture and civilization together with these assumptions of modern Western civilization. They cannot believe in a God-created universe in which natural phenomena are portents (or *āyāt*) of God and at the same time regard them as nothing more than materials which can be plundered for

temporary gain. Can one accept Ādam as the first Man created by God and at the same time believe in evolution? How can the viewer believe in Man's destiny as *Khalīfatullāh* when all modern scientific and psychological theories teach many confused notions of 'self'? If it is accepted that values are dependent on changing circumstances characterized glibly and falsely as 'social change' and all norms are regarded as time and space-bound and not derived from absolutes, how can Divine Law as given in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah be immutable against which man can measure his own actions objectively?

In an attempt to prevent the entire Muslim world being totally captured by secularist ideas and ideals, the traditionalists have supported traditional Islamic education whereas many authorities have adopted a secular education system with slight modifications here and there. The two systems have not been integrated because as yet Muslim scholars have not formulated Islamic concepts for all modern branches for all scientific knowledge as substitutes for the secularist concepts. Even the approach to literature and fine arts is vitiated by the concept of aesthetic pleasure which is at variance with that of a universal ethical and spiritual norm. Muslim scholars who met at the world conferences on Muslim education held at Makkah and other places are now fully aware of this problem. They know that the two systems are creating conflicting groups who have already started fighting among themselves. Moreover, unless Islamic concepts are formulated and text-books written which are guided by these concepts and a teaching methodology devised to carry the Islamic approach into all branches of knowledge, the traditional system will not be able to resist secularism for long. But scholarly research and reform in formal education alone cannot save Muslim society from this onslaught. Radio and television programs originating from Europe; films and theaters influenced by the content, technique and methodology of the non-religious West; and the secularist mentality of the ruling bureaucrats — all these need a new orientation. Even if Muslim scholars carry out

research and are able to formulate true Islamic concepts to meet the challenge of secularist concepts, formal education alone cannot solve the problem unless steps are also taken to create resistance to modern scientific attitudes, and a modernized and mechanized environment.

The problem for Muslims is therefore far more complex than the problem of substituting secularist concepts by Islamic concepts drawn from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Already large scale modernization is going on in all Muslim countries. This modernization of environment is inevitably coupled with some form of mechanization and, where possible, with industrialization. Even countries ill-equipped with

to afford it are compelled to industrialize and welcome technology. Can education preserve and transmit orthodoxy through those Islamic concepts that we are expecting scholars to formulate, even when the environment, including its society, has been modernized and technology is creating a technological mentality? This question can be answered only after we examine what this modernization of environment means, the characteristics of technological mentality, and how far it is amenable to control by religious influences.

(To be continued, insha'Allah)

Tawbah and Time Tenses

To sin is a verb or an act or action. Therefore, it has three time tenses, i.e. past, present, and future. So when we repent and seek forgiveness, we should do so with these three time tenses in mind. We should repent for all of our sins, the ones in the past, present, and future. Everyone understands why we would repent for past sins, but why the present and the future? We should repent for the present because we lack the sincerity that Allah deserves even while presently repenting. We should repent for the future we are human and are prone to sin. So perhaps by acknowledging our weakness and hoping in His mercy, He will forgive us in the future, or even better, facilitate for us not to sin, and if by chance we do, then He allows us the opportunity to repent and ask for forgiveness. One of the scariest consequences of sin is that the sinner is deprived from repentance. (Shaykh Nabeel Khan)

Kitab e Zindagi (The Book of My Life)

Translated by Zainab Wasay from
Shu'oor e Hayat by Maulana Yusuf Islahi

"Each one of us is authoring a book - a book uniquely their's. Every new dawn leaves a new page for us to fill in, until finally the day comes when we fill in its last page and it is then forever sealed. And as we close our eyes and our soul departs our body, this book too will be closed - only to be opened again very soon.

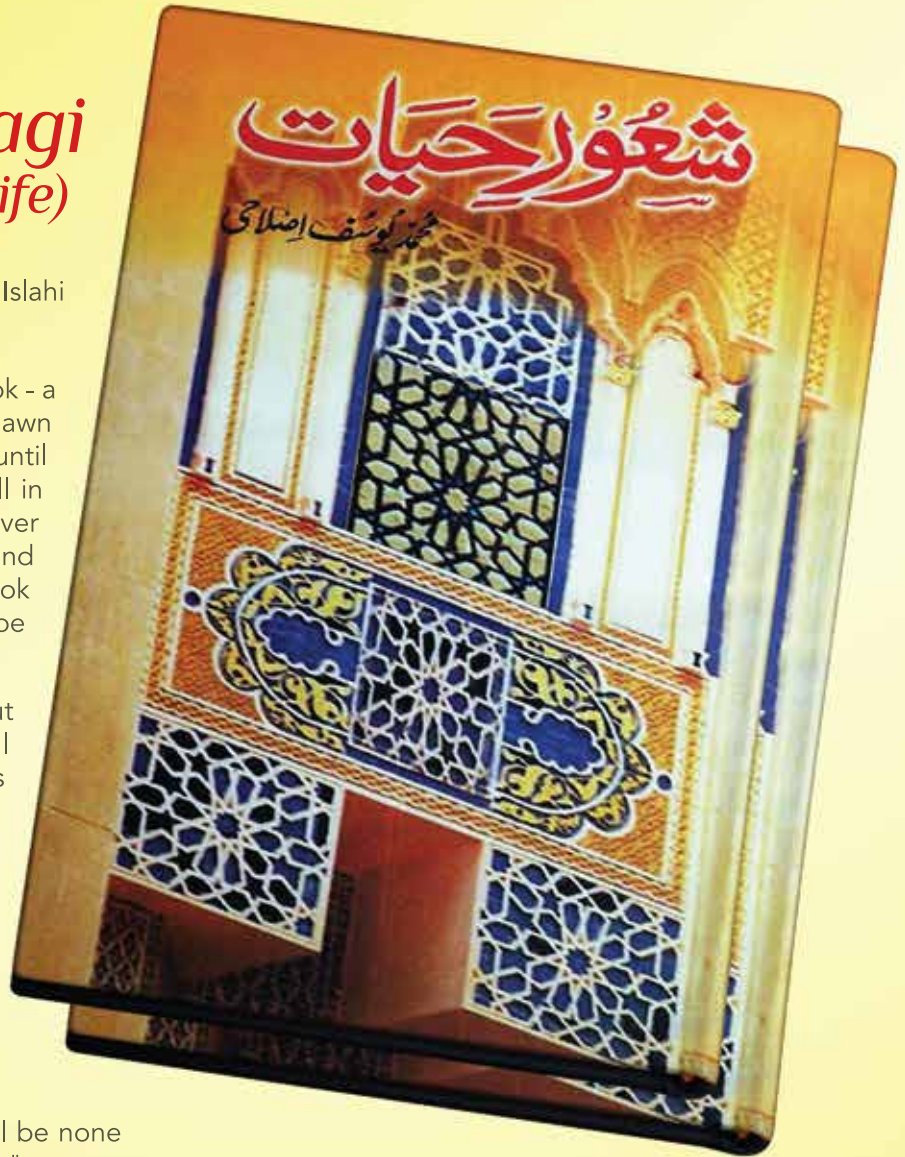
We may or may not realize it, but every one of us is exhausting all their energies in preparing this book. It will contain only what you write in it, no one else is capable of adding even a dot. You are the sole author of this book and you write in it all that you think, see, hear, desire and do. And it won't be long before the day comes when Allah, The One and Sublime, calls:

"Read your book. Today there will be none but yourself to call you to account." (Al-Isra:13-14)

Then all that we did in our worldly life will determine the fate of our afterlife. Hence, depending on the content of the book, some will be given their book in their right hand and some in their left:

"As for him who is given his book in his right hand, he will say, 'Here, take my book and read it! Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my Account.' So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing. In a lofty Garden, the fruits in bunches whereof will be low and near at hand. 'Eat and drink merrily for what you did in the days gone by!'" (Al-Haaqah: 19-24)

"But as for him who is given his book in his left



hand, he will say, 'I wish I was never given my book. And never knew what my account was. I wish, would that it had been my end. My wealth has not availed me, my power has vanished from me...'" (Al-Haaqah: 25-29)

May Allah ﷻ make us among those who receive their book of deeds in their right hand. Ameen."



Ethically Successful

By Ateefah Sana Ur Rab

The door swung open and stepped inside a familiar figure clad in a black abaya. The undeniably tense aura of anxiousness swiftly lowered the temperature of the classroom as a stack of papers found its place on the fairly polished wooden desk. For a moment, all pairs of eyes lost themselves to what lay in front, trying to decipher what the near future held as a surprise. Though soon enough the realisation dawned and the focus shifted back to what was of utmost importance, 'Assalam-o-Alaikum!'

'Walaikum Assalam Wa Rehmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu. How is everyone today?' Clasp her hands together and rubbing gently to keep warm in the chilly weather of late December, Miss Ruqaiya smiled at her female students. Unfortunately, the excitement in her voice wasn't quite reciprocated, if one would take notice of all the troubled expressions in sight.

'I think it will depend on what kind of result you are about to reveal.' It was Ramsha who had dared to speak through the unnerving silence. The rest chose not to add to it all that was on their minds and waited rather impatiently, glancing at the marked papers that would soon to be distributed.

'I see. Well, it's about time.' She started to call out the names one by one and handed over the papers. Those who approached in turns were unsure whether to mimic the smile plastered on their teacher's lips and thus, remained neutral with their heads hung slightly. In the midst, as if she had suddenly remembered something, Miss Ruqaiya raised her head. 'Girls, a round of applause for Kainat upon scoring the highest marks. Ninety-seven out of hundred. Well done!'

Hania, who sat at the very back, looked at the proud girl in front, wondering if there would come a day when she would be the one being appreciated. Would she be able to face her parents and relatives without guilt stabbing her existence?

She shrugged the negativity away and took a deep breath with a leap of faith. Upon hearing her name, she went to receive the white sheet which held more power over her than she had ever consciously recognised. Clutching it and uttering prayers, she went back to her place and sat down. The teeny tiny speckle of hope she had had in her heart, vanished immediately as her eyes successfully comprehended the digits written in

red. The ghost of a smile surrendered itself to one complete frown.

'Am I not working hard enough?' She asked herself, realising the belief that she had attempted well in her exam was an outright delusion she had voluntarily kept feeding on. Grades had always had this proclivity of disappointing the young girl each time she thought the scores would be better. Life seemed



to have an obsession with playing games with her; where it kept throwing limes, twice in a while. Hania sighed in defeat. Nothing could be done. She went and quietly handed back the paper to Miss Ruqaiya.

'Faiza, how did you— I thought you had said you couldn't study due to the drama episode on air?'

'Shhh— don't say that out loud! Someone might hear!' Faiza hushed her best friend, hastily looking around to make sure that no one was close by.

'But how did you get such a high score?' Sadaf whispered, completely oblivious that Hania had heard them on her way to the last row.

Bitterness erupted within the already disheartened girl as she stared at the two from afar. It appeared, Faiza wasn't revealing much but that didn't matter at all. Not to Hania, at least. She knew what had happened that day. She was, after all, one of the witnesses who had no evidence and neither the required courage to speak against such occurrences. Rage was like one volcano inside of her, equally stirred with the helplessness that ran in her bones. How sunshine and glitter, it was there. While storm and darkness, here.

'Okay, girls! Just hand over the papers now. I need to start with the next topic. Ten minutes have passed already. Take out your textbooks. No more time to be wasted!' Miss Ruqaiya announced, interrupting Hania's train of thoughts. It was precisely what she needed right then, to keep tears at bay.

The fourteen-year-old girl had somehow

managed to stop pessimism from taking reins after reaching home, for she had busied herself with a nap. It worked quite well if the nightmare was to not be taken into account. With a jerk she had woken, sweat running down her forehead. Just when she came back after washing her face with cold water, Ayesha called. 'Hania, Nausheen baji has arrived.'

'Okay, mom. I'll be right there.'

She covered her head with dupatta and grabbed her school bag. Bracing herself for whatever was to come, she entered the drawing room where her tuition teacher sat on the sofa. 'Assalam-o-Alaikum, baji.'

'Walaikum Assalam, beta. Sit down, how are you?'

'I am fine.'

'Why does that sound like you've forced it out? Did something happen at school?'

With hesitation and escalating dread of getting scolded, Hania whispered in a cracked tone. 'I... I got my science exam result... and...'. She bent down and quietly took out the sheet that pronounced her doom, placing it on the table. For an endless moment, there was silence as Nausheen baji went through the pages. Hania could hear the beat of her heart and ragged breathing in agitation.

'What happened, beta? You studied well. Why is the score so low? You've barely made it. What went wrong?' The tenderness in her teacher's voice wasn't what she had anticipated.

'I don't know...'. Tears poured from Hania's eyes as she sobbed. 'I did what I could... And yet... They made it... far better than me... they always get around without anyone catching them in the act... and I... just because I don't cheat... I...'. Her hands sheltered the newly formed streaks as she cried more.

'Listen to me, Hania. Come on, good girl. Look at me.' Nausheen baji cooed, patting her student's shoulder until she calmed a bit. The girl had had a nervous breakdown, after successfully pushing it for too long.

'Hania, I am proud of you. Do you know why?'

'Why?' She sniffed.

'It's because you are not like others who achieve their desired goals by implementing what is unethical. That is one quality that unfortunately, I rarely get to see these days. You know, I'd rather have you fail in exams than to have you involved in cheating and get a gold medal. Hania, my dear, it must be hard. I can understand. Watching people achieve your goals without any struggle while you're continuously testing your limits and not getting anywhere, requires patience and courage. And I know you have both. Trust me, the time isn't much far when you will receive the outcome of hard work and never letting yourself turn to the wrong ways.'

'When? When will I have it? I have been waiting and waiting since years...'

'Soon, Hania. Very soon. Your golden days are approaching. Hang in there, my dear. Put your complete trust in Allah and His plans. You will be rewarded massively.' Nausheen baji smiled in reassurance.

The words of her beloved teacher did come true in the near future when Hania witnessed herself standing in all her glory, being awarded the shield for scoring the first position in her college. It was the moment when her heart grew a higher level of respect for Nausheen baji, the one who had always believed in her potential and supported her through thick and thin. When asked to share a few words with everyone, Hania grabbed the microphone with gratitude enlightening her countenance.

'The credit of my achievement goes to my dearest teacher, Miss Nausheen. If I stand here, with this award in my hand, it is because of her. She taught me to confront each obstacle with firmness and hard work, to never implement unethical means to achieve my goals and to have faith in Almighty Allah that He won't let my struggles go to waste. I thank Allah Almighty for showering me with countless blessings and keeping me away from what could have put my success in jeopardy on the Day of Judgement.'

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Void of the Soul

By Emaan Zubair

Grey are the walls, the sky, the air
The Sun's so-called radiance is but a dim glare

Shrouded is my being with clouds of bleak gloom
And when hail makes its descent,
I can scarcely seem to care

A vast barren desert is the inside of my mind
Where thoughts of mild cheer have yet been known to bloom
But thorny wretchedness drives gashes into my soul
Spilling blood over and over
Until it has marked its goal

When? My heart trills out the woeful symphony
Will the bonds of melancholy finally be broken free?
Why? Follows the desperate screeching of my mind
Was this dismal living meant for us to be?

Why? Exists such needless rancor
Why? Such selfish greed
Why? Such vehement loathing
The contrast in color or creed?
Why? Is my identity being stripped away
Why? Injustice taking its toll
When? Will truth finally manifest itself
And fill the void of my soul?



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The Blame Game

By Zawjah Zia

"In the last year, Denmark elected a female prime minister, Brazil elected a female president and a female took the helm of the International Monetary Fund. In the last decade, Ethiopia passed the most progressive abortion laws in Africa to combat unsafe abortion rates and Mali passed a law that says women are not required to obey their husbands. It seems the state of women's rights and freedoms worldwide are perhaps better than ever before. But, large and sobering discrepancies remain. Women aren't allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia and are killed for honor in Pakistan."

(An extract from a 'Women's Rights Report' published in a famous international magazine a couple of years back.)

Type 'oppressed women' in any search engine on the internet and select the images option, and almost ninety-nine percent of the results are going to show women clad in *abaayas*. Ironically enough, there won't be a single image of a Christian Nun, though their 'get up' is fairly similar to Muslim women in *abaayas*.

A dignified Muslim would frequently witness the distasteful bias and misinterpretation in the examples like the ones stated above and instantly reject them saying, "These reports are compiled by non-Muslims as per their own ignorant standards, they have no idea what Islam is - a religion of peace and justice."

But this very argument then goes against us. By saying so, we, the inhabitants of the Muslim societies, the supposed custodians of the beautiful *Deen-e-Islam*, imply that Muslims don't need any women's rights campaigners because Islam does not teach to oppress women. But then we look around ourselves and witness nerve-wrecking cases of wife-thrashing, dowry-deaths, bride-burnings and acid-attacks against women in our neighborhoods, almost all these crimes committed by Muslim men. More appalling is the fact that these crimes, more than often, are committed under the sacred bond of *Nikah*. As an aftermath of these crimes then, we have women's rights

organizations of every sort and caliber who demand all sorts of 'women's rights' - due and undue. Why complain then that the world misinterprets and defames our *deen*?

Whatever is wrong, unfortunately, is with us - those of us, the only thing 'Muslim' about whom are their names.

Let us now look at some standards that have been set by our beautiful *deen* pertaining to the ideal behavior that husbands and wives must have towards each other, particularly with reference to the common misbehaviors, misconceptions and misinterpretations prevalent in Muslim societies today.

Tranquility, the sole purpose of marriage in Islam

The beautiful institution of *Nikah* in Islam is aimed at providing a source of peace and satisfaction to the believers.

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them..." (Ar-Ru'm:21)

Also, Allah ﷻ has likened the spouses to being garments for each other - garments that would provide protection and satisfaction to the one adorning them, would beautify and compliment them, would hide their faults and so on. Now how can one be such a garment for his/her spouse?

With love and Kindness...

The beloved Prophet ﷺ has said that, "The best of you is the one who is the best to his wife..." (Tirmidhi). Also, He ﷺ is reported to have compared women to 'vessels of glass' (referring to the fragility of women and how carefully they need to be handled).

On the other hand, explicating the level of devotion and respect that a woman must have for her husband, our beloved Prophet ﷺ has said that if prostrating to anyone except Allah ﷻ would have been allowed then women would have been asked to prostrate before their husbands. In fact, being

obedient and pleasing to her husband is such a virtuous trait for a woman that it has been graded as a ticket to *Jannah* for her *Insha'Allah*.

By acknowledging and accepting the respective duties and rights...

Allah ﷻ, The Hakeem (All-Wise), has assigned specific roles to Muslim men and women regarding every aspect of their lives in this world.

The beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said in his last sermon that, "O people, it is true that you have certain rights over women but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your rights then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with anyone of whom you do not approve, as well as never be unchaste."

The only concept of dowry that our deen has provided us with is the right of the women in the form of Mahr that is to be delivered by the husband to his wife at the time of Nikah. Dowry, as prevalent in our society, is a concept nonexistent in our deen.

Moreover, it is the right of both men and women that their spouses be helpful and accommodating for them, that they acknowledge their own faults to help them forgive the faults of their spouses and that they love them for Allah ﷻ.

A humble Diagnosis and Prescription

Having stated the few key standards set for us by Allah ﷻ in order for us to enjoy blissful relationships, let us now compare 'what is' with 'what is not but needs to be' and see that in what gory ways it is affecting our social fabric, our peace and the way we are seen by the rest of the world.

For Him...

Yes, Allah ﷻ has appointed you as a 'Qawwaam' over her. She has to obey you in doing the things that Allah ﷻ has told her to do for you. But if you remember that you are the boss while demanding your rights but forget it when it comes to keeping up with your duties and, above all, take undue advantage of it when you feel like treating her as your slave, then it won't work. Ever wonder why you don't see 'men's rights activists' around? May be it's because you know that whatever you want, you'll take it by force. She, on the other hand, resorts to

taking these drastic measures in order to get her point across because she finds no other way to acquire her rights from you. Allah ﷻ has made her weaker than you and you know it too well. But force is not the answer. It never has been and never will be.

Hence, be a rightful protecting guardian for her. Take care of her, try your best to provide for her, be gentle with her, forgive her mistakes, respect her, appreciate whatever she does for you and be a source of peace for her. Demand of her only what is your right and nothing more because 'more' shall automatically follow then *Insha'Allah*.

For Her...

He is a gift for you by Allah ﷻ so take him as exactly that; a strong, protecting friend who works hard to provide for you because it is his job. But if you act all vigilant when reminding and nagging him about his duties and when it comes to your own, you are clumsy and ignorant, then don't blame him if he reacts. Just imagine how Allah ﷻ has arranged your life to be facilitated by him. Had Allah ﷻ not made it his duty to go out and earn a livelihood for you, then you'd loathe the 'freedom' that you campaign for now.

The beloved Prophet ﷺ has said that, "This world, the whole of it, is a commodity and the best of the commodities of the world is a virtuous wife" (Bukhari). So try and be that precious treasure for him. You are special, so act with dignity. You are not every man's commodity to look at and have fun with, rather you are for him alone to cherish and derive peace from. So submit to him as one devoted friend would do to the other. Expect from him your bare minimum emotional and physical necessities but not an ounce more, and he'll protect and pamper you to his maximum capacities and cherish you like a jewel, *Insha'Allah*.

Sadly enough, today most of us are utterly ignorant of the beauty and serenity of a happy marriage. Not only that, but Muslim men and women misbehave with and mistreat each other in almost all of their interactions. We deny the standards set for us by our divine deen and transgress, then to stop the world from calling bad names to us and our deen, instead of returning to our lovely code of life, we pass laws like the one passed in Mali.

Common sense is not very common indeed!

Unorthodox Matchmaking

By Bint e Aftab Ahmed

"Sunen!" (Listen). A shrill voice brought us to abruptly stop talking and look around.

"Hey, Warda, I think---"

"Jee aap! Zara sunen!" (Yes you, listen please). One of the two aunties sitting across from us called loudly.

I'm surprised to see both of them looking at me expectantly, and a nudge from Afia is all it takes for me to squeak out, "Jee, main?" (Me?).

"Jee, aap. Idhar aaen zara." (Yes you, come here for a minute). The younger one of the two says.

I look at my friends desperately, willing for them to pull me out of this misery but all I get is a push and narrowed eyes telling me to quit being a brat and just go to them.

I swallow deeply, and take shaky steps towards the aunties who literally are staring holes into my soul, borderline predatory.

"Jee? Assalam o alaikum." I manage to say with the barest hint of a smile that they can't see anyway because of my veil that my friends and I hadn't taken off because of the cameras and the men.

"Wa'alaikumassalam, jee kya naam hai aap ka?" (What is your name?) Again, it's the younger of the two ladies who makes the shrill demand,

while the older aunty is just scanning me from head to toe, making me shift uneasily.

And as I tell them my name and my address and answer their weird questions, I'm suddenly super calm because somehow, it's not so weird anymore, I know the drill. Look down, answer all their questions politely, give them Mama's number and then walk away. Been there, done that. More times than I'd like to remember. But it's the absurdity and audacity of their next question that literally has me go numb for a moment. All I'm able to do, as my mind takes its sweet time processing this unusual demand, is blink. And blink again.

"Aap apne chehry se ye hataen, in ko aap ki shakal dekhni hai." (Remove your veil. She wants to see your face). The younger lady says, gesturing towards her elder.

And in front of an audience of nearly five people, I'm left speechless and at the brink of tears in just a minute. And as I think of an appropriate reply, I can feel my friends and other strangers drill holes into me with their stares; it doesn't help that I'm the only *Niqabi* (veiled one) standing in a hall full of vibrantly colored women, so people from other tables are also staring at the black-gown-wearing anomaly standing between two aggressive aunties.

"I'm sorry, there are men here...", just as I begin

explaining to them, very politely may I add, my predicament, the younger lady again cuts me off again asking for my number and that is where I decide. Again, very politely, I tell her that I'm already engaged and just as I'm about to take my leave, she steals the words from my mouth, well, my mind since *Alhumdulillah*, I've been raised with better manners.

"*Aaye haye! Chalo, jaan chuuti!*" (Good riddance!)

And as I sit back down on my chair, there's silence amongst the three of us until one of my friends says,

"We're all in *Abayas* (gowns) and *Niqabs* (veils), they couldn't see anything; then why did they only call you?"

And as I try to lighten the mood, by cracking a stupid joke about my super-impressive personality that makes waves and sends rays, my gaze falls on our hands on the table. And never before have I been this ashamed and embarrassed by my fair complexion. It takes me no more than five seconds to understand that they couldn't see anything but our hands, and all they saw were my fairer hands against the beautiful brown ones of my friends'. My head bowed down.

The first step towards change is acknowledgment and the second, acceptance. Unfortunately for us girls, in certain areas, society is not even willing to acknowledge its mistakes, let alone allow fixing them.

Despite the thousands spent on their education, women, even young ones, in our society are blinded by the customs and traditions that they believe are correct, and must be followed. They themselves have gone through these same procedures of being sat on the sofa like a porcelain doll, while strange aunties observe them with laser eyes and ask questions they should not be obligated to answer. Why do these women not feel offended, why do these women not feel objectified? Is this the respect our

religion has given us, that any random woman with a son, a brother or a nephew will show up, observe us from head to toe, interrogate us about our hobbies, our routines, our education, our friends and basically, all things personal?

No. That is not how our religion dishonors our entire being. And this is not our culture; the Islamic culture, these are traditions and customs we've inherited and adopted from the subcontinent, from Hindustan (i.e.: Hindus). Allah ﷻ has given women such dignity, that they are not meant to be showpieces; not for men and not for women, they are not meant to be paraded around, for whatever purpose. And was this the custom in the life of our beloved Prophet ﷺ, or in the lives of the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم? No, it was not. In those times, fathers and *Walīs* (guardians) would give their daughters to men who they deemed worthy. They didn't invite people to come see their daughters; desperately hoping and praying that they'll like them enough, be impressed enough to come again, and again with a few more relatives, and then send in a proposal. One woman did not judge another girl, actually girls, and then short list to decide who was best for her man. That was the worth, the respect of a woman in olden times, whereas modern society has reduced her to an object judged according to society's standards of beauty. In the 'backward' culture, women could actually make the first move, their families could make the first move, while today, it is unthinkable, unimaginable, taboo and plain shameful for a girl or her parents to send out a proposal. If someone is blessed with a daughter, then they are actually also cursed with times of worry and desperation, because they simply cannot go out and choose men. It just has to be the other way round; because you have a daughter you will be reduced to submission before those who could maybe consider her for their sons. This is how we have cheapened and corrupted the institution of marriage.

We may believe we are exempted from this perverted psychology until it begins to infiltrate not only our lives, but our perceptions. And call me a feminist or an overly opinionated individual,

but no, I am not okay with being X-rayed by random women (and with the remarks you hear after that!) My interests, my hobbies, my views, they're just that; mine. They are not so trifle that I am expected to exhibit them in front of anyone who demands a visual. And why must I go through these obligations, why must I dress up to impress someone who I have no guarantee will even actually end up in my life? Just because, in this matter, for their convenience, society chooses to forego religious morals and values?

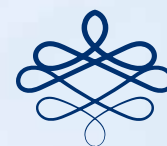
This whole culture of girls being presented and exhibited is wrong from the very roots. Those who are 'blessed' with these visitors are often told to be grateful for them; for there are so many girls who grow up seeing fairer, thinner, prettier cousins being visited, while they just keep on waiting; their parents keep on waiting for the day when their home, too, will be blessed with these visitors. Just look at how twisted the whole system and our thinking is. This system has given fruit to insecurities, and set, yet another, standard of beauty. If you're pretty you'll have aunties ringing your bell every other day, and if that's not happening, then maybe you should be seriously considering Botox or at least maybe a nose job, because this is obviously very telling of your beauty. And it's worse if you know you're not meeting the general standards of a 'pretty' girl ('beautiful' really seems a long shot these days; no one gets that honor), and some aunties come in; you're forced to dress up and although that is not how you want to feel, but the excitement, no matter how subdued, of everyone around you, rekindles a kind of hope and excitement within you, only for it to be crushed; for they didn't look that 'impressed' or they simply didn't come back. And you're left thinking of the thirteen reasons why, and watching that suicidal show is exactly what you feel like doing, since all this havoc leads to the girls ending up in an existential crisis; caught up in an interminable quest to correct the newfound flaws.

While this may seem a harsh and offensive read to many, as mostly it's not appreciated that girls even think too much on such topics, it is

undoubtedly nothing but the relatable truth.

Dear parents, you need to understand that your daughters will get married at the time, and with the person who is written for them. Have faith in Allah ﷻ believe in what He has planned and stand up for your daughters; let your actions be your voice raised against any degrading customs. And if you cannot do that, for whatever reasons (for the worries and constraints of the parents truly are incomprehensible for us children), then at least do not become a part of this hawkish 'girl hunt' yourself. At least, do not promote this custom of making girls exhibit themselves in front of ladies who are absolute strangers and could throw any piece of judgment at a girl's face, without having to offer any regrets. Don't take years going from home to home, looking from one girl to the other, unknowingly breaking so many people's hearts; shattering hopes and building insecurities; causing damage you had no intention of creating.

In order to collectively grow as a society, we need to acknowledge and question this mentality and practice. Who does it serve? Is the overwhelming feeling of inadequacy over your 'flaws', the fear to get married before your 'expiry date', and the obsession with filling in with all the society-set beauty and socio-economic standards, the key to a successful and happy life ahead? All women have a voice, all girls think, some may voice their feelings while others choose to remain quiet. But do not mistake their silence for acceptance and appreciation for this myopic culture; they rightfully feel objectified and will continue to do so, until these issues are addressed. The need of the hour is to mend the cracks in our society, step by step, beginning with at least not promoting this culture of coercively putting up girls for exhibition.





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The Wheelchair

Translated by Zainab Wasay



From the Arabic book: *Wa Taharraknaa bil Quran wa Sunnah* by Somaya Ramadan Ahmad

After attaining a degree in Arabic literature the young man began his teaching career in a college. His love for the Arabic language helped him to memorize the Quran and he would find utmost joy in applying its Aayaat (verses) to his life. He would also try to help his relatives, neighbours and students through understanding

the aayaat of the Quran - and this single quality sufficed to win him the hearts of one and all.

Years passed until he reached twenty nine years of age. Then, on a day that was destined for him, his health deteriorated all of a sudden, his legs got paralyzed and he became irrevocably

crippled. But because of the esteem that people held him in, his home was always bustling with loved ones; one would take care of his food, another would help him with his clothes while still others would tidy up his house.

Meanwhile, with each day he only grew closer to the Quran, until he actually started delivering Quran lessons. In teaching the Quran he would share beautiful secrets of his love for the Quran with all those who visited his home. His method of teaching was that he would first read the *aayah*, he would ask his students to memorize it and he would explain its meanings and method of application. Later he would ask them how far they had reached in bringing the *aayah* into their actions. Always pleasant and smiling, he was content with the will of the Most Merciful as he hoped to attain His pleasure by his patience and forbearance. Classes for *Hifz* and the implementation of the Quran began taking place in his house - every batch would be succeeded by another.

Marriage

Before his illness, he had been engaged to one of his relatives but the topic had fallen silent after paralysis befell him. Then to everyone's surprise his fiancé herself revived the topic and insisted on marrying him so that she may become closer to Allah ﷻ. Her father tried to persuade her to change her mind since her betrothed was now completely immobile and life requires more than affection to get through. But in the end he gave in to her insistence since she yearned to look after him as everyone else did, and the only way she could do that was by marrying him. So out of Allah's mercy for His creation she became this young man's wife. While attending to him, her tongue would always be moist in the remembrance of Allah ﷻ, and when she would hear him reciting the Quran she would say, "By Allah, this is more valuable than this world and all that it contains."

Life's Simple Needs

The young man was in dire need of a wheelchair to allow him to move about. However, his illness had exhausted all his resources and he simply couldn't afford to buy one as he could barely

manage to take care of his daily needs. So the people around him began searching for someone who could help this seemingly simple but amazing person.

A *daa'iyah* came to know of his story. She knew of a woman who devoted her time and wealth to help the needy as she had come to the realization that her wealth was a test from Allah ﷻ. Hence she would spend it in the path of Allah ﷻ in the hope of being included among the People of the Right Hand and so that she might be relieved of its accountability on the Day of Reckoning. The following *aayaat* were her motto:

"Their guidance is not your responsibility, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged."
(Al-Baqarah: 272)

"Whoever is protected from his natural greed—it is they who are the successful." (Hashr: 9)

"Those who give in prosperity and adversity."
(Aal-e-Imran: 134)

Abundance of wealth really is a test, and the only path to salvation is to spend it in that which pleases Allah ﷻ while constantly praising and thanking Him for His favors and blessings.

As expected, as soon as the lady was contacted she got in touch with others like herself until she managed to arrange a wheelchair for the young man. It then seemed as though the whole world got consolidated in it for him as everything came into his reach and his life became much easier.

The Gift

Life went on until one day the *daa'iyah* picked up her phone to hear the voice of the benevolent woman in a deep trance of *iman* (faith), "Dear sister, I've just witnessed an incredible sign! I simply have to share it with you. Do you remember the young impaired teacher? Well listen carefully to what I have to tell you!

"As you know, every month he goes to collect his modest stipend. Well, as always, his companions

took him. After seating him in the hall they folded his wheelchair and put it beside him. As they were waiting, a plump elderly woman struggling to walk with crutches entered the hall. With every movement she would sigh in her weak and feeble voice as she was clearly suffering great pain and exhaustion. As soon as she saw the young man with the wheelchair on his side she mumbled some words, put her hand on the wheelchair and addressed the young man saying, 'If only you gave this to me, it's my dream.' He immediately responded, 'It's yours, dear mother.'

"Everyone was dumbfounded. One person tried to intervene but as the woman glorified Allah ﷻ with tears flowing down her cheeks and thanked Him as well as the young man, he too was rendered speechless. And within seconds she and the wheelchair disappeared out of sight.

"The young man was now alone without his support and aide. He looked at his companions but before they could say anything to him, he took them to his world as he recited the verse: *"They give them priority over themselves, even if they themselves are needy. And whoever is protected from his natural greed—it is they who are the successful."* (Hashr: 9)

He then said, 'I often used to think and wonder how the Sahabah would do so, since it really is so difficult. But now by the grace of Allah, I've experienced sacrifice and giving preference to others over one's self and I now know that it has its own sweetness and charm. Allah ﷻ made this possible for me and helped me to do it, so indeed all praise is for Him.'

Allah's ﷻ Watchfulness over Us

His companions looked at each other in absolute silence and bewilderment as they picked him up and took him back. They had no idea where they could get another wheelchair from since even the first one was only obtained after much effort and difficulty.

The young man began having a hard time without his wheelchair. One day he called me and after telling me the story of the elderly woman, he began explaining and apologizing for giving it away without asking me first. I was absolutely

shocked and I said to him, 'Do you know what you gave her? You gave her your two legs! Do you have any idea how much we did to arrange for that wheelchair? How could you give it to her when you yourself were in such need of it?'

"I was saying all of this to hear his response. He was trying to calm me down as he read the ayah: *"You will not attain virtuous conduct until you give of what you cherish"* (Aal-e-Imran: 92) On hearing this ayah from him I couldn't control my tears. Since only three days ago a well-off family had brought a high quality wheelchair to me which they had ordered from abroad for their sick father, but he had passed away before he was able to use it. Whenever I would pass by it I would think to myself, 'I wonder who you're meant for and who will enjoy all the facilities you have... Indeed Allah has brought you here for someone special...'

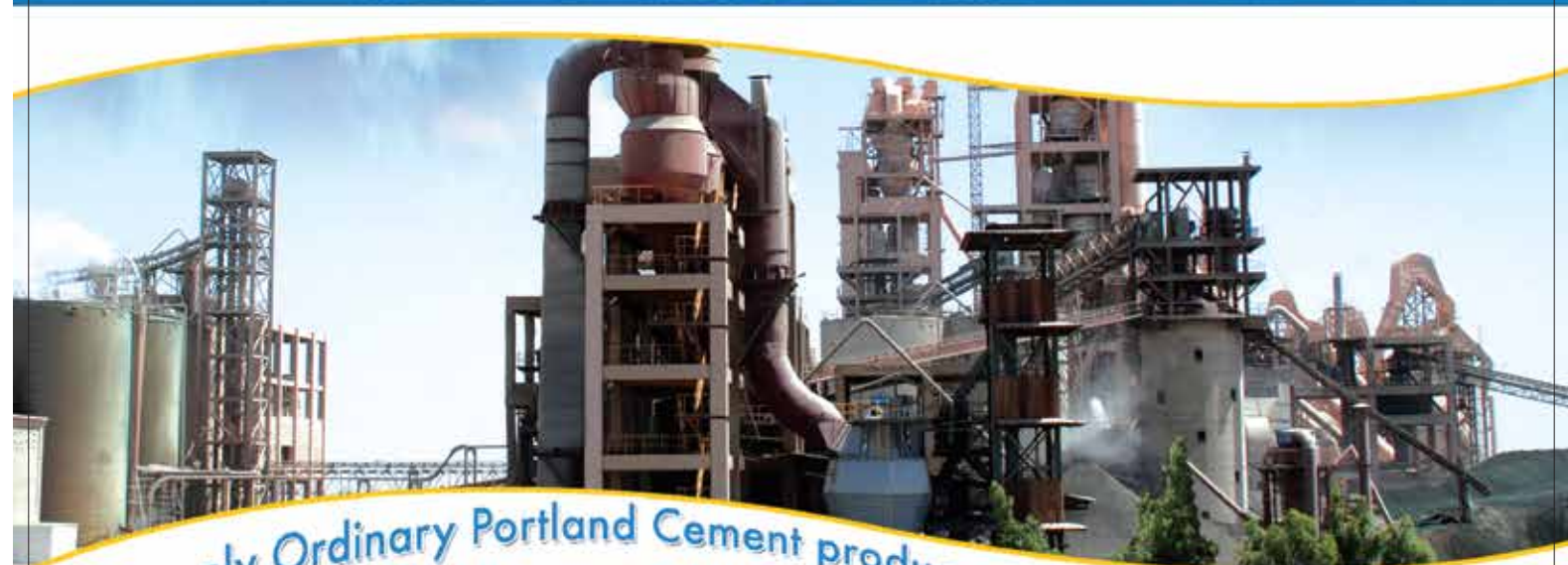
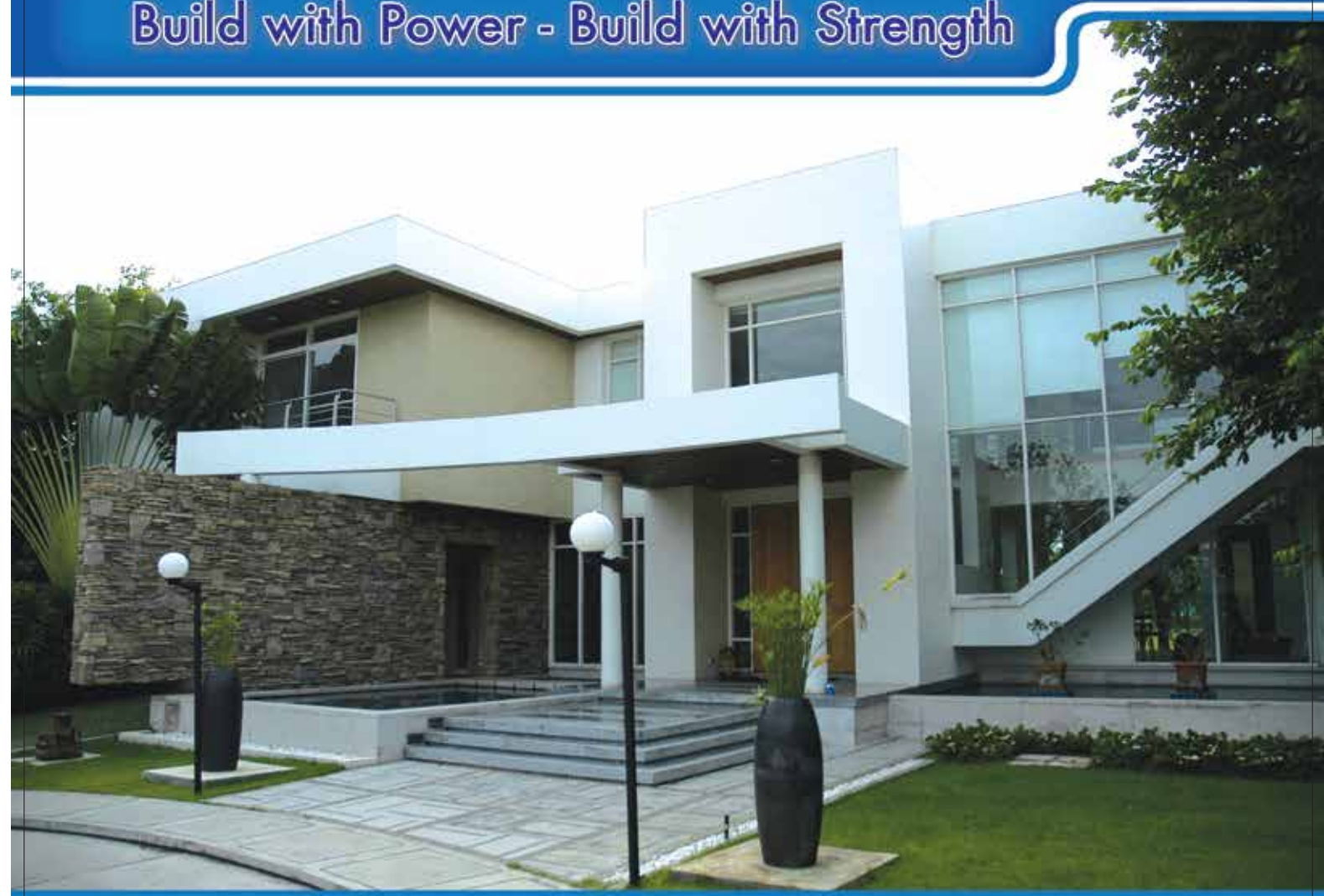
"*SubhanAllah* dear sister! I consider this to be a sign which shows us how The Creator plans and arranges for us in such fine detail by means which are beyond the planning of our limited minds. I told the young man about Allah's ﷻ gift for him which Allah ﷻ had sent for him even before he had met the elderly lady and before he had given preference to her over himself. This truly is Allah's ﷻ grace which He gives to whomever He wills. The wheelchair is now on its way to him. So what do you have to say about all of this?"

It was now the *daa'iyah* turn to speak. With an illumined heart and a smile on her lips she said: "*SubhanAllah*, the power of the ayaat of the Quran on the human soul is truly immense, given that it finds receptive hearts, attentive ears and facilitation from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala."

After concluding the conversation the Quran teacher called her children and told them the story of the young man while she herself was in utter amazement. Indeed, Allah ﷻ made him a beacon of guidance and truly Allah ﷻ never forsakes or wrongs a believer in any way.

It is worth mentioning that this young man is currently alive *Alhamdulillah* and lives in one of Cairo's well-known neighborhoods. This story dates 19 May 2009 CE - 24 Jamadil Ula 1430 AH.

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Remembering my Father

By Dr. Asad Zaman



My father, Mohammad Masihuzzaman, died on the blessed day of the 10th of Muharram, two years ago. He had his own theories of parenting, and the training that he gave me and my brothers has shaped all aspects of our lives. One of the greatest treasures of my life is the extraordinary, deep, absolute, love that he gave us. He once told me a story about his youth — apparently he had been involved with a group which was taking some violent actions against the British Raj. When the police came to investigate, my grandfather offered his own life to protect his son. It was completely clear to me that if it was ever called for, my father would also be ready to die for me. It was much later that I learnt that what I took for granted as normal parental love, was a unique and exceptional quality. Never, not even once in his life, did he raise his voice or his arms against me — even though I gave him many occasions to do so. I especially remember one incident when, at the age of fifteen, I took our car out without permission, and drove it too fast, lost control, and crashed it into our gate, causing a major repair bill. I was trembling with fear and anxiety, but, much to my surprise and relief, my father smiled and embraced me, and never said anything about the accident.

In this day and age, it seems essential to clarify that deep love and absolute commitment does not mean

permissive parenting. Abba watched carefully over character development of his children, and took steps to correct what he saw as problems. Once he thought that I was being too selfish, and to rectify this, he asked me to give away as a gift to my cousin, a toy that I valued and cherished very much. He persuaded me by telling me of the virtues of generosity, and assured me that if I gave away what I loved so dearly, I would be rewarded by even greater gifts by Allah ﷻ. With extreme reluctance, and against my desire, I did give the toy to my cousin, who was overjoyed to receive it. I remember that I went to my room and cried for a while at the shock of the loss, and consoled myself by thinking about the rewards for generosity that Abba had promised would result. The gift that I received from God was much greater than any material replacement for the toy would have been. Allah T'aala rewarded me with a feeling of contentment and satisfaction at the tremendous blessings that I had already been given.

The greatest gift that my father gave me was the introduction to the movement of Tableegh. After a lifetime of searching for the truth, engaging in very heated debates with many people of different persuasions, as well as participating in many different movements, he finally settled on the movement of Tableegh and *Dawah*, and committed his entire life to this movement. At one point he gathered all five brothers and made a very emotional speech to us. He told us that he had devoted all his resources to giving us all the best possible education and training — while his colleagues had big houses and multiple plots, and cars, he had highly educated children. He said that he had never asked us for anything before, and would not ever ask for anything again, but he wanted us all to promise to do just one thing: spend four months (or forty days) in Tableegh. Of course, all of us promised to do so, and eventually, all of us did spend forty days in Tableegh — much against our own inclinations and desires. But this time spent in the path of Allah ﷻ changed the lives of all of us.

After experiencing the teachings and simple

lifestyle of Tableegh, I came to the realization that everything that I had learned about Islam until then was just “cultural” Islam, and had almost nothing to with the reality of the revolutionary Message of Allah ﷻ to humanity brought to us by the most excellent of Prophets Mohammad, may Allah T'aala shower His finest blessings and mercy upon him. It was like the lifting of darkness and the coming in of light — I understood that I had been sent here to this planet for a very short time, on a mission of vital importance — there was no time to waste in idle pursuits, as minutes were slipping away while a task of burning importance remained undone. Success or failure in this task could mean the difference between eternal happiness and eternal loss. All of the worldly materials and gains — ranks, degrees, wealth, luxury, pleasures, sports, and intellectual and philosophical pursuits — these were trivialities and toys meant to tempt and distract us away from realizing and fulfilling the real purpose of our life, which is to create and build a strong connection with Allah T'aala, the Creator and Sustainer of all Dominions.

To change the purpose of life is to change life itself. As the Quran says, “Man can only have that which he strives for”. I realized that so far I had pursued worldly goals and ambitions, and so, because of my lowly goals, my life had been worth less than the wing of a mosquito. Tableegh asks for a unique merger between worldly struggle and the struggle to become friends with Allah ﷻ. During the day, we must work as hard as we can on the creation, while the nights must be devoted to the Creator. Both efforts supplement each other, and neither is fruitful in isolation. The path to progress in *Deen* is the one chosen by the Prophet ﷺ himself — say, this is my way, and the way of all those who follow me — I invite towards Allah — There is a deep paradox in the work of *Dawah*, and balance between two polar opposites is hard to achieve. On the one hand, following the path of the Mercy towards the Nations requires us to be deeply concerned about the fate of the entire humanity, and to fulfill the mission of the *Ummah* by calling all towards the good, while forbidding the evil. After all, our

Prophet ﷺ was chided many times not to kill himself with sorrow over the fate of those who would not listen to him. At the same time, we are also supremely selfish — ultimately the world consists of me and Allah ﷻ alone — all other creations are a source of distraction. The verses of Surah Muzammil (73:7, 8) are amazing in this connection — the Prophet ﷺ is busy during the day (with what? with the work of the Deen!!) so he should devote his nights EXCLUSIVELY to Allah ﷻ. Many things which made no sense before — like being in this world, but not being part of it — like acting like a traveller, spending a few brief moments on this planet — like finishing the planting of the seed, even though *Qiyama* is upon you — now started to make a lot of sense. It is not the effect of the action within this world which matters, it is whether or not you are fulfilling the commandments of Allah ﷻ which matters.

Coming back to my father, there is no doubt that the work of Tableegh took him away from us, and

that this was a great loss to the family, which we all felt deeply. From roughly 1984 onwards, he became full time resident in Raiwind. He was then fully occupied with managing the worldwide movement, and had little time for us. However, his love for us was so strong that it is reported that the leader of the movement in Pakistan, Abdul Wahhab Saheb used to joke that if Masihuzzaman loved Allah T'aala as much as he loves his sons, he would have become a Wali-ullah long ago. However, as we all realized much later, the time with him that we lost, was given to hundreds of thousands of seekers of God from all over the planet, and changed their lives. I have met so many people, from all over the world, who told of meaningful encounters with Abba, and words that he had said to them.

There is so much more that I wanted to write, but this write-up has already become long, and words are not enough for all that needs to be said. So I will leave it here, and hope to have another chance to write more about it later, *in sha Allah*.

Sufism and its Representations

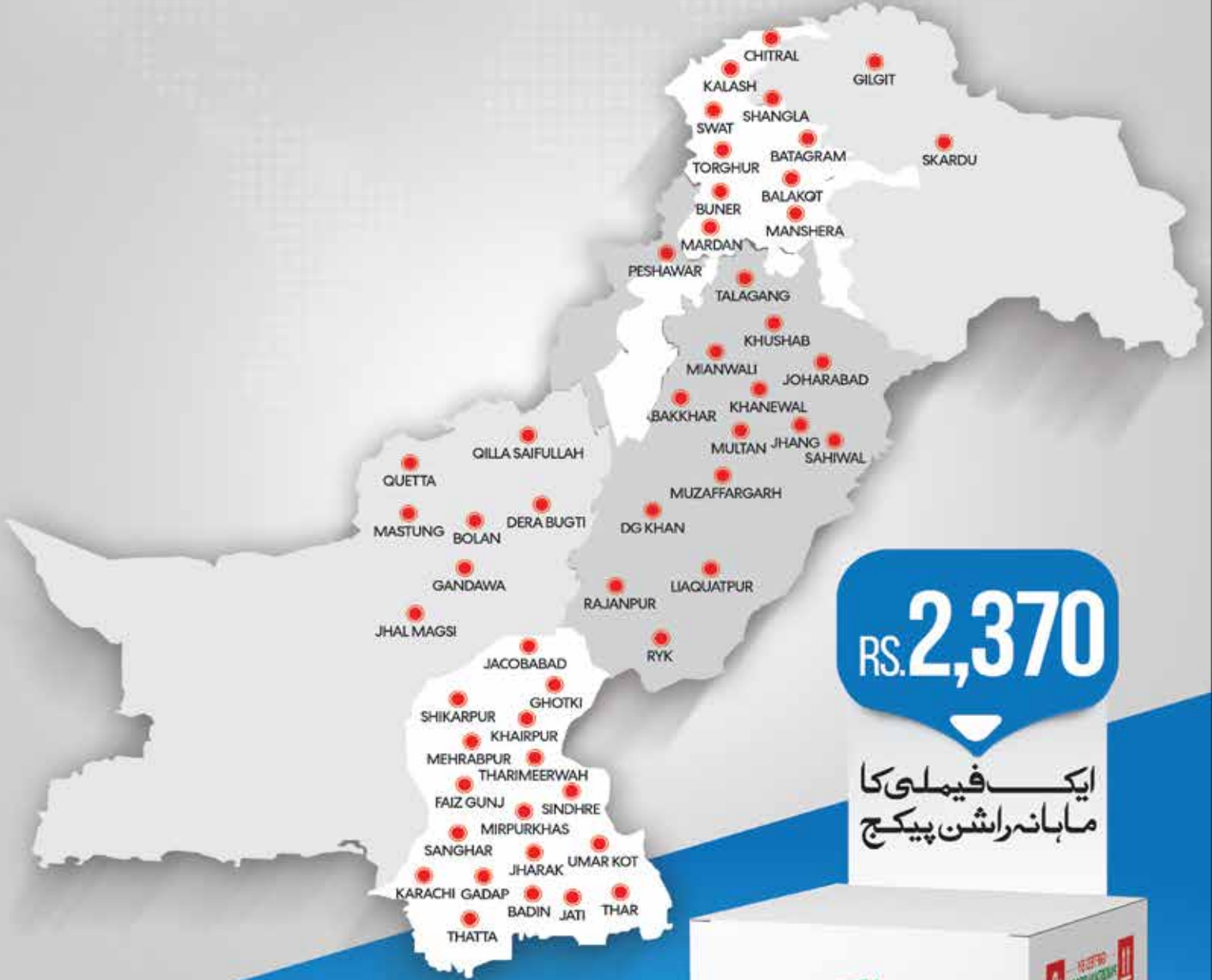
By Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

I would warn the younger Muslim generation about the wrong interpretation of Sufism. It has been widely propagated in the Western world by non-Muslims. They coined the term Sufism. They praise Sufism. They preach sufism. They propagate Sufism. One may think that they do this in service to Islam. However, the reality is that the Sufism propagated by Western writers is quite contradictory to the *Shariah*. It is quite contradictory to the real essence of *Tasawwuf* and *tariqat*.

A high ranking western official visited the Darul Uloom, Karachi. After having a detailed tour observing the teaching activities he commented that he did not see anything about Sufism being taught. It was inquired that what did he mean by Sufism. He replied that Sufism is something related to one's soul and what pleases one's soul. For example, playing music, dancing, having ecstasy (*wajd*) and *qawwali*, etc. The poor individual restricted Sufism to these kinds of activities.

The real problem is that when Western world speaks of soul as against the physical life they assume that they are speaking of the spirit or spiritual things. There is a big difference between soul and spirit. In fact soul is what is called the *nafs* in *Tasawwuf*. That is the (lower) desires of the heart. *Tasawwuf* does not have relation to soul in that meaning. *Tasawwuf* relates to the spiritual qualities- the human instincts (reformation of the moral characteristics – thus becoming a better human being and a real Muslim).

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Seeking Halal Earning

By Khalid Baig

According to Abdullah ibn Masud رضي الله عنه, The Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم, said: 'Seeking halaal earning is a duty after the duty.' In other words working to earn a halal living is itself a religious obligation second in importance after the primary religious obligations like prayers, fasting and *hajj*.

This brief hadith contains three very important messages. First, it points to the Islamic way out of the apparent dichotomy between the material and the spiritual worlds. We often see them working in opposite directions. Indulgence in the material world does lead one away from the spiritual world. Spiritual uplifting seems to accompany a tendency to distance oneself from the material pleasures. There is a conflict, but is there a contradiction also? Is it possible to resolve the conflict in a way that one can take care of both? Or are they mutually exclusive? This has been a central question for all religions and many in the past suggested the second answer, making hermits as the ideal for the humanity. Unfortunately not much humanity is left when one moves too far in this direction. One can read today the horror stories of Christian and Hindu monks, among others, who tried to seek spiritual purification this way.

As a reaction, others took the other course, making material pleasures the goal of this life. The western civilization today is the prime example of that. Its toll on human spirit and morality is well known and is a constant reminder that something is wrong here as well.

In between the two extremes Islam points out the Straight Path. Man is both a material and a spiritual being. The solution does not lie in denying the material needs and desires but in denying their claim to primacy. They are part of being but not the reason or goal of being. As long as they are kept in place, they are an important part of our life. The problem is not money but the love of it. Wealth itself is not bad. In fact Qur'an refers to it as '... your wealth which Allah has made for you a means of support' (Al-Nisa, 4:5). And another hadith praises the merits of 'the halal wealth of a pious person.' The effort to earn a living is not only not against spirituality, it is a religious obligation!

But this earning must be through halal means. This is the second message of this hadith. Our obligation is not just to make money but to make halal money. This is a broad statement that is the basis for Islamization of a society's economic life. Not every business idea or possible business enterprise is good for the society. And the decision regarding right and wrong here cannot be left to the so-called market forces. Right and wrong in the economic life, as in all life, must be determined by a higher source. *Shariah* guides us as to the *halaal* and *haraam* business enterprises and practices, and at both individual and collective levels we must follow that guidance.

At times that guidance may conflict with the prevailing practices. For example *riba* (interest), gambling, pornography, and liquor are haram, and no matter how attractive the financial rewards of engaging in those enterprises may seem to be, a Muslim must refrain from them. This is the economic struggle of a believer, and it is obvious why it should be carried out as a religious obligation. At the individual level the obligation is to engage in halal professions and businesses. At the collective level the obligation is to establish a system that facilitates such individual efforts and discourages their opposite.

Sometimes we lose the balance between obligations at the two levels. Obviously our ultimate responsibility is at the individual level; in

the hereafter we will be asked about what we did in our personal lives. At the same time, in the era of multi-national companies, CNN, IMF, World Bank, and GATT, it is obvious that individual efforts alone cannot steer the economic life of a society in the direction of halal. Why avoiding interest has become so difficult today? Not because of its inherent merits as a healthy financial instrument but because it is entrenched in the system. Can we build an Islamic life style when the CNN is advertising a western life style in the most enticing ways 24 hours a day in our homes? Can we resolve the issues of halal and haram in taxation in Muslim countries when the national budgets and tax decisions are dictated to these countries by the IMF and the World Bank? (Jurists say that taxes may be permissible if they are necessary, reasonable, fair, within the ability of the payers, and if the means of collection are not harsh. Otherwise they are unjust and haram). Obviously the struggle to avoid haram individually must, of necessity, include the struggle to change the system that forces haram.

Third, all this effort for halal earning should not eclipse our primary religious obligations. Indulgence even in a purely halal enterprise should not make us miss our *Salat*, or *hajj*, for example.

This point is more important than we may realize at first. In this century, some Islamic movements made the error of suggesting that the primary acts of worship like *Salat* were not meant for their own sake, but were there to prepare us for the real challenge of establishing an Islamic state. It was stated to persuade the audiences to join such movements but the speakers had gone carried away and in effect it would result in an inversion of the relationship between the two. The result is that those drawn to collective struggles, in political or economic arenas, sometimes may ignore their primary religious responsibilities, in favor of the 'bigger' struggle. This hadith may help us set our priorities right: The economic endeavor is a duty after the primary duties. And let us remember: In economics, as well as in religion, getting the priorities right is part of being right.

IT BEGINS WITH YOU!

By Emaan Zubair

Ever saw a bunch of teenagers headed happily for the cinema, and thought "They can't be good people if they're so interested in movies", or (for girls) observed your friends not covering their heads and thought "I always cover my head. I'm so much better than them"? Ever felt contempt for someone listening to music in Ramzan or sneered at them for always being late for prayers? I have been in this unfortunate position sometimes, and I know some of you will agree.

The straightforward and sad fact of our society is: we are way, way too much focused on others. And not in the good things; we're not necessarily trying to help others or benefit them in some way. No, in this age, everyone subconsciously tries to seek the faults of others, put them in show and try to amend them through unwanted advice and warning, all in so-called "goodwill" for the people in question. Forever we are seeing errors in their ways, pointing out tiny glitches and mistakes, berating them for their tardiness and incapacities, lack of motivation, lack of interest in religion etc. All this is happening at a steadily increasing rate when in fact, the most important question should be and is "What about ourselves?"

Let's stop and think. What about myself? What about the faults and imperfections that lie in my personality? What about the error of my ways? Above all, what right have I to criticize and condemn others for their wrongdoings if I am not

even conscious of my own? Even though we may all agree with this reasoning, putting it into practice may be very difficult because of the bad habits of nit-picking ingrained into our characters.

So let's view it from another angle. If you are suffering from, say, a constant fever and headache, you will naturally and obviously be very distressed and concerned for yourself. You will be worrying about getting yourself better. If someone else around you has a severe stomachache, do you imagine you will care very much? Obviously not, when you yourself are sick. You cannot really focus on the other's pain or attempt to alleviate it when you yourself are not in the best of conditions. Even if you are told that someone is suffering from a grave terminal illness, chances are you will not be much affected or concerned. This is human nature. Put this way, why should we be so obsessed with the faults of others when we ourselves possess so many that need identifying and correcting?

Allah ﷻ says in his Holy Book, the Quran:*"Fear the day when a person shall be of no avail to another. Neither intercession nor compensation shall be taken from anyone....."*(Surah Al-Baqarah 2, Ayat 48). At another place, Allah ﷻ says: *'...when the Day (of Judgment) comes, every suckling mother will forget her suckling-babe, and every pregnant female shall lay down her burden...'* (Surah Hajj 22, Ayat 2). In the end, it will be every man for

himself. If the Day of Judgment is so terrifying that even the love of a mother, arguably the strongest force there is in the physical world, will not be able to sustain for her child, then why are we wasting so much time and energy seeking out others' mistakes? Who will save us on the Final Day if we have not accounted for our own misdeeds? The Final Day, with all its horrors and trials is not something to be taken lightly. And remember that the life of that world is eternal: are we prepared to (God forbid) suffer the Hell-fire infinitely in exchange for pointing out petty shortcomings in people in this world, just because we were "too busy" to focus on ourselves? Everyone complains about the increasing degradation of society, its rampant evils and its diminishing values. And everyone blames the other for it, when it is obvious that all of us do our bit in contributing to the deterioration of whatever standards there are, or loss of whatever virtue there was. One person, or one organization alone cannot be "responsible" for everything bad that goes on. The mere notion is ludicrous and illogical.

A brief glance into the Sunnah of our beloved Prophet ﷺ testifies to the wrongness of the fault-finding paradigm of our society. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: *'A believer is not a fault-finder and is not abusive, obscene or coarse'*. (Bukhari, Ahmad). With regards the Quranic verse *"Nor defame one another"* (49:11) the Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said: *"Do not spend your time finding fault with one another"*. These *Ahadith* alone should suffice to make us think twice before we begin to brashly point out others' imperfections.

So what lies at the other end of the spectrum? Correcting oneself. It sounds and seems so tedious, but the fact of the matter is simple-if each person focuses on amending his own ways, the system will automatically be corrected! Automatically, there will be no need for the finger-pointing, jeering, contempt-showing and condemning of others and their 'wrongdoings'. We fail to grasp and act upon the absurdly simple solution, which is to try as best to improve one's

own conduct and actions before even thinking of other people.

Therein lies an important point: advice, when justified and given in an appropriate manner, is totally acceptable and in fact, important for Muslims to give to one another. Did not the Prophet ﷺ say: *'Whosoever of you sees an evil action, let him correct it with his hand. And if he is not able to do so, with his tongue. And if he is not able to do so, then with his heart and that is the weakest of faith'* (Bukhari)? Informing each other when they are straying from the right path and encouraging them to do good is a vital part of the entire moral system of Islam. It would not do for everyone to become blind and deaf to everyone's actions around them. No, the problem emerges when we are so wholly preoccupied in hunting out each and every trivial and large concern in others' personalities that it begins to adversely affect our own conduct and attitude in lives, and we become oblivious to the errors we ourselves are making. Time to stop for a reality check. Others are our responsibility only to a certain extent.

The way to go about this, hence, is to lighten up on our too-meticulous surveys of others' lives and actions. We should consciously think and find ways of how we can improve ourselves to make a positive contribution to society and be an indirect inspiration for many. Influencing other people to do good through our own example is an excellent and smart strategy of achieving our aim without causing any conflicts or ill-will, as no-one likes having their faults found all the time. Do your own part and pray sincerely for others (and also advise from time to time) to be beckoned to the right path as well. We can sum up by a thought-provoking Hadith of our beloved Prophet ﷺ: *"I am amazed at the one who spots an impurity in the eye of another but is unable to detect it in his/her own eye, or who attempts to remove a grudge from another's heart while making no attempt to remove grudges from his/her own heart....."* (Bukhari, Vol. 899, Ibn Habbab).

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani دوست برکاتہم

Translated by Bint Zahid

The subject won't be complete without mentioning a few more special merits of Bhai Jaan (Hazrat Muhammad Zaki Kaifi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ); amongst all of us brothers, he alone enjoyed the merit of doing his Bai'yah from, and remaining in the service and company of Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. Our respected father Rahimahullah used to take him to Thaana Bhawan every year, and Hazrat Thanwi Rahimahullah was very affectionate towards him. Several times Hazrat gave Bhai Jaan the opportunity to massage his head. Hazrat was not used to eating Paan but sometimes he would eat a plain one, without *katha* (catechu) and *chuna* (slaked lime), after a meal. Bhai Jaan would often make a well-timed offer of Paan to Hazrat due to which Hazrat, out of humour, named him "Paani" (1). Whenever Hazrat desired to have a Paan and Bhai Jaan was not nearby, Hazrat would say: "Where did our Paani go?" A great blessing that Bhai Jaan received was that one day he requested Hazrat: "Please teach me *Pand Nama-e-Attar*." How would Hazrat have enough time to teach *Pand Nama* to a small boy but due to his extraordinary love and care for Bhai Jaan, he replied: "I don't have any other time, but after *Asr* prayers, I go for a walk. You can come along with the book at that time. I will teach you *Pand Nama* in that free time."

Thus, Bhai Jaan went to Hazrat after *Asr* prayers with the book and the lessons began. At that time, senior *Khulafa* of Hazrat were also present and when they got the news of these lessons being taught (to Bhai Jaan) they also sought permission to attend these lessons. Hazrat granted them with permission. Thereafter, my

respected father, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahab and Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Sahab (may Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them all) participated in those heart-warming lessons and the activity continued throughout the month of Ramadan. Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (Rahimahullah) would often remind Bhai Jaan about those lessons and say: "You are our classmate and due to you we were fortunate enough to study *Pand Nama* from Hazrat."

When Bhai Jaan learnt how to write, our respected father Rahimahullah asked him to write his first letter to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah Rahimahullah. The reply to this letter was a lesson in itself and also a great fortune for Bhai Jaan. Hazrat replied:

"Dear son (May Allah Ta'ala keep you safe). Assalamualaikum with dua. I was pleased to see your writing. I make dua for your progress in terms of knowledge and action. Make your handwriting cleaner; the reader will find it easier to read it and with this intention, you will also get the reward (ajr). See! I'm making you a Sufi from your childhood only; tie this amulet (ta'aweez) for headache on your head. Peace and prayers for your entire family. Ashraf Ali."

Common people would ponder over how making one's handwriting more legible related to *Tasawwuf*? But this was a specialty of Hakeem Ul Ummah Rahimahullah that he always reminded his associates about the most important demand of *Shariah* and *Tariqah* (*Tasawwuf*) which is the etiquettes of social life, good character and having clean and clear dealings with others. This

was at a time when people used to consider these essential branches of Islam as having nothing to do with *deen*. Also, Hazrat never admonished his associates if they lagged in their daily recitations or supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*), but would take strict action against someone who lapsed in social behavior, or in their dealings with others, or did something which caused harm to others.

It was the result of this teaching of Hazrat that Bhai Jaan would take extra precaution not to cause any problem for anyone else through any of his actions.

The incident of Bhai Jaan taking his *baiy'ah* at the hands of Hakeem Ul Ummah is also quite strange. Bhai Jaan, at that time, had not yet reached puberty, but considering the love and kindness he received from Hazrat, he one day requested Hazrat for *Baiy'ah*. Hazrat normally would not take *Baiy'ah* from minor children, so he humourously told Bhai Jaan: "*Baiy'ah* is not for free; bring some guava then I'll accept your *Baiy'ah*." In that season guavas were not available in the market so Hazrat had said this to avert him and thought that he would not be able to bring a guava. But Bhai Jaan brought a guava, from Allah knows where. When Hazrat saw this he got really surprised, but since he had promised, he agreed to take Bhai Jaan's *Baiy'ah*. But who could observe the laws of Shariah at the level that Hazrat adhered to? Bhai Jaan had not reached puberty by that time and it is not permissible to accept a gift from one who
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not reached puberty without their parents' permission. So he sent Bhai Jaan to ask for his parents' permission to gift the guava to Hazrat. Bhai Jaan took permission and thereafter Hazrat took his *Baiy'ah*.

After this event, on 7th Rabee' al-Thanee, 1356 AH, our respected father wrote a letter to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah which read as follows:

"All praise is for Allah, the blessings of Muhammad Zaki (may Allah Ta'ala protect him) becoming your Mureed have become manifestly evident in that he has become very motivated to offer prayers. Previously he used to sleep at the time of Isha prayer but now he keeps sitting, waiting for it."

Hakeem Ul Ummah wrote in reply:

"Masha'Allah! Please make du'a that I also receive the blessings of this sinless child, and get motivation for action and steadfastness and sincerity."

Many important matters related to Bhai Jaan's childhood were decided on the advices of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah. Our respected father wrote to Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah in the letter sent on the 10th of Rajab 1355 AH:

"It has been more than one

year that we had started Muhammad Zaki's (may Allah Ta'ala protect him) memorisation of the Qur'an. Now he has been sick for almost six months, and some relatives are suggesting that he is not able to tolerate the hard work involved in memorising the Qur'an. I'm deeply perplexed, please suggest what to do."

Hazrat replied:

"If Zaki were my son I would stop his Hifz. Then later in life if he had the energy (even if after finishing his studies) then I would get him to complete the memorisation of the Qur'an. It would be much easier at that time."

Thus till the age of eighteen, Bhai Jaan continued to benefit from the guidance and kindnesses of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah. Once, during this time, our respected father had to send a letter to Hazrat Thanvi and wanted it to reach Hazrat the same day. On the other hand, there was no possibility to catch the train from Saharanpur to Thana Bhawan. Bhai Jaan took this responsibility upon himself. He travelled from Deoband to Muzaffarnagar and from Muzaffarnagar to Shamli. He expected to catch the train from Shamli to Thana Bhawan but the train had already left by the time he reached there. Bhai Jaan rented a bicycle and travelled the long distance from Shamli to Thana Bhawan on that bicycle and presented the letter to Hazrat in time.

Besides Hazrat Thanwi, in Deoband, Hazrat Miyan Sahab (Hazrat Maulana Sayyad Asghar Husain Sahab) would also be very kind to Bhai Jaan and Bhai Jaan also got many opportunities to spend time in his service and company. Since childhood, Bhai Jaan had great eagerness to benefit from the service and company of the pious elders and thus he rightfully said in his poem:

*I have adored your beauty from the time
When my heart did not even know what love was*

And it was the influence of this very company of the pious elders that his personality seemed to be imbued by Deen and the correct understanding of Deen, to such an extent that he would not be affected or awed by any environment; rather he would be the one to leave a good impact on others in whichever environment he was in:

*The story of love and loyalty receive their
exuberant colour from me
Such that I found the colour of my loyalty on your
face*

Notes:

(1) In the Urdu language, "Paani" actually means "water" but Hazrat humourously meant 'the one with the Paan'.

To be continued, insha'Allah

Wisdom of Iqbal

ستیزہ کار رہا ہے ازل سے تا امروز
چراغ مصطفوی سے شرار بو لہبی
-اقبال

Since eternity till this day, the battle goes on
Between the light of Mustafa and the flame of Abu Lahab

Translation: Bint e Akram

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