

The Intellect

Al Quran
Surah al-An'am – Part 3

Al Hadith
The most Enviably Bondsman

The Awakening
The Virus – Last Part

*Transgender
Identity ^{the} truth
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Re-awakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life



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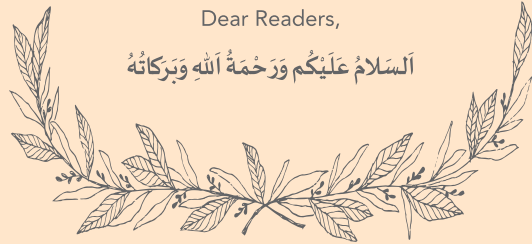
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Editorial

Dear Readers,

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ



Paul Bloom, a psychology professor at Yale University, part of a team studying “The Moral Life of Babies” and Kiley Hamlin, Lead Author of Infant Morality Study, Infant Cognition Center, Yale University, describe in a New York Times report (*David Frank and Paul Bloom for New York Times 2010*), an astonishing observation they made regarding the inherent sense of good and bad that babies have.

In the study, infants are made to watch a mini puppet show multiple times, where one character is a ‘bad guy’, snatching a ball from a neutral character, not letting it open a box and pushing it down a hill; the other character is a ‘good guy’, helping the neutral character fetch a ball, open a box, and helping it climb up a hill.

After the show, the puppets are placed in front of the infants to select from, and astonishingly, an upward of 80% of infants grab hold of the ‘good guy’!

Does this mean, that despite their infancy, an internal meter guides them to ‘good’, and makes them averse to ‘bad’, without even knowing the implication of these words or having the power to comprehend them?

Our tradition tells us that all babies are born on ‘Fitrah’. It also says that living things exist in pairs.

Gender is binary; babies are born either male or female. If a birth anomaly (in negligible numbers) results in the baby being *Khunsa* (intersex), that does not increase the ‘number’ of genders.

Case in point: if you are asked how many fingers a human hand has, your answer would explicitly be five; despite the fact that a negligible percentage of people might be born with six. Similarly, when you are asked how many genders humans have, if you subscribe to fitrah, or just pure facts, your answer has to be two.

Making a simple and crystal-clear matter confusing and hazy has to be the work of a diseased mind. Just like an ill person finds issue with the tastiest morsel of food.

This brings us to the ongoing debate on an issue that came to the fore a couple of months ago concerning the notorious ‘Transgender Persons Act of 2018’.

Having read the act that was passed in the National Assembly (and subsequently challenged), its most problematic part is its inability to clarify the stark difference between the terms “intersex” and “transgender”. The former basically refers to *khunsa* in Islam, people born with physical attributes that render them as neither fully male, nor fully female (or *khunsa mushkil*).

No sane person can fathom objecting to the rights of such people to an honourable living, completely at par with other citizens of the society.

In contrast, “transgender” is a term used to describe a wide variety of people (you can think of all the alphabets that come to your mind) who are born normal (fully male or fully female), but self-subscribe to another ‘gender’ LATER in life because they don’t ‘identify’ with the gender ‘assigned’ to them at birth.

This indistinction in terminology leads to another problem in the Act: the “self-perceived identity” clause (of which ‘gender change surgery’ is an extension). What it can basically amount to is that any eighteen-year-old male (supposedly “transgender”) can just walk into the National Database Registration Authority office and claim that I perceive myself to be “female”. Subsequently, he may be registered as a female and can eventually walk freely into female restrooms in public areas, cast vote in women polling stations, plead ‘harassment’ if restrained from entering women-only public spaces and even get married to another man!

How in the world can this be allowed to happen without a medical board (or even a single doctor) verifying such an outrageous claim?!

Since the seeds of ‘transgenderism’ were sowed in the West, amidst the deafening and misleading noise made by the so-called ‘transgender rights activists’, it is refreshing to hear some voices of sanity straight from the horse’s mouth.

Dr. Michelle Cretella, who served as the President of the American College of Pediatrics (and has worked as a pediatrician for 20 years) relates, that our gender is not ‘assigned’ at a birth; it is determined at conception by our DNA and stamped into every cell of our body. She says that there are at least 6500 genetic differences between men and women and that no one is born “transgender”.

The reasons that may lead a person to identify as a transgender and the options for treating such a state of mind (e.g., psychological counseling), is a separate debate altogether. But the crux of the matter at hand is, that merely ‘identifying’ oneself as belonging to the opposite gender on the basis of ‘feelings’ and whims (“self-perceived gender identity”), has extremely serious consequences for the society, especially a Muslim one. We cannot allow such a disruptive stand to ruin our family system, upend societal norms and play with Islamic social, inheritance and family laws.

Our Cover Story takes on supporters of the issue in ‘*Transgender Identity; the Truth behind the Farce*’.

Confusing cultural norms with the teachings of *Deen*, in fact, justifying these through religion, is rampant in the Islamic world. As an example, it isn’t difficult to come across people who justify holding the (predominantly) unsegregated, music-perked *Mehndi* function - an integral part of sub-continental weddings - by saying that ‘mehndi is from *Sunnah*’. *Astaghfirullah!* Are we talking about the red-orange dye applied on hands and hair (henna), or the boisterous, mixed event, complete with its dance numbers, color themes, song medleys, you-name-it-*Makruh*-acts stretching all the way to Fajr? Come on.

Similarly, in some conservative areas of our country, *Purdah* is a mere cultural formality, only to be observed locally. It is thus easy to find women conveniently swapping their *Chaddars* for *Dupattas* as soon as they cross over provincial borders. More strikingly, a growing number of ladies who dress up in modest *Kameez Shalwar* in Pakistan, expediently switch to bold alternatives in western attire as soon as their plane hits the landing strip in Europe. This is conveniently explained away by “Do in Rome as Romans do”.

Whatever happened to pearls such as “O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments...” (Al-Ahzab 33:59).

To read more on this topic, turn to *Cultural Norms and Thoughts – Part of Islam?*

In *Our Pious Predecessors*, brief accounts of some stellar lives are featured and in *UlulAlbab*, we republish the enthralling Big Bang

Wassalam,

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Re-awakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life

The Intellect

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مفتي القرآن

Surah Al-An'am

Translation with Arabic Text

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

وَأَن كَانَ كَبُرَ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَن تَبْتَغِي نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

If their aversion is too hard on you, then seek, if you can, a tunnel into the earth or a ladder unto the sky in order to bring them a sign. Had Allah so willed, He would have brought all of them to the right path. ¹⁰ So, never be one of the ignorant. [35]

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

Only those respond who listen (to seek the truth). As for the dead, Allah shall raise them, after which they shall be returned to Him. [36]

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَن يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

They say, "Why is it that no sign (of our choice) has been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Allah is surely powerful enough to send down a sign." But most of them do not know. [37]

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ مِمَّا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ عِثْمٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

There is no creature moving on the earth, nor a bird flying on its two wings, but they are all communities like you. We have not missed anything in the Book. Then, to their Lord all of them shall be gathered. ¹¹ [38]

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَن يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يَضِلُّهُ وَمَن يَشَاءِ يُجْعَلُهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

Those who gave the lie to Our signs are deaf and dumb, in layers of darkness. He lets whomsoever He wills go astray, and brings whomsoever He wills on the straight path. ¹² [39]

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمُ السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

Say, "Tell me if the punishment of Allah comes to you or the Hour befalls you, would you call someone other than Allah, if you are truthful?" [40]

بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

Rather, Him alone you will call and He, if He wills, shall remove what you call Him for, and you will forget those you associate with Him. [41]

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَا هُم بِالْبِأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

We did send messengers to communities before you and put them to hardships and sufferings, so that they may supplicate in humility. [42]

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَٰكِن قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Why then, did they not supplicate in humility when a calamity from Us came upon them? ¹³ Instead, their hearts were hardened and Satan adorned for them what they were doing. [43]

Explanation

10) In spite of the many miracles shown by Allah ﷻ, at the hands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the pagans of Makkah used to make demands for showing miracles of their own choice, like building a tunnel across the whole earth, or a ladder for ascending to the sky etc. Allah ﷻ had already made it clear that it was not in accordance with His wisdom to accept such demands, which were actually based on their obstinacy. Still, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, out of his merciful nature, used at times to think that if some of these demands were fulfilled, some of the pagans might come to accept the truth. The present verse, therefore, addresses the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying that Allah ﷻ, according to His infinite wisdom is not going to fulfill all their demands, but if the Holy Prophet ﷺ could fulfill them on his own, he could do so. Obviously since the Holy Prophet ﷺ could not do so on his own, he should relinquish all such notions. Further, Allah ﷻ says that it is not at all impossible for Him to compel them, by whatever force necessary, to accept the truth. But the worldly life being a test, Allah ﷻ has deemed it enough to send the Holy Prophet ﷺ with clear proofs. Now it is left to the people whether they accept his message and pass the test, or reject his call and fail.

11) This verse may be interpreted in two ways. According to one interpretation, it means that resurrection is not restricted to all human beings; all the animals will also be resurrected on the Day of Judgment like humans. Then, every animal that was subjected to a hurt by another animal will be given an opportunity to take revenge from the latter. According to this interpretation, the 'Book' refers to the Preserved Tablet (Al-Lauh-ul-Mahfuz) where every act done by any creature is recorded. Since this book has not missed anything, reckoning of the deeds of every creature is not difficult. However, the animals will perish after their mutual retribution, while human beings will be sent to Paradise or Hell.

The second interpretation is that the verse relates to the demand of the unbelievers to show a sign. The verse draws their attention to the universal signs spread all over the world to prove Allah's ﷻ infinite power and wisdom after which no proof is required to establish His existence and His being omnipotent, and thus in no need of a partner or assistant. The creation of the animals moving on the earth or flying in the sky has been referred to in this context. They are like humans in that Allah ﷻ has equipped them with such qualities and abilities as were required by them to fulfill their needs. The 'Book' according to this interpretation refers to the Qur'an which has not missed any basic point to prove the truth about Allah ﷻ and His Messenger. If, even after receiving such obvious proofs, some people make absurd demands for the signs of their choice, then their matter will be decided by Allah ﷻ Himself who will assemble all of them on the Day of Judgment.

12) The sense is that those who have adopted the erroneous way on their own volition are not brought by Allah ﷻ to the right path, because this is the requirement of the test they are subjected to.

13) This means that, before destroying a people with a general divine punishment, Allah ﷻ warns them firstly through a messenger, and secondly by subjecting them to some minor calamities, so that they might take lesson and supplicate and repent.

(To be continued, In sha Allah)



The Most Enviably Bondsman

By Mawlana Manzoor Nomani ﷺ

(189/49) It is related by Abu Umamah ﷺ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Among my friends the most enviable, in my judgment, is the faithful believer who is lightly burdened and has a large share in prayer, and worships the Lord well and with the awareness that he is seeing, or is being seen by his Lord. And renders habitual obedience to Him, and does all this secretly and not in the open, and remains unknown to fame and the fingers are not stretched towards him, and whose sustenance is proportionate to his essential needs and he is contented with it."

The Prophet ﷺ, then, snapped his fingers [as one does to express surprise at anything], and said: "Death comes soon to him and the women to





mourn his loss are few and the legacy left behind by him is also little."





Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah


Commentary: The above saying of the Prophet ﷺ means that though the states and circumstances of his friends and the earnest bondsmen of the Lord were different, the most enviable life was of the believer who had very few encumbrances, but a special share in prayer and other modes of worship, and was so little known, that is when he moved about, people did not point out that such and such a man was coming, and his daily bread was adequate for his needs and he was also satisfied with it, and when the hours of his death struck, he just passed away without leaving

behind disputes over the division of property or a host of mourners to grieve over his death. Surely, the lives of such people are enviable. Indeed, there are such people in the world today.



Abu Darda 's reply to his Wife

(190/50) Umm Darda , wife of Abu Darda , related that [once] she said to her husband, "What is the matter? Why do you not make request for wealth and positions as such-and-such do?" Abu Darda  replied, "I have heard the Messenger of Allah  say: 'Ahead of you lies a difficult valley which the heavily burdened shall not be able to cross easily,' so I want to stay light for crossing the valley [and hence do not ask for wealth and positions]" (Baihaqi).

Commentary: Conditions had improved so much during the last phase of the Prophet's  life, and, after him, during the days of the first four Caliphs , that goods used to come in from various sources and were distributed to the poor and those in want. In the same way, many people were appointed to public offices for which they received a suitable remuneration, and, thereby, it became possible for them to live comfortably. But, even at that time, some of the Companions , preferred a life of poverty for themselves and Abu Darda  was one of them. They believed that safety against the ordeals of the Judgment Day

lay in taking as little a share in material comfort as possible, and passing their days in this world with as little means as possible. The Prophet  had told them that only those would cross the perilous valleys of the Hereafter safely who were lightly burdened in the world while those who would load themselves to excess with worldly goods and connections shall experience much difficulty.

Death of Poverty

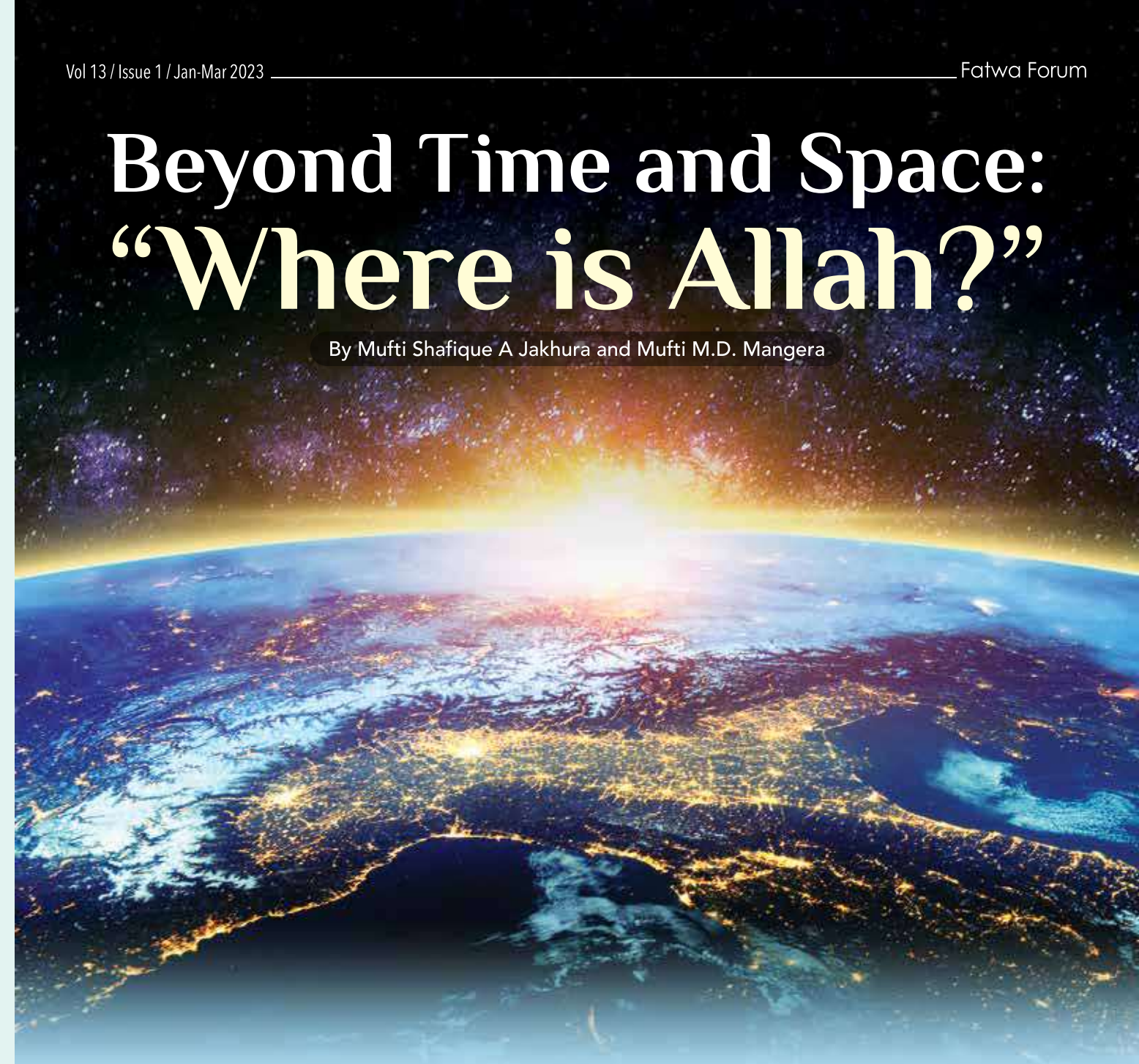
(191/51) It is related by Muhammad bin Labeed that the Messenger  of Allah  said: "There are two things a man dislikes [while there is a lot of good in them for him]: one is death, though death is better for a believer than mischief, and the other is few possessions, though few possessions involve shorter and lighter [for him] reckoning in the Hereafter ..." (Musnad Ahmad)

Commentary: Everyone fears death and poverty and wants to evade these, though death is a great blessing in the sense that when a person dies, he becomes safe from the faith-consuming mischief of the world, and remaining in need of the worldly possessions is a great blessing because the poor and the indigent will have to render a very brief account on the Day of Judgment and they will quickly pass through the ordeal. Sayings like these can be a source of great relief to us when we are poverty-stricken or suffering bereavement.



Beyond Time and Space: "Where is Allah?"

By Mufti Shafique A Jakhura and Mufti M.D. Mangera



Q. Is Allah everywhere, or is He beyond the heavens and the earth?

A. The issue of "Where is Allah?" is something that was never debated or made a matter of dispute among the Muslims throughout the ages and eras. In fact the Qur'an warns against delving into these issues in Surah *Aal-e Imraan* (verse no. 7). The *Sahabah* and the *Tabi'een* also dealt very severely with those who began discussing these issues. Unfortunately, due to immense ignorance about our *deen*, certain Muslims forget about their real duties and responsibilities and waste

their precious time arguing about these issues regarding which we have been ordered not to delve into.

Kindly see (*abridged*) answer of Mufti Muhammad ibn Adam Al-Kawthari below:

'The belief (aqidah) one must have regarding his Lord and Creator is that Allah Almighty is One, there is nothing like Him, there is nothing that can overwhelm Him, there is no god besides Him and He is Eternal without a beginning and Enduring without end. He will neither perish nor come to an end and nothing happens except what He

wills. No imagination can conceive of Him and no understanding can comprehend Him. He is different from any created being.

Allah, the Most High, says about Himself:

“There is nothing whatever unto like Him” (*al-Shura*, 42:11).

And He says in *Surah al-Ikhlās*:

“And there is none like unto Him” (*Al-Ikhlās*, 112: 4).

Due to the above and other texts of the Qur’an and Sunnah, one of the major beliefs a Muslim must have regarding Allah, the Most High, is that there is no creation that is similar to Him. If Allah is regarded to be similar, or resemble, or have any qualities of His creation, then that would constitute disbelief (*Kufr*).

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (May Allah have mercy on him) states:

“Whoever thinks that Allah has a body made of organs, then he is an idol-worshipper...Whosoever worships a body is regarded a disbeliever by the consensus of all the scholars, the early scholars (*salaf*) and the late (*muta’akhirun*)” (*Iljam al-Anam an Ilm al-Kalam*, 6-8).

If one believes that there is nothing similar to Allah in any way, then his Aqidah is correct and there is no need for disputes and arguments. I believe that there isn’t a Muslim that really believes that Allah is similar to his creation in any way; thus, disputes and arguments must be avoided. Yes, if one does believe that Allah has hands, feet, face, etc...that is similar to his creation, then without doubt this person would come out of the fold of Islam.

Regarding the question, “where is Allah?” Firstly, it should be remembered that this is not something that one will be asked about on the day of *Qiyamah*. We are in need of people really learning about the basics of Islam, rather than engaging themselves in these matters. Those that argue and cause destruction with such issues are normally ignorant about even the basics of Salah, Zakah, Hajj, etc...

Secondly, this question in itself is wrong. We ask regarding the whereabouts of a person that lives

in time and space. For example, I encompass time, meaning I live in time, and I have a body that needs to fill some space.

However, Allah, Mighty and Majestic, is the creator of time and space. If we limit Him to any time or space, then this would imply that we resemble Him to his creation by giving Him a body, as space is limited. If one was to say that Allah is everywhere, then this is wrong, as ‘everywhere’ is limited and ends somewhere, whereas Allah is not limited.

Similarly, to say that Allah is on earth, sky, moon, sun, throne, etc., is also wrong, as all these things are limited and to limit Allah to any created thing is *Kufr*.

Imam al-Tahawi (Allah have mercy on him) states in his famous, *al-Aqida al-Tahawiyya*:

“He (Allah) is beyond having limits placed on Him, or being restricted, or having parts or limbs. Nor is He contained by six directions as all created things are.” (P. 9).

Imam al-Nasafi (Allah have mercy on him) states:

“He (Allah) is not a body (*jism*), nor an atom (*jawhar*), nor is He something formed (*musawwar*), nor a thing limited (*mahdud*), nor a thing numbered (*ma’dud*), nor a thing portioned or divided, nor a thing compounded (*mutarakkab*), nor does He come to end in Himself. He is not described by quiddity (*al-ma’hiya*), or by quality (*al-kayfiyya*), nor is He placed in space (*al-makan*), and time (*al-zaman*) does not affect Him. Nothing resembles Him, that is to say, nothing is like Him” (See: Sa’d al-Din al-Taftazani & Najm al-Din al-Nasafi, *Sharh al-Aqa’id al-Nasafiyya*, 92-97).

In conclusion, one must have the Aqidah that Allah, the Most High, is pure from space and time. It is wrong to say that He is everywhere and it is also wrong to believe that He is on something, as all these are limited whereas Allah Almighty is limitless. However, we must believe that His knowledge encompasses everything, and he knows, sees and listens to everything.

And Allah Knows Best.

The Virus

By Maulana Abdul Sattar حفظه الله

Benefits of the Company of the Righteous

When we keep the company of the righteous men then Allah ﷻ bestows us with His mercy and blessings that flow through those closest to Him ﷻ. Just as we not only extend respect to our guest but also to anyone who’s accompanying them. Similarly, when we stay in the company of these men, we also get to enjoy these blessings. It’s like a gardener tending to his garden so that whenever he finds thorns scattered across it, he would pick them up and throw them away, but if the same thorns are on a rose plant, the gardener would always keep them with great care.

Blessings of True Yearning

Allah’s ﷻ men are like flowers, so that the thorns like us would still not be forsaken from His blessings and would rather be taken closer to our salvation. There is a great need to organize participation in good gatherings and congregations of authentic scholars who practice their knowledge, and it should be attended with focus and a conscious heart and mind. Allah’s ﷻ blessing is such that whenever a person comes with a sincere request, He ﷻ fulfills his needs even without him ever revealing them. So, whenever you arrive at such a gathering always come with a clean and a keen heart so that you may not only learn to trust the ‘ilm of these righteous men but seek their guidance in every important matter if life. There’s a whole chapter in Qur’an, *Ash-Shura*, derived from the word ‘shura’ meaning counsel or consultation; it describes how Sahaba رضى الله عنهم used to seek



Last Part

guidance, in all important matters, from one another.

Man’s Greatest Need

The most important thing in my life is my deen; a practicing Muslim would always seek direction and assistance in both his personal and professional life in order to make decisions in the light of his Deen’s commands. Which Muslim is better? The one who frequents the mosque regularly or the one who doesn’t? Or the person who visits a mosque, but doesn’t seek guidance, or the one who finds a mentor and seeks his counsel for guidance on how to live his life in accordance to Islam?

It’s urgent that we change, or we risk being blindsided by such difficulties and tribulations in the near future. In the modern world, if Muslims do not endeavor to incorporate Islam into their lives and keep their spiritual connection strong, they may not even be aware of the spiritual illnesses and viruses they are carrying. We must attend these events and work to live our lives according to the principles of Islam.

We need to shed this carelessness off; the only way is to shun sins and do *astaghfar* with a sense of remorse. We need to connect ourselves with religious company to seek guidance so Allah ﷻ may keep us safe from the perils of modern life. May Allah ﷻ give us the *tawfeeq* to live up to our preaching, aamin.

Concluded

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Transgender Identity ^{the truth} behind the farce

By Asna A. Ansari

I read an article in the editorial section of a leading national newspaper dated September 22, 2022, headlined, Transgender Identity. The beginning sentence of this article went like this, "The question of the 'compatibility' of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act of 2018 with 'Islamic values, which has been contested in a long-running case being heard by the Federal Shariat Court, should be laid to rest."

Once I finished reading this article I reached the sad conclusion that what needs to be actually laid to rest is the sanity of a Muslim nation which refuses to come out of self-loathing. Self-loathing for its own identity. Self-loathing for its roots. Self-loathing for all the laws and rules ordained by The Almighty for a Muslim society.

It appears to me as if we have reached the nauseating limit of a frenzy. A frenzy to please and emulate the West, the masters, to an extent that we have lost every ounce of sense, logic and self-respect. I write this particularly after reading the following excerpt from the same article mentioned above:

"The petitioners in the case had moved the court to strike down two important provisions in the law: the question of who is to be considered a transgender person, as well as an individual's right to be recognized according to their perceived gender identity. The court subsequently invited a number of people, including representatives from the transgender community, to join the proceedings and plead their perspectives on the matter. The move, though commendable for giving an equal voice to all stakeholders, has also considerably prolonged deliberations. This has meant that all those who will be affected by the case's eventual outcome continue to live under a shadow."

In simple words the above paragraph means nothing but this:

The Courts and the authorities need to rush. They must hurry up and put aside all deliberations and leave caution to the wind before they scramble and jump to legalize change in gender identity based on a person's own whims and wishes. This is essentially analogous to saying that if an individual wishes to

get rid of, or alter a certain part of their physical being on the basis of 'how they feel' it should be enough to make it possible for them to legally do that. This, they argue should be implemented without taking into consideration the fact whether or not the said individual is in a mentally and psychologically healthy state or without giving a second thought about providing the said individual medical help or making them go through investigative procedure and/or psychological counselling.

If such should be the case, I wonder what's next. Suicide to be legalized? For clearly, if the above were to be the standard of legalizing something, then individuals eventually must be given the right to choose whether or not they wish to live.

Appalling, to say the least!

Other excerpts from the same article further go on as follows:

"... the petitioners and like-minded individuals have argued that granting people the right to self-identify as male or female is 'against religion' and 'opens the door to homosexuality'. This is a similar argument to the one brought forth by the Jamaat-i-Islami in a bill presented to the Senate earlier. ... these arguments reflect an unfortunate and misinformed view of what it means to be a transgender. Further, equating gender non-conformity with homosexuality is deeply problematic, as being transgender has nothing to do with an individual's sexual orientation."

I find the use of the word 'misinformed' here especially ironic. The author's viewpoint is actually the one which is based on misinformation when trying to negate the obvious danger of falling into the sin of homosexuality which has been pointed out by the petitioners. The author, it seems is clearly not aware of the term 'intersex' and the medical details attached to this term. When the author talks about 'being transgender having nothing to do with sexual orientation,' they are obviously referring to such an individual who is devoid of the biological organs responsible for developing sexual inclinations. Such an individual in medical terms is called an 'intersex' and not a 'transgender'. Intersex individuals have a genital deformity which may be congenital or as a result of castration. In either case, it leads to a lack of sexual inclination towards any gender. Another term used for such an individual is 'eunuch'. They,

however, are not transgenders.

A transgender, on the other hand describes a range of individuals who may be an intersex person or an individual with completely healthy and properly functioning genitalia. If the latter is the case, their challenge, however, is more psychological and not physical whatsoever. Such individuals may experience difficulty in identifying themselves with the gender they were born with. This could be due to various reasons such as childhood trauma, being nurtured in an environment which enabled a gender identity paradox, or a brain chemical imbalance leading to such a psychological challenge.

Having explained the difference of both terms above, the dire question which arises is whether or not the law in question is opening doors to homosexuality? The answer is simple, a transgender person who is not an intersex, if allowed to change their gender identity will eventually be given the right to marry. When that happens, my question is, who will they decide to marry? If the individual in question is actually a man who identifies himself as a woman and gets to change his identity to a woman will obviously marry a man and, therefore, essentially end up marrying a person of his own gender. The appalling truth here would be that this same sex marriage would then have the protection of the law!

If this will not open the doors to homosexuality, I fail to understand what will?

Referring back to the article above, I find the author's statement 'being transgender has nothing to do with an individual's sexual orientation' either extremely naïve and misinformed or perhaps a very cunning attempt to confuse and mislead readers about the social and religious consequences of implementing this law.

Sayyiduna Jabir رضي الله عنه reports that Rasulullah ﷺ said: 'The greatest fear that I have for my Ummah, is [that they will engage in] the action of the people of [Nabi] Lut.'

(SunanTirmidhi, Hadith: 1457 and Mustadrak Hakim, vol.4 pg.357)

Alas! Our Prophet ﷺ was justifiably concerned about this sin, for it looks that those who have contempt for Allah's Deen and His rulings are leaving no stone unturned in taking our society and country towards this deplorable sin! May Allah protect us from their mischief. Ameen.

A Trip around the World

Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb دامت برکاتہم

We landed in Tokyo at 4 o'clock in the evening. Third secretary from the Pakistan embassy, Mr. Asghar Gono was there to receive us and in no time we were through with airport formalities and on our way to the city.

Narita airport is at a distance of around 80 kilometers from Tokyo city. The highway network around the Tokyo city all the way to the airport is excellent and huge distances are covered swiftly and easily. However, the toll tax that's charged upon using this highway system is ridiculously high. Our host informed me that using a car, it was a two hundred dollars trip to and from the airport. It was enough to blow away a Pakistani mind like mine.

It was still more than an hour till Maghrib when I reached the hotel. I prayed my Asr as soon as I reached and I had prayed my Zuhr in the US. So most interestingly, no *Salah's* time had passed upon me during my journey of eleven to twelve hours! But since that day turned out to be of thirty hours for me, I had lost track of my sleep and meal times totally.

My hotel was situated at the shore of a gulf and one

could view the endless tossing of the blue waters of the Pacific. I was sitting there and thinking: I have just flown across all that vastness; these swifter means of communication had literally shrunk the world.

A Pakistani tradesman, Mr. Sheikh Qaiser Sahib, a prominent person in the Pakistani community of Tokyo with regards his social welfare activism, invited me over to dinner at his place that night. He had arranged for me to meet some other prominent Pakistani figures in Tokyo. The fact that he had an endearing personality and well reputed presence in this community, which was earning Pakistan a very good name among these people, was something that made me really happy. Most kindly, he offered that two of his colleagues would be accompanying me as tour guides during my stay in Tokyo.

As promised, his colleagues Ilyas Javed sahib and Rafeeq Muhammad Naeem sahib were there for my company the next morning. Apart from the major sites worth seeing in Tokyo, I wanted to visit its Islamic center too. My two fellows proved to be excellent guides who helped me go over a major portion of the city in a short span of time.

Tokyo is an evidence of the amazing industrial and scientific



development in Japan over the last four decades. Despite being thickly populated, it is an extremely spacious, clean and well-organized city. Modernity and its marvels make it stand out amongst the other big cities of the world with several sky scrapers, roads bustling with urban activity, attractive marketplaces and innumerable flyovers. Another exclusiveness of this city is that usually in other cities, it's only the city's downtown which is the center of all the hustle and bustle, but when you come to Tokyo, all of the city is equally attractive and well-maintained. Amongst the amazing sky scrapers there's the sixty-five story Tocho building housing the government secretariat. This unique building has its three towers upon three different roads and interconnected through bridges. For a layperson, navigating this giant and spacious building would not be less than navigating through a maze.

Then, in the middle of the city they have Tokyo Tower, an important tourist attraction. At a single glance, one could notice it to be a twin of the Eiffel Tower of Paris. There are some differences however. The Eiffel Tower is three hundred and twenty meters tall whereas the Tokyo Tower is the world's tallest iron tower, three hundred and thirty-three meters high. Moreover, the Eiffel Tower weighs seven thousand tons while amazingly the Tokyo Tower is only four thousand tons owing to latest technologies in construction.

All of these technological advancements do not come for free of course. Tokyo is one of the most expensive cities of the world to live in. However, the average income of the citizens is equally good to balance it all out. So, its people usually are happy and extremely soft-mannered and civil. Some Pakistani people we met shared with us that they had not ever witnessed any two people quarreling or being loud in all the years they had been living there. The crime rate too is a calm low. One would find the people to be generally responsible, hardworking and sincere. Seeing these qualities in the general public, the development rate they boast of seems nothing to be surprised about.

Initially, one would be really impressed by and surprised at seeing people behaving with such discipline on the roads. On a keen look it is revealed that though one sees no cops or law enforcers physically supervising, they are constantly keeping an eye upon every nick and

corner of the city through a sophisticated network of security cameras and are able to arrive on spot wherever and whenever the need arises.

Despite all the modern sophistication like the West, Japan is retaining many attributes of its eastern culture. One does not witness the ugly thrust of vulgarity and immodesty as strongly here as in the West. The family system is largely intact. Many Pakistani Muslims have married reverted Japanese women and they acknowledge that Japanese women are fairly loyal and giving by nature.

These praiseworthy traits of the Japanese people have earned them exemplary development and prosperity despite the fact that Japan does not possess any extraordinary reserves of natural resources.

My father Hazrat Mawlana Mufti Shafi Uthmani رحمہ اللہ would always say something very profound; "Allah ﷻ

has not placed in falsehood the ability to prosper because He says in the Quran Majeed.....

إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

...so, if you ever see a non-believing nation prospering, then immediately understand that what causes its prosperity is not belief in falsehood, rather it must have adopted some truth and held on to it, leading to its prosperity by Allah's ﷻ will.

Witnessing the non-believers benefiting from these golden attributes and values which were once our religious heritage, makes one's heart painfully wishful. Losing them is not merely our loss as a people, rather it is a loss of our religion and our nation in terms of the bad name we have earned them through this. Allah ﷻ has blessed us with unmatched natural and human resources, yet, dishonesty, corruption, selfishness and indolence got the better of us. Isn't it about time that we wake up as a nation?

There's an Islamic center in Tokyo. We prayed our Zuhr there and met its patron Mr. Sualeh Samraii who was an Iraqi Muslim. He had come to Japan for his education, but then stayed back for good for the purpose of *Dawah* and *Tableegh*. There are others like him too. And the stories of the advent of Islam in Japan do not date very far back in history...

(To be continued, insh'Allah)

A Page from My Diary

By Bint Akram

"There is too much dreariness in life. All is bleak and no ray of hope seems to be cutting through the thick clouds of darkness that surround me. I don't know where to go, what to do. I don't know how to live. I feel depressed all the time. Meaninglessness is what characterises my life. Life? Do I even have a life? Am I alive? These are the questions that keep on disturbing me all the time. I don't seem to have a way out. I am lost. Lost in woods with no hope of finding my way back. Is there a way back? You tell me. You, who actually seem to be confident about life. You, who actually seem to be living life. Please answer me..."

The youth broke down into tears after having voiced his despair so expressively. To me it almost seemed like a death wish! I knew the answer to all his questions. I knew the answer because I too had experienced the same spiritual anguish at

one point in time. I knew the answer because I too had been a victim of the materialistic civilisation that has engulfed our lives like a vicious circle which does not seem to let go of us. I had the answer because it was this mental and spiritual agony that made me realise the emptiness which is a characteristic of modern, de-centered life. Yes, de-centered, because the centre of man's life rests with Allah! And I was made to realise this by someone who had already recognised Allah! How lucky auliyas are! I wondered as I looked at the youth who sat crying before. Crying like a child of three who has lost his way in a bazaar and now in desperation searches for his parents. This thought made me smile inwardly. And I re-called a verse by a Wali of Allah who once said:

Duniya mein hoon, duniya ka talab-gaar nahi hoon

Bazaar se guzra hoon, khareedaar nahi hoon

[A part of this world but unconcerned with it

I walk through the bazaar without making transactions]

I wanted to pour out all those answers that this youth was looking for and that were simmering inside me. I wanted to tell him that there is a solution to all your problems. You just need to search a bit. And even if you do not search, just harbour a genuine desire in your heart to walk on the straight path, to realise the purpose of your life and death, make intense Dua for it and you will soon be blessed by your Lord – The Haadi! Again, someone spoke inside me. I could hear a teacher telling his students, “Whenever a man is ready to learn, a teacher appears...”

I refuse to use the clichéd phrase that goes, “youth is our asset,” despite agreeing to its meaning. Nowadays, since our youth has become too ‘practical’ so some of them (not all, of course) might smirk at my using it. But yes, I will definitely quote a passage from a book by one of my favourite authors. A passage that might help some eyes get wet and realise what has been lost and what is to be recovered. Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi رحمہ اللہ, after describing the gracious impact of the religion of Islam on humanity, writes in his famous ‘Islam and the World’:

“The spirit of man was aroused, and his genius was set to noble purposes. In short, the caravan of humanity was brought nearer to its destination and its vanguard did, indeed, arrive there.

But before the rest of the travellers could arrive at the journey’s end, the caravan suddenly stopped and its leadership underwent a change. The old leader had to relinquish the charge because he had not made adequate arrangements for the safety of the travellers. An unknown fellow-traveller assumed the reins of leadership at the point of dagger and proceeded to take the caravan along a path that was tortuous and uneven and over which the nocturnal darkness prevailed even at high noon. He is engaged still in the same mad pursuit. The travellers stumble and fall headlong and groan, but the leader, in his arrogance and

haste, presses heedlessly.”

Some might question the necessity of quoting the passage at such great length. The answer is right there in the passage itself. Let us rub our eyes and take a clearer look. Does not it seem as if these travellers are those that form the entire present humanity? The humanity of which we all are a part. The humanity for whose guidance the Last Prophet of Allah was sent. The humanity that now bleeds. The humanity, in need of first aid. Who is going to stand up against the demon of materialistic civilisation which is now apparently ‘leading’ the travellers of the caravan? A civilisation which has slowly and gradually spread its roots even in the society – the Muslim society - which is ideally opposed to it. Who will be ready to reform just one person – that person being himself or herself - in order to contribute to the process of remedying the wounds of humanity? Let us leave this questions unanswered because they are rhetorical. Also because everybody out there who is reading these lines can clearly read between them ...

We are undoubtedly living in tumultuous times. The Ummah for which our Prophet ﷺ used to cry is in a state of disunity and vulnerability. Is losing hope a solution to all our problems? Not at all! Is it not hope which encourages a Palestinian child to cast stones at an Israeli military tank despite knowing that a single stone cannot make any difference to the mammoth creature which is heading to destroy, perhaps his own house. If hope too is there then what is the real problem? I believe that the problem is indifference. Most of us who are reading this magazine are perhaps sitting comfortably in a chair or a couch. Let us perform an exercise at this very moment. Let us look into ourselves and then judge how much pain we feel at those Muslim brethren of ours who are being butchered every minute. To what extent does our heart ache when we think of women and children dying in perhaps Afghanistan, Iraq or Palestine? How many of us would actually not read the newspapers with an air of pensiveness then get ourselves busy in the humdrum of daily life? And our ‘worldly’ commitments would not even let our minds drift towards anything ‘distracting’. We, the ‘successful’ need to concentrate on our studies, jobs et cetera to maintain our ‘success’. Let us, as

a part of the exercise, also analyse our ‘success’ in lives critically. What is my individual success worth if I am unable to pay heed to the cries and shrieks of those who are tortured and bombed in Yemen, Syria, Palestine, etc. No, I cannot go and help them, but I can at least give some moments of my life to simply ‘think’ about them and pray for them. A little bit of reflection on their state on my part may not do any good to them but it will surely do good to me!

A sense of collectivity on an individual basis is all that we require. Majority of my readers are students, perhaps. Have we ever thought as to the role we can actually play in making our society’s and eventually the Ummah’s condition somewhat better? Is getting a lucrative job and leading a good, luxurious life the only purpose of our education? Let us think and think hard on this one. It is high time that we decide as to what is our purpose in life because only then we will be able to focus all our faculties on one single point. Now what is that one single point? For a Muslim, at least, it cannot be an expensive car or a big house. For a Muslim, this one point can only be the desire to attain Allah’s ﷻ and his Prophet’s ﷺ love. This is the most sublime desire for anyone who has uttered the Shahadah from his tongue. Only this desire can cut through the darkness of meaninglessness that seems to have gripped us. But how is one able to engender this desire? Will such a desire spring in our hearts on its own? Of course, that is possible if Allah ﷻ wills but we must not forget that Allah ﷻ used to send Prophets ﷺ who would connect His people to Him. Who would make the ignorant people realise that they had a past. An unworldly past in which they had taken the covenant of Alast! In this world, the successful will be those who would adhere to the proclamation they made when asked, *alastu bi Rabbikum...*

“(Remember) when thy Lord took from the loins of the children of Adam their progeny and made them testify about themselves: ‘Am I not (alast) your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yea! We testify!’ – lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘As for us, we were heedless of this’” (Al-A’raf 7:172)

Now, the prophethood has been sealed.

Muhammad ﷺ was the final Prophet of Allah ﷻ. So, who would thus make people realise that they have a Lord – Allah ﷻ - who they have to recognise before they die. Allah ﷻ, in whom they should alone put their trust. Allah ﷻ, who listens and answers whenever they call upon him. Allah ﷻ, the acquisition of whose love should be the sole purpose of a Muslim’s life. The only people who can now help make us desire Allah’s ﷻ love are the heirs of the Prophet ﷺ – the auliya! These are the people who themselves have focused all their energies on acquiring Allah’s ﷻ love. They are the ones who reform themselves and with the Barakah of whom others too get reformed. The point behind saying all this is to emphasise the fact that no matter whichever class of the society we belong to, no matter whichever profession or field of study we have chosen for ourselves, it is incumbent upon us to benefit from the company of those blessed by Allah ﷻ and reform the course of our lives in the light of Quran and Sunnah. We should at least make an effort and the guidance shall follow from Him, The Merciful...

Let us end on the following note of hope given in a prayer by our Beloved Prophet ﷺ:

“O Allah, forgive us and the believing men and women and Muslim men and women, reform them and set right their mutual affairs, unite their hearts, fill their hearts with faith and wisdom, stabilise them in the pursuit of Your Apostle’s religion, grant them that they be grateful to You for Your grace which You have bestowed on them and they fulfil the covenant which You have taken from them and grant them victory over their and Your enemy; O True God, You are absolute, pure and sublime, there is no deity besides You, forgive my sins and set right my actions as You forgives the sins of whomsoever You pleases and You are indeed Forgiving and Merciful. O You who is exceedingly Forgiving also forgive me; O You who is Oft-Returning also accept my repentance; O You who is Most Gracious also have mercy on me. O You who is inclined to pardon faults also blot out my sins; O You who is the Kindest of all also be kind to me. O Lord, grant me that I may be grateful to You for Your favours which You have bestowed on me and grant me ability to worship You well” (*Kanz-ul-a’amaal*).

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Among the infamies of the soul is that you will not bring your soul to life until you bring about its death. That is: You will bring it to live for the Afterlife until you cause its death from this world. And you will not bring it to life through Allah until it is dead from delusions.

Yahya ibn Mu'adh [al-Razi] said, "Whoever draws closer to Allah by annihilating his soul, Allah will protect him from his soul." This is [achieved] by denying the soul its lusts and compelling it to do what it dislikes.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Paradise is surrounded by [the pursuit of] dislikes; Hellfire is surrounded by temptations" (the hadith indicates the nature of

types of actions that enter one into Paradise or the Hellfire).

This condition is treated by staying up late at night [in worship], in addition to hunger, thirst, doing things contrary to the soul's nature, and denying it its lusts. I heard Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn al-Fadl say: I heard Muhammad ibn al-Rumi say: I heard Yahya ibn Mu'adh al-Razi say: "Hunger is food through which Allah strengthens the bodies of the trusting ones [siddiqin]."

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

If *Beginnings* can be *Holy*

By Murtaza Humayun Saeed

Leave me in a quiet place to pray
Where I can receive the energy
To face the new day
A place close to nature
Re-vi-tal-i-zing
Ox-y-gen-a-ting
Calm-ing
Leave me there early in the day
Leave me alone (if you can)
So I don't have to feel embarrassed
If I cry
Thinking about how hard it is
To remain in a calm place inside
Soon the traffic will start
The noise of business
Will burst the stillness
I don't mind the cold
Soon everything will be gold
Perhaps I'm too sensitive
But if beginnings can be holy
I can return to this quiet place inside
Re-vi-tal-i-zed
Ox-y-gen-a-ted
Calm-ed
So leave me here a while
So leave me here a while
Till I can feel the sun rise inside me.

This poem was first published in the UK in 2020 by Lote Tree Press in an anthology by 80 Muslims poets from around the world. Murtaza has extra copies of this anthology: 'A Kaleidoscope of Stories. Muslim Voices in Contemporary Poetry' in stock. You can contact him on his Instagram @selectbooks_artgallery. He is a bookseller and teacher. He teaches at Zaawiya Trust School. (www.zaawiya.org.pk)



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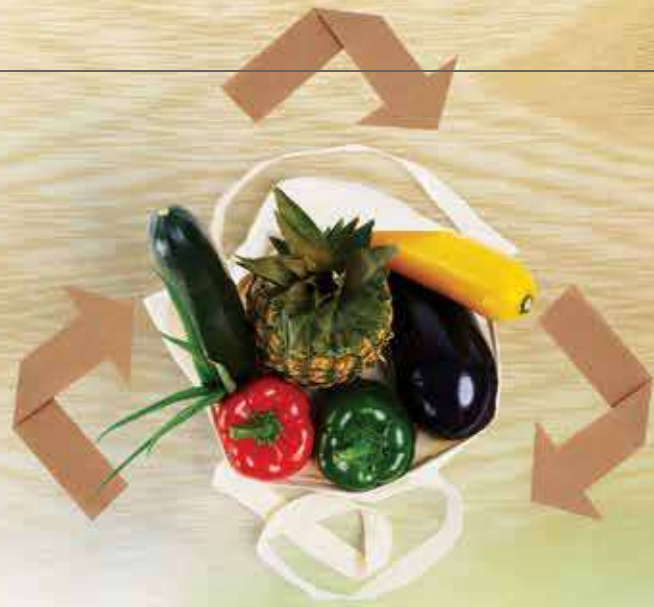
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Food Waste Prevention – a choice or an obligation?

By Zawjah Kashif (Registered Nutritionist)



A mentee visits his mentor. They eat together on the *dastarkhwan* (food mat spread on the floor). After the meal is over and the food is taken away, the mentee started rolling up the cloth. The mentor asked: "What are you doing?"

The mentee replied, "I am rolling up the *dastarkhwan* to shake it off in an appropriate place."

The mentor said, "Do you know how to roll up the *dastarkhwan*?"

Mentee: "Is that also an art?"

Mentor: "Yes, this is also an art and that is why I asked whether you know how to do it or not."

The mentee requested to be taught this art.

And so, they separated the leftover pieces of meat, gathered the bones, the large pieces of bread were separated from the smaller pieces into two piles. Then the mentor said, "I have set a particular place for each. The pieces of meat are kept in a certain place: every day a cat comes there and eats them. There is a separate place for the

bones, the dog knows that place and he come there for the bones, and I put the larger pieces of bread where the birds come and benefit from these, whereas the smaller pieces of bread are placed next to an ant's burrow and it becomes their food."

The mentee was the eminent scholar of Islam, *Mufti Shafi Usmani* and his mentor was the esteemed teacher of many respectable Scholars, i.e., *Maulana Syed Asghar Hussain*, famously known as *Mian Sb.* (*Zikr o Fikr* by Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم)

After all of the leftover food was placed in its designated place, *Mian Sahab* said: "All these things are the sustenance of Allah Almighty, no part of it should be wasted."

Respect of every morsel of food is highly valued in Islam. Licking his fingers after finishing a meal was a *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ Muslim, *Shamail Tirmidhi*). Looking at it from the lens of food wastage at home, we see how Islam teaches us to control wastage at the ground level. Picking up the morsel of food that may have fallen while eating (*Muslim, Ibn Majah*), dusting it and eating it is highly appreciated (and if it is no longer edible then it should be given to an animal or added to compost). If this much care is given to the morsels of leftover food (often not even considered food by some of us) then imagine the care one must

exercise in ensuring that no food is wasted during preparation, cooking, serving and eating.

Today, mindful eating practices focus on eating slowly and with presence of mind. One of the reasons is that the satiety signal is received by the brain sometime after the stomach is actually full. So, in reality by the time we feel satiated we have already entered the red zone of overeating. The *sunnah* of eating up to 2/3 of your stomach and leaving 1/3 for air (*Uswah-e-Rasul Akram* ﷺ by Dr. Abdul Hai Arifi دامت برکاتہم) implies that one should stop eating when some vestiges of hunger are still felt. This not only serves as a golden principle for portion control but also in controlling food waste.

"In 2019, the 74th United Nations General Assembly designated 29 September as the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, recognizing the fundamental role that sustainable food production plays in promoting food security and nutrition."

However, fourteen hundred years ago Allah Almighty with His infinite knowledge and wisdom ordained His believers to adopt moderation, and made them accountable for the correct use of resources created for their benefit in this world.

A famous hadith of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ "Do not waste water even if performing ablution on the bank of a fast-flowing large river" (*Tirmidhi*) lays the principle of preventing waste in all aspects of one's life, including food and drink.

According to the United Nations: "Reducing food loss and waste requires the attention and actions of all, from food producers, to food supply chain stakeholders, to food industries, retailers and consumers." (*International Day of Food Loss Awareness*)

It is also worth mentioning that preventing food waste at a global level and achieving Zero Hunger is not a pipe dream. It is absolutely possible. In fact, history tells us that not only once but twice,

the world experienced a state where poverty was zero and hence, we can safely assume that if hunger was present, it was voluntary and not a result of lack of food.

Yes, I am talking about the caliphate of Hazrat Umer رضى الله عنه and his great grandson Hazrat Umer bin Abdul Aziz رضى الله عنه. (*Mahmud Adès a Ayuba (2016); Islamic Economic System, Poverty and Insurgency: From Zakat distribution to Capacity Building; International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance Studies*)

Both these leaders ruled over half of the world at a time when communication still relied on horses and human messengers. Yet, the people under their rule (both Muslims and Non-Muslims) lived a life of tranquillity where people eligible for zakat (poor-due/charity) were difficult to find.

The caliphs did not set out for a Zero Hunger world, but they achieved just that. Their focus was the implementation of the just system of Islam and to spread Allah's ﷻ message by acting on His commands. Thus, this is evidence that Islam is not restricted to a set of rituals, rather, it encompasses our social and individual life and provides us with the framework of success in both.

Food waste is prevalent in both the developed and developing countries with another 83 to 131 billion people at risk of food insecurity due to the (Covid 19) pandemic. It is high time that we come out of our state of negligence and practice moderation in our food purchasing, storage, preparation, consumption and mindfully sort out our leftovers.

In conclusion, for the believers of Islam prevention of food waste is not an option, rather, it is a religious obligation!

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Cultural Norms how much a part of *Islam?*

By M. Bint Hanif

Cultural norms are the standards we live by. They are the shared expectations and rules that guide behavior of people within social groups. Cultural norms are learned and reinforced from parents, friends, teachers, family and others while growing up in a society; however, society also has a vital role in setting forth many cultural practices that are unanimously followed by its inhabitants, whether right or wrong.

Unfortunately, a great number of Muslims in our society have given precedence to Culture over Islam, not realizing the fact that Islam is devoid of and against the many cultures created by us; associating un-Islamic cultures with Islam, apart from shedding a negative light on it, also gives media a chance to voice unfavourable views on Islam. Who is to blame?

Issues and events about Islam get treated as 'news' in the mainstream media and so many are regrettably announced as 'problems with Islam', whereas those are, in reality, problems of culture, politics, superstitions, and tribal or ethnic codes of conduct of some Muslim-majority region. Everyone would unequivocally agree that it is imperatively wrong to judge a religion by the practices it does not condone. The religion of Islam does not condone, it actually condemns practices such as dishonorable 'honor killings', racism or tribalism, oppression of women, banning women from acquiring education, and many other un-Islamic practices that make their

way to the sensationalized news.

Cultures are making the social lives of many Muslims difficult. Take the example of dowry at the time of marriage. Fathers, rich or poor, make endless sacrifices to give their darling daughters handsome amount of dowries due to the fear of the prospective groom or in-laws mistreating or mishandling the girl they so lovingly raised. Lamentably in today's era the groom and the in-laws shamelessly request items of great monetary value or handsome amounts of money and then proclaim that "whatever the father is giving, he is giving to his own daughter." Why the bitter fact of the strain it puts upon parents goes unnoticed? Huge amounts of money is spent on wedding preparations making it seem like a competition with regards to having the best wedding in town.

Rasulullah ﷺ himself organized the marriage ceremony of Fatimah ﷺ and Ali ﷺ. Rasulallah ﷺ blessed them with the following dua, "May Allah maintain your bond and bless you with good fortune. May He grant and bless you many pious noble children."

On the second day, Ali ﷺ arranged for a simple waleemah (wedding feast). Whatever food was at hand was served without any pomp, display or pretence. Barley bread, dates, Hareera (soup), cheese and mutton were served.

Truly, what can be said of the simple marriage of the Queen of all women in Jannah and Ali ﷺ!

As for the departure of Fatimah ﷺ Rasulallah ﷺ

arranged for Umme Ayman ﷺ, Umme Ayman ﷺ, whom he lovingly whom he lovingly referred to as mother, to escort Fatimah ﷺ to her husband's house. No fanfare, no pomp and no customs at all. Neither did Ali ﷺ arrive with a caravan of friends! Sheer simplicity from both sides! After having such examples before us it becomes incumbent upon us to shun the modern rituals and huge expenses on these occasions and adopt the pure, simple and informal Sunnah of our beloved Nabi ﷺ. What prevents Muslim parents from escorting their daughters to their new homes? If it amounts to disgrace why did Nabi ﷺ request his mother to personally escort the Queen of Jannah!

Surely, in the simplicity of this marriage lies an example for the whole of mankind!

Cultural stigma attached to divorce is another example of how culture is given precedence over Islam. The marriages of several divorced girls are becoming an arduous task or even impossible, even if the girl may not be at fault, however the mercy of mankind, the greatest king, the most handsome of all men, the most honorable in society had eleven wives and all of them were either divorced or widowed except for Ummul Mu'mineen Aa'isha ﷺ.

It is unclear as to why the social as to why the social stigma has developed over the centuries in Muslims societies and has snowballed to an extent where most Muslim women prefer living in extremely abusive, torturous marriages than run the risk of being labeled or carrying the ignoble title of 'divorcee'. She is never given the benefit of the doubt; rather, all carefully designed (apparently) religious and social narratives hold her more responsible for the breakup of 'her home' and destroying 'his life'. She is never accorded the luxury of 'husn-az-zan' or the principle of positive possibility, that she may genuinely have been wronged or she may have been at the receiving end of oppression and/or verbal, mental, physical abuse. She is never trusted to have possibly done all she could possibly do to save her marriage. Also, women divorcees find it incredibly hard to find suitable marriage proposals. Muslim men generally abhor the idea of marrying a divorced woman, again because of the culturally stereotyped image of divorced women.

A divorced woman can expect to elicit a wide spectrum of negative emotions and behaviors

from people – ranging from pity, sympathy, shock and horror to contempt, intrigue and snoopiness – with complete disregard to respecting her right of maintaining privacy. Slandering, gossiping and judging the woman for her newly acquired "divorced" status is quite rampant in Muslim societies. This is the "collateral damage" of divorce, the social "price" that a woman has to pay for being divorced, which in actuality has no precedents in Islamic history, fiqh or laws.

Divorce is undeniably one of the most condemnable acts in Islam. In a famous Hadith, narration of which is slightly weak, but scholars agree that the meaning is sound, Rasulallah ﷺ is reported to have said:

"أَبْغَضُ الْحَالِلِ إِلَى اللَّهِ الطَّلَاقُ"

'The most detestable of all permissible deeds to Allah is divorce.'

This implies that Allah hates divorce, but He does not forbid it to His slaves, for He knows that sometimes, in dire situations, the complexity of human interactions may actually make it more destructive for them to carry on with a particular marital relationship. The Holy Quran lays down exacting and meticulous instructions and procedures that any couple trying to sort out marital conflicts must follow conscientiously, to avoid invoking the wrath of Allah.

Many of the Sahabah ﷺ, during the life of Rasulallah ﷺ, reportedly went through divorces for legitimate reasons, and they were neither chastised for it nor publicly blamed and reprimanded for it.

The society is often quick in judging divorcees as being 'good' or 'bad'. In truth, they are just as human as those who are happily married. A case in point is that of Zaid ibn Harithah ﷺ and Zainab bint Jahash ﷺ. Both were not just closely related to the Prophet, their marriage also took place upon his ﷺ request. The Prophet ﷺ has many Ahadith praising their pious statures; they were, after all the Companions of the highest ranks. They were not compatible for each other and their marriage was plagued with issues of varying nature, eventually leading to a divorce. It was not an issue of good or bad; rather, sometimes two good people may not get along well for other legitimate reasons. Moreover, society should not punish them for that.

During the era of Rasulallah ﷺ, a woman of

marriageable age, whether she was a virgin, widow or a divorcee had no difficulty in immediately finding a suitor.

On numerous occasions authors and 'pundits' have wrongly attacked the religion of Islam for the cultural practices of Muslims in certain places in the world. Polls have shown that about 70 percent of the American public acknowledges being unfamiliar with Islam. Thus, it is not a surprise that most Americans cannot distinguish Islamic religious practices from cultural practices followed in Muslim-majority countries.

There are certain overlapping areas as well. A people's religion influences their culture, and culture influences how they practice their religion. Furthermore, in Islam there is a clear distinction between the two.

Many countries that are commonly labeled as being 'Islamic', in reality, are merely 'Muslim-majority countries' practicing an amalgam of Islamic and pre-Islamic/non-Islamic practices. More than 10 centuries ago, when Islam became the predominant religion of the part of the world that today is Muslim-majority, those countries already had very distinct and very patriarchal cultures, as many remain patriarchal today.

Cooking certain types of food at certain times of the year and distributing them among the poor, visiting shrines and requesting spirits of the deceased to pray to Allah for them, are practices performed by Muslims claiming these to be Islamic, yet these practices have nothing to do with Islam.

So then, what is an Islamic practice? Islamic practices and beliefs are those that have roots in the Quran which Muslims believe to be the last and unchanged revelation from Allah and the Sunnah of Rasulallah ﷺ. Any belief or practice, no matter how common it is in any Muslim-majority country, which does not go back to the Quran or the Sunnah, is not an Islamic belief or practice.

Let us now take the example of the Western culture. Whatever it is being sold in the name of feminism is slowly creeping into Muslim homes.

If women are looking after a home so should men... If women are looking after children so should men... Why do we have to cover ourselves and men don't...

Sounds familiar? There are many more.

In the name of feminism we have obliterated the rights Almighty Allah and Rasulallah ﷺ bestowed upon us.

The west calls a woman a 'mere housewife' if she is at home, showcasing her as if she is married to the house. Ever wondered what Islam calls such women? Rabbay tul Bayt – the queen of a home. Why hanker after feminism when a woman is being given the status of a queen? A queen in true and literal sense. When she is born she is a source of blessing and reward for her father. At the time of marriage her acceptance matters the most. When she gives birth Jannah lies under her feet. For every drop of breast milk she feeds her baby with, reward is continuously recorded for her by the angels. She has the right to inheritance. She has the right to business, she has the right to give her opinion. She has several rights within the limits of Shariah. Our beloved Prophet ﷺ spoke about womenfolk thrice in his last sermon, "treat women kindly..."

Fatimah ؓ is the queen of Jannah. Khadija ؓ was first to accept Islam. Sumayya ؓ was the first martyr. Aisha ؓ was and still is the greatest scholar, she had the knowledge of medicine, understanding of psychology, wisdom and so much more that sahabah who sat in the company of Prophet ﷺ would later on benefit from her. The law of tayyammum was revealed due to Aisha ؓ.

Even one person can make a difference to this never ending cultural circle, the story of the starfish comes to my mind which I heard last month at a seminar: a little boy was at a beach which had dozens of starfish washed off onto the sand, he started picking up a starfish one at a time and threw it in the water in order to save its life and return them to their original habitats. Coincidentally a man passed by and exclaimed "Hey! You little kid the sand is lined with these, how many will you save? ... you are plainly wasting your time, what difference will it make?" the innocent boy instantly turned around picked up a starfish, returned it to its original habitat, gazed into the man's eyes, pointed at the starfish swimming in the water and exclaimed with pure innocence, "oh uncle, I made a difference for that starfish! I did make a difference! It is difference even if it's for one!"

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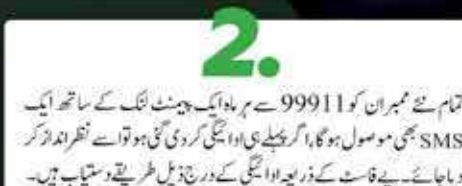
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On Religious Tolerance

By Khalid Baig



While on his deathbed, Sayyidna Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه dictated a long will consisting of instructions for the next Khalifah. Here is the last sentence of that historic document: "I instruct you on behalf of the people who have been given protection in the name of Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ. [That is the *Dhimmi*s or the non-Muslim minorities within the Islamic state]. Our covenant to them must be fulfilled, we must fight to protect them, and they must not be burdened beyond their capabilities."

At that time Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه was lying in pain because of the wounds inflicted on him by a non-Muslim who had stabbed him with a dagger soaked in poison while he was leading the Fajr prayer. It should also be remembered that he was the head of a vast empire ranging from Egypt to Persia. From normal rulers of his time

or ours, we could have expected vengeance and swift reaction. (The enlightened rulers of today have sent bombers even on suspicion of murder conspiracy). From a very forgiving head of state, we could have expected an attempt to forget and forgive - and that would be considered noble. But a command to protect the minorities and take care of them?

What is even more remarkable is that for Muslim historians the entire affair was just natural. After all it was the Khalifah himself who had established the standards by writing the guarantees for the protection of life, property and religion in decree after decree as Muslims opened land after land during his rule. The pattern established here was followed for centuries throughout the Muslim world.

Of course, Sayyidna Umar رضي الله عنه was simply following what he learnt from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself. That the protection of life, property and religious freedom of minorities is the religious duty of the Islamic state. That he personally would be demanding justice in the hereafter on behalf of a dhimmi who had been wronged by a Muslim. That there is no compulsion in religion and that Muslims must be just to friends and foe alike.

The result of these teachings was a Muslim rule that set the gold standard for religious tolerance in a world that was not used to the idea. Not only that the Muslim history is so remarkably free of the inquisitions, persecutions, witch hunts, and holocausts that tarnish history of other civilizations, it protected its minorities from persecution by others as well. It protected Jews from Christians and Eastern Christians from Roman Catholics. In Spain under the Umayyads and in Baghdad under the Abbasid Khalifahs, Christians and Jews enjoyed a freedom of religion that they did not allow each other or anyone else.

This exemplary tolerance is built into Islamic teachings. The entire message of Islam is that this life is a test and we have the option of choosing the path to hell or to heaven. Messengers were sent to inform about the choices and to warn about the consequences. They were not sent to forcibly put the people on the right path. The job of the Muslims is the same. They must deliver the message of Islam to the humanity as they have received it. They are neither to change it to make it attractive, nor to coerce others to accept it. In addition, the results in the hereafter will depend upon faith. For all good acts are meaningless in the absence of the proper faith. And faith is an affair of the heart. It simply cannot be imposed.

It is not an idea that followers of other religions have shared with Islam. The result is, Muslim experience in the area of tolerance has been exactly opposite of the rest of the world. As Marmaduke Pickthall noted: "It was not until the Western nations broke away from their religious law that they became more tolerant, and it was only when the Muslims fell away from their religious law that they declined in tolerance."

The path that the Western world took to provide

harmony in society was to banish religion from the public square. For this achievement, it thinks that it has earned lecturing rights over the issue. So, it may be good to remember that while it has indeed made huge progress in the area of tolerance during the last century (which should be appreciated), it has a long way to go before it can reach the standards established by Islam. First, while Muslim Personal Law is not recognized in the West, the Personal Law of non-Muslim minorities has always been recognized in the Muslim world. Second, while throughout Europe and America, Muslims are not permitted to make the call to prayer (Adhan) on loud speakers, church bells ring freely in the Muslim world. Third, the wide spread anti-Islamic prejudice in the Western media is both a cause and a consequence of the underlying intolerance. Fourth, hate crimes are a fact of life in the West. Many incidents of vandalism take place against Mosques in the peaceful USA, not to mention hundreds of attacks against individuals. Fifth, the will to admit this state of affairs is also not sufficiently strong. In 1999 two resolutions were floated in the US Senate and House, titled "A resolution supporting religious tolerance toward Muslims." While the Senate resolution passed, the House resolution was gutted under pressure from several Jewish and Christian groups.

The situation of the rest of the "international community" is not much different. With this background, extortions to display tolerance become a vehicle for imposing one's own intolerance.

Some time ago, some people declared that the demolition of Buddhist statues in a country with no Buddhist minority violated Islam's teachings on religious tolerance. They forgot that religious tolerance means accommodation to religious minorities; it does not mean undermining the majority. Here the issue of religious freedom had been turned on its head. For the real question to ask was, why the Muslims in Afghanistan must endure the statues they abhor?

For Muslims religious tolerance is not about political posturing. It is a serious religious obligation. They must be a force against all intolerance, even that which is promoted in the guise of tolerance.

The Advent of Islam

By Ukasha Niazi

Part
05

The Hudaibiya Peace Treaty:

In 6th A.H., the Prophet ﷺ dreamed of performing a Tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka'ba) in Makkah. Once the other Muslims heard of this dream, they got passionate about entering Makkah. Thus, fourteen hundred people set out with the Prophet ﷺ to perform Umrah that very year. The Prophet ﷺ had earlier sent ahead an informant to gauge the reaction of the Meccans regarding the Muslims move. He soon came up with the news 'that Quraysh had decided to not allow the entry of Muslims in Makkah under any circumstance.' (Sahih Bukhari, Kitab ul Maghazi). The Holy Prophet ﷺ kept on advancing and finally reached Hudaibiya. Muslims faced a water shortage here. There was only a single well in Hudaibiya which hardly supplied much water and finally dried out once Muslims drew water from it on regular basis. However, due to a miracle of Allah ﷻ at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ, the well was soon filled to the brim. (Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab ul Maghazi).

Keeping the preparations of the non-Muslims in mind, the Prophet ﷺ wished to hold peace talks with the Meccans and for that very reason, he sent Hazrat Uthman ؓ as a diplomat. 'Meccans confined Hazrat Uthman to a place, but a rumor spread that he was slain.' (Musnad Ahmed, Seerah ibn Hashim). When the Prophet ﷺ heard this news, he announced a war against the Meccans. "Now it is mandatory for us to avenge the murder of 'Uthman." Saying this, he took an oath of allegiance from his companions under an acacia (Babul) tree. They swore to fight until death. This pledge came to be known as Bay't-e- Rizwan. 'It was later found out that the news about the death of Hazrat 'Uthman ؓ was nothing but a rumor.' (Seerah ibn Hashim).

Draft of the Peace Treaty (Sulah-e-Hudaibiya):

The Quraysh sent Suhayl bin 'Amr as their emissary to the Prophet ﷺ. Suhayl met the Prophet ﷺ and discussed the terms and conditions of the peace treaty. The Prophet ﷺ asked Hazrat 'Ali to write

down the draft of the treaty.

The terms of the Treaty (Sulah-e- Hudaibiya) were as follows:

1. The Muslims will go back that year.
2. They will come to Makkah to perform 'Umrah next year and return after three days of stay.
3. When they come next year, they will not be wearing arms. They could bring only their swords, which should be properly sheathed, and even a sheathed sword should be in a *Jalbaan* (a sack or the like).
4. They will not take with them any Muslim living in Makkah and will not oppose if a Muslim who comes with them wants to stay in Makkah.
5. If a disbeliever or a Muslim escapes to Madinah, he will be returned to the disbelievers. However, if a Muslim runs away to Makkah, he will not be returned to the Muslims.
6. The Arab tribes will be free to enter a treaty with any of the two parties they like. (Sahih Al-Bukhari)

Apparently, the terms set for this treaty were against Muslims but Prophet Muhammad ﷺ told them to accept the conditions of this treaty. To accept a treaty (which had terms and conditions apparently humiliating to the Muslims) at its face value was quite a test for the faithful Companions ؓ. Hence, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ set off for the return journey. On his way back the first verses of Surah Al-Fath were revealed to him.

انا فتحناك فتحا مبينا

(Verily, We have given you a manifest victory.)

Allah ﷻ declared the Al-Hudaibiyah peace treaty a manifest victory, because of the benefits it would carry and the good results that originated from it.

Benefits of the treaty:

Until then the Muslims and the disbelievers did not mix with each other. Now the peace treaty facilitated social interaction among them. The disbelievers now came to Madinah for trade, stayed there for months, and dealt with Muslims, which helped them know about Islamic values. In addition, every Muslim was a living example of sincerity, virtue, piety, and moral refinement. The Muslims who went to Makkah exhibited a high level of refinement and excellence. This naturally attracted the hearts of the disbelievers toward Islam. (Zaad ul Ma'ad) Historians relate that during the Hudaibiya Peace Treaty and the Conquest of Makkah such many people accepted Islam as was never known before. (Dalael un Nabuwwah)

Letters to Rulers:

In the seventh Hijri, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ officially started inviting the kings and rulers towards Islam. For this purpose, he sent them letters. Until then there was no personal stamp of the name of the Prophet ﷺ. When letters were written to the kings outside Arabia, a stamp was made. It was of silver, which had three words – Allah, Rasul, Muhammad - written in Arabic consecutively in three lines. (Sahih ul Bukhari)

The rulers to whom Prophet ﷺ wrote letters included Najashi (the King of Abyssinia), Munzir bin Saawi (King of Bahrain), and the King of Oman who readily accepted Islam.

Munzir bin Harith bin Abu Shimr (ruler of Damascus), Jareeh bin Matta, popularly known as Maquqas, (ruler of Alexandria and Egypt) and Heraclius, (the king of Constantinople), though did not accept Islam but they showed a good response to Prophet's ambassador, but Khusroe Pervaiz Kisra who was ruler of Persia was most offensive in his response. He tore the letter into two pieces. (Sahih al-Bukhari) Prophet Muhammad ﷺ cursed him that the way he tore

his letter, in a similar manner his kingdom be torn apart. Subsequently, he was murdered by his own son and after it the Persian kingdom went into decline. Ultimately, the curse of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came true.

Battle of Khyber:

After the Jews were expelled from Medina, most of them settled at a place known as Khyber. Soon, Khyber became a center point of Judaism, and they would coax the surrounding tribes against the Muslims and Islam. After his return from Huddaybiah, Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ came to know that the Jews of Khyber had planned to launch an attack on Muslims. After hearing this, the Prophet ﷺ raised an army and included in it only those Companions who were with him at Huddaybiya. This army consisted of 1,600 soldiers in which 200 were mounted. (Seerah Halabiyah) The Jews had confined themselves to various forts which were difficult to be conquered but by the will of Allah ﷻ, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took over the forts of Khyber one after another. After the conquest, Muslims took the agricultural land of Khyber into their control. But the Jews demanded for land to be given back to them on the condition that they would give half of the yield to Muslims. Holy Prophet ﷺ granted them the permission.' (Sunan Abi Dawud) The non-commercial land of Khyber was distributed among those who had participated in the battle.

The Prophet ﷺ marches for Umrah:

As per the terms of Huddaybia Treaty, Muslims was permitted to go to Makkah for 'Umrah that year (7th Hijri). Therefore, after Khyber, the Prophet ﷺ decided to perform the Umrah they had postponed previously. The Prophet ﷺ then called for Muslims and made an announcement that 'all those who were with him in the 'Umrah trip last year would be now accompanying him. Except for those who had been martyred, all

others joined him and performed 'Umrah with him.' (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Battle of Mu'ata:

Shurahbeel bin 'Amr was ruler of Basra who believed in Christianity. Prophet ﷺ sent a letter to him inviting him towards Islam. When Harith bin 'Umayr ﷺ, the envoy sent by Prophet ﷺ, reached Shurahbeel, he misbehaved and killed Harith bin 'Umayr ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ decided to avenge his murder and sent a military dispatch to Syria consisting of 3,000 soldiers (Zaad ul Ma'ad) Shurahbeel got ready to fight against the Muslims with a 100,000-strong army. Heraclius, the ruler of Rome, also collected a large army of the Arab tribes to support Shurahbeel. Initially, some Muslims paused to ponder about whether they should move ahead to fight or not but then they were convinced by their army commander and thus the small army of Muslims advanced and fell upon the huge enemy. Three commanders of the Muslims met martyrdom and after that Hazrat Khalid bin Waleed ﷺ took the command and fought enemies with an exceptional bravery. A total of eight swords broke down in his hand during this battle. (Sahih al-Bukhari) Despite feeling an overwhelming urge to fight, Hazrat Khalid ﷺ decided to play a defensive strategy because the battle was between 3,000 Muslims and more than 100,000 disbelievers, with a slim chance for the Muslims to win. Eventually, Hazrat Khalid ﷺ took the Muslim army safely out of the battlefield.

Violation of Huddaybia Treaty:

When the treaty of Huddaybia was signed, it included a clause, stating that 'the Arab tribes will be free to enter into a treaty with any of the two parties they like.' The Quraysh however violated this clause of the treaty by helping their ally tribe, Banu Bakr, in a fight against Bani Khuza'a tribe that had sided with the Prophet ﷺ. The people of

Bani Khuza'a were brutally killed at the hands of the Banu Bakr and their supporters, the Quraysh. Although the members Bani Khuza'a appealed for a break in fighting and even tried to seek shelter in the Ka'ba, but they were put to death wherever they were found. (Seerah ibn Hisham, Tareekh e Tabri) Around forty members of Bani Khuza'a who had somehow survived in this brutal killing came up to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and reported the account of this bloody event. After listening to them, the Prophet ﷺ sent a message to the Meccans, asking them for an immediate redress for their brutal act and violation. He placed three alternatives before them; either they were to pay blood money for the victims of Khuza 'ah or had to dismiss their alliance with Banu Bakr; but if they did not opt for the first two conditions then the last option for them was to consider that truce to be nullified and that Muslims were free to attack them at any time by any means. This message worried the Quraysh and they realized the gravity of the situation, thus fearing the horrible forthcoming consequences. The Quraysh decided to delegate their chief Abu Sufyan to Prophet for a renewal of the truce. Abu Sufyan tried his best to get an extension in the treaty or to renew it, but all went in vain. The Prophet ﷺ refused to listen to him and ordered for a battle against Quraysh, who violated the treaty who had slain the innocent people.

The Conquest of Makkah:

It was the holy month of Ramadan and 8th Hijri when the 'Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ advanced towards Makkah with 10,000 Companions ﷺ. (Sahih al-Bukhari) He wished that the Meccans do not get any idea about his arrival in advance. Ultimately, the grand army of Islam reached close to Makkah.

Here, the Prophet ﷺ desired that he should conquer the city without any resistance or

bloodshed and the enemy should surrender without any conditions. However, nine persons including 'Ikrimah bin Abu Jahl, Habbar bin Aswad, Abdullah bin Sa'd Abi Sarah, Miqyas Subabah Laythi, Huwairath bin Nuqayd, Abdullah Hilal and four women who had been guilty of murder or other very serious offences or had made efforts to provoke war should be killed for their offences immediately, whenever they are captured'. (Seerah Ibn Hisham)

As for those who were killed, mention could be made of 'Abdul 'Uzza bin Khatal, Miqyas bin Sababa, Huwairith and a woman singer. (Ar Raheeq Al-Makhtum) Rest of them either accepted Islam or were forgiven. In a separate brief skirmish, only twelve disbelievers were killed. (Ibn Hisham)

Thereafter, the Prophet ﷺ mounted a camel and proceeded to the Masjid ul Haram for pilgrimage and tawaf (circumambulation) of the Ka'ba. There were around three hundred and sixty idols in Kabah which he knocked down with a stick or a spear that he was carrying in his hand and recited this verse:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَرَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

Say: Truth has come, and falsehood has been banished and falsehood is certainly doomed to banishment. (Surah Isra 17:81)

The Prophet ﷺ completed his tawaf and afterwards made a sermon to the people of Makkah. Here, he announced for a general amnesty by saying: "I too say to you the same thing, which my brother Yusuf said to his unkind brothers i.e., "Have no fear this day! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful". (Mughazi-i-Waqidi) Hence, the display of mercy that existed on that day was extremely wonderful.

(To be continued, *inshAllah*)

'Ikrima bin Abi Jahl رضي الله عنه

"Soon 'Ikrima will come to you as a believing emigrant so do not abuse his father, for surely abusing the dead causes pain to the living and does not reach the dead."

Muhammad, Rasul Allah ﷺ

"Welcome to the mounted emigrant."

From the greetings of Rasul Allah to 'Ikrima

He was in his late thirties when the Messenger of Mercy ﷺ proclaimed his invitation of guidance and truth. He ranked among the noblest of Quraish in lineage and was also one of the richest men in Mecca. It behoved him to accept Islam along with his peers, noblemen such as Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqaas, Mus'ab bin Umair رضي الله عنه.

Unfortunately, his father, Abu Jahl was the arch enemy of Islam. He had persecuted countless Muslims and was obsessed with bringing about the downfall of Islam.

His son 'Ikrima bin Abi Jahl Al Makhzoomi رضي الله عنه was renowned for his bravery and proficiency in riding.

'Ikrima felt compelled to uphold his father's enmity against Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. Therefore, he fiercely opposed the Blessed Prophet ﷺ.

On the day of Badr, his father led the troops into battle and swore by Laat and 'Uzza that he would not return to Mecca until he had defeated Muhammad. Full of swaggering arrogance, the Pagan army camped at Badr for three days, during which they slaughtered camels, drank much wine, and singing girls sang odes of victory.

Abu Jahl marched into war, accompanied by his son, 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه. But Laat and 'Uzza did not respond to the invocation of Abu Jahl for they were deaf and could not hear, nor did they help him in battle because they were senseless blocks of wood. 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه heard his dying father's screams and ﷺ him soaked in blood.

The pagans returned to Mecca, leaving behind the corpses of the Quraish who had been slain at Badr. In their haste to retreat, they were forced to leave their dead behind. The Muslims flung their bodies in a well and cast sand upon them.

From that day onwards, 'Ikrima's رضي الله عنه hatred of Islam soared to unprecedented heights. Formerly he had opposed Islam out of loyalty to his father but now he opposed Islam with a vengeful heart. Along with a group whose fathers had been killed in Badr, 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه swore to avenge the deaths of their loved ones. Assiduously they fanned the embers of hatred of all who had lost family members at Badr and incited them to take revenge upon the Muslims in Uhud.

'Ikrima took part in Uhud and was accompanied by his wife, Umm Hakeem رضي الله عنها. She was one of the Quraish women whose relatives had been killed at Badr, they kept beating the drums to spur on their men to greater heights of valour and to prevent them from fleeing out of cowardice.

Quraish had positioned Khalid Bin Walid رضي الله عنه on the right flank of the army while 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه was on the left side. Both men fought fiercely and managed to secure a decisive victory for Pagans against the Muslims, so that Abu Sufiyan exclaimed in satisfaction, "today was for Badr."

During the battle of Khandaq the pagans besieged Madina for many days until 'Ikrima's رضي الله عنه patience ran out. He scanned the trench closely until his sharp eyes spotted a narrow part. Boldly, he rode forward and leapt to the other side. He was followed by a group of daring horsemen. One of the Muslims, 'Amr Bin 'Abd Wudd Al-'Aamiree رضي الله عنه, was martyred and 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه managed to escape.

On the day of the conquest of Mecca, Quraish recognised that they had no choice but to allow Muhammad ﷺ and his companions free passage to Mecca. Their decision was prompted by the knowledge that the Blessed Prophet ﷺ had forbidden his commanders from fighting any of the Meccans except those who attacked them.

However, 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه along with a group of warriors went out to challenge the mighty Muslim army. A minor skirmish took place in which Khalid Bin Waleed رضي الله عنه easily defeated them. Some were killed and others fled. Among those who fled was 'Ikrima رضي الله عنه.

At this point, he was devastated. Since Mecca had surrendered to the Muslims, it was now unsafe for him. The Blessed Prophet ﷺ had issued a general amnesty for all of Quraish excepting a group who had been specifically mentioned by name. The command was that these men had to be killed even if they were found beneath the covering of the Ka'ba. 'Ikrima's رضي الله عنه name was on that list, so he now fled secretly from Mecca and headed towards Yemen for that was the only refuge he had left.

In the meantime, Umm Hakeem, 'Ikrima's رضي الله عنها wife and Hind bint 'Utba رضي الله عنها went to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ accompanied by ten other women so they could swear allegiance to him. They entered his presence and found him with two of his wives, his daughter Fatima رضي الله عنها as well as some women from Bani 'Abdil Muttalib.

Hind رضي الله عنها, who was heavily veiled, spoke up, "O Messenger of Allah, praise be to Allah Who has caused His chosen religion to triumph and I ask you to treat me with kindness by right of our kinship for I am a true believing woman." Then she unveiled her face and said, "Hind bint 'Utba, O Messenger of Allah."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ told her, "you are welcome."

She uttered, "By Allah, O messenger of Allah, there was no household on the face of this earth for which I wished for humiliation more ardently than your household and now there is no household on the face of this earth for which I shall pray for honour more than your household."

Rasul Allah ﷺ said to her, "And more."

Then Umm Hakeem ؓ 'Ikrima's ؓ wife arose and accepted Islam and said, "O Messenger of Allah, 'Ikrima has fled to Yemen for fear that you will kill him so grant him sanctuary. May Allah ﷻ grant you peace."

The Blessed Prophet responded, "he is safe."

She set off immediately in search of 'Ikrima accompanied by her Roman slave. On the way, the slave tried to seduce her. She managed to repel him until she came to a town where she appealed to the people for help. The bound the slave and she travelled on, leaving him behind.

She proceeded along her journey until she found 'Ikrima ؓ near the seashore of the town of Tihama. 'Ikrima was trying to hire a Muslim boatman to take him across, but the boatman kept saying, "Save yourself and then I will take you."

'Ikrima ؓ asked, "How can I save myself?"

The boatman responded, "By saying, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

'Ikrima ؓ retorted, "This was what caused me to flee!"

While they were both arguing, Umm Hakim ؓ ran up to 'Ikrima ؓ, saying, "O my cousin, I have come to you from the best of men, from Muhammad bin 'Abdullah ؓ. I asked him to grant you sanctuary and he consented so do not flee."

'Ikrima asked incredulously, "Did you actually speak to him?" She replied, "Yes I spoke to him and he gave you sanctuary." She allayed his fears and convinced him to return with her.

On the return journey, she informed him about the slave's attempt. When he passed by him, 'Ikrima ؓ killed him. During the journey, 'Ikrima ؓ wanted to have marital relations with his wife but she refused, "I am a Muslim and you are an idoltaor."

'Ikrima ؓ was flabbergasted and exclaimed, "Something that come that could come between me and you is something truly wondrous."

As 'Ikrima ؓ approached Mecca, the Blessed Prophet ﷺ said to his Companions, "Soon 'Ikrima ؓ will come to you as a believing emigrant so do not abuse his father, for abusing the dead causes pain to the living and does not reach the dead."

Shortly afterwards, 'Ikrima ؓ arrived and went straight to the Blessed Prophet ﷺ. As soon as the Prophet ﷺ set eyes and 'Ikrima ؓ, he stepped forward eagerly without even putting on his mantle, so great was his joy. When Rasul Allah ﷺ sat down, 'Ikrima ؓ stood before him and said humbly, "O Muhammad ﷺ, Umm Hakeem has informed me that you have granted me sanctuary."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ said, "She spoke the truth and you are safe."

'Ikrima ؓ asked, "To what you do invite, O Muhammad?"

The Prophet ﷺ answered, "I invite you to testify that there is no god but Allah and that I am the slave of Allah and his Messenger, to establish salat and to pay zakat." The Blessed Prophet ﷺ then enumerated all the obligatory pillars of Islam.

'Ikrima ؓ responded, "By Allah, you have Summit to the truth and you have commanded what is right. By Allah even before you invited us to Islam, you were always the most truthful and virtuous man among us." So saying, he stretched out his hand and declared, "Indeed I testify that there is no god but Allah and I testify that you are His slave and His Messenger." Then he said, "O Rasul Allah ﷺ teach me the best words I can say."

Rasul Allah ﷺ answered, "You should say, 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and

Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.'"

'Ikrima ؓ asked, "What else?"

Rasul Allah ﷺ replied, "You should say, 'I call Allah to witness and I bid all those who are present to witness I am a Muslim, a Mujahid, and a Muhajir.'" 'Ikrima ؓ repeated these words.

Then Rasul Allah ﷺ said to him tenderly, "Today I shall grant you whatever you ask for."

'Ikrima ؓ replied, "I ask you to seek forgiveness on my behalf for every act of enmity I ever showed you, for every occasion that I ever fought you and for each word of abuse I ever uttered about you, either to your face or behind your back."

The Blessed Prophet ﷺ invoked, "O Allah, forgive him for every act of enmity he ever showed me and for every step he took towards any destination, intending thereby to extinguish Your Light. And forgive him for all the words of abuse he uttered to my face or in my absence."

'Ikrima's face grew radiant with joy and he exclaimed rapturously, "I swear by Allah, O Rasul Allah ﷺ that I shall now spend more in the Path of Allah than what I would formerly spend to hinder from the path of Allah ﷻ. And I shall fight far more valiantly in the path of Allah than I used to fight when I tried to hinder from the Path of Allah."

From that day onwards, a mighty hero joined the ranks of the Muslim army. A devout worshipper who used to diligently recite the Qur'an in the masjid. So great was his love for the Book of Allah ﷻ that he would reverently place it on his face while uttering, "The book of my Lord... the Speech of my Lord..." And he would be weeping humbly, in a state of awe before Allah .

'Ikrima ؓ faithfully upheld is covenant to Rasul Allah ﷺ and always participated in each Muslim battle. Moreover, he ؓ was always in the forefront of the army.

On the day of Yarmook, 'Ikrima ؓ advanced towards the battlefield with the eagerness of a thirsty man who sees cold water on a blazingly hot day. When the fighting grew fierce, and the

Muslims faced dire peril, he dismounted from his horse, smashed the sheath of his sword and boldly penetrated the ranks of the Romans.

Divining his purpose, Khalid bin Waleed ؓ hastened towards him and said anxiously, "Don't do this, 'Ikrima, for your death will be a severe blow for the Muslims."

'Ikrima ؓ replied resolutely, "Leave me alone, Khalid. You have had the honour of fighting with Rasul Allah ﷺ in the past but my father and I were among his most bitter opponents. Leave me be so I may expiate my past sins. After fighting against Rasul Allah ﷺ on numerous occasions, shall I now flee from the Romans? That will never be!"

Then he addressed the Muslims in ringing tones, "Who will swear allegiance to fight until death?" His paternal uncle Haarith bin Hishaam and Ziraar bin Al-Awzar ؓ were among the four hundred Muslims who swore allegiance to him. They fought most courageously and defended him with their last breath.

The battle ended in a decisive victory for the Muslims. Three fatally wounded warriors lay on the ground of Yarmook. They were Haarith bin Hishaam ؓ, Ayyash bin Abi Rabe'e'a ؓ and 'Ikrima bin Abu Jahl ؓ. Haarith ؓ called out for water to drink. When the water was brought to him, 'Ikrima happened to look at him so Haarith ؓ said, "Give it to him." When they brought the water near 'Ikrima ؓ, Ayyash ؓ glanced at him so 'Ikrimah ؓ said, "Give it to him." When they drew near Ayyash ؓ they found that his pure soul had passed away. So they went back to his companions and found that both of them had also died.

May Allah bestow His Eternal Pleasure upon them all and grant them a drink from the pool of Kauthar, a drink after which they will never feel any thirst. And may He bless them with eternal rapture amid the lush greenery of Al-Firdous, to dwell in bliss forever and ever.

Excerpted here with permission, from 'Stories from the Lives of the Sahaba' (Vol 1) by Dr Abdur Rahman Rafat Pasha; Trans. by Umm Husain

The End ^{of} the Dark Era

By Anonymous

When the flames of a lamp are blown away by turbulent winds, darkness covers all proximities.

But like, 'after every hardship there is comfort,' after a dark hour there is a bright shiny day in the offering. But sometimes, one becomes accustomed to the blind shadows. The hope and even the willingness of a ray of light gets faded away.

Many battles have been fought on this earth, and many defeated souls were enslaved by some victor. But a man is a slave only when he gives up his courage, until then, he is a revolutionist tied up in chains and shackles. The Muslims of today though may not have such chains tied up their neck, but are infected by a disease fatal for a nation. A man enslaved in chains would see himself as a slave, and would one day fight for his freedom, but a slave of ideology sees himself as an independent follower of a supreme being, a perfect ideology or a pure system. There exists no sign of realization, until fatality welcomes him with open arms.

Some centuries ago, Europe was also engulfed in slavery and darkness. Their slavery was not what the Jews or Bani Israel suffered at the hand of Pharaoh, nor was it the prevailing financial slavery of capitalism, their slavery was the shackle of intellect and knowledge. The church had banned the study of science and philosophy because it would question the distorted beliefs enforced

upon its followers by the church. Anyone having a book of science or philosophy or anyone who tried to independently study religion would be burnt to death. Growth of knowledge and intellect was impeded by every possible means. But the same Europe fought for their gifted right of Pursuit of Knowledge and Truth. Their bodies were tortured and punished, but there minds flew the flights of a free bird.

The West gathered the treasure of intellect of Islamic Knowledge through the madrassas of Cordoba and Granada. This was the story of their Renaissance. As a result of which, the slaves became the masters, and the lamps of the Torch Bearers were blown away by the turbulent winds of their mundane desires and taste for power.

Today their capitalistic financial system, their secular ideology and their liberal lifestyle has become the universal fashion of the whole world including the Muslims by and large. Their culture breathes through our society. The founders of their faith have become the role models of this Ummah.

Parents seek their children to become the wealthiest of businessmen, though it may require being polished in the teachings of an atheist. The biggest and most reputed universities are devoid of any teaching of morals or values. Once what were the centers of knowledge have become the centers of business. Human emotions and

desires have overshadowed all divine injunctions. Muhammad Bin Qasim, the commander of a battalion, reportedly conquered Sindh at the age of seventeen. Today a seventeen-year-old Muslim is engraved by the luster of entertainment. Sometime later, he is blinded by the pursuit of a healthy employment, be it in a state surrounded by vulgarity and 'religion animosity'.

Inside the mosque our Qiblah may still be the Khana-e-Kaaba, but outside the mosque, our focus is nothing but the materialistic thirst. We are the true followers of the philosophy of 'eat, drink and be merry.' Pursuit of personal dominance has divided this Ummah and shattered the fabric of Islam. It's not a matter of right or wrong, but a war of 'mine and yours.' Immodesty and vulgarity has been awarded the title of fashion.

Our ideals have drastically changed. Be it a pop-celebrity, a sports star, or a cherished writer, few ideals of our youth would be servants of Allah ﷻ, if any. On the contrary, our history is filled with examples of those blessed souls whose hearts were enriched with the love of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They used to follow an act of Sunnat because for them it was a "Sunnat" and today we leave act of Sunnat because for us it is "just a Sunnat". They were the Companions whose loyalty was testified even by truthful enemies. Urwa Ibne Masud, a spokesman of the Quraish said on an occasion:

"I have been to Chosroes, Caesar and Negus in their kingdoms, but never have I seen a king among a people like Muhammad ﷺ among his Companions. If he performs his ablution, they would not let the water thereof fall on the ground; if he expectorates, they would have the mucus to rub their faces with; if he speaks, they would lower their voices. They will not abandon him for anything in any case..." (Sealed Nectar pg 213).

All the gifts that were bestowed upon the Companions are being taken away one by one. The ever stretching poverty, the corrupt and disloyal leaders, the authority of our enemies, the spreading of unfamiliar diseases and most dangerous is the loss of IIm by the Shahadat of Ulema.

Our problem and our solution lies in one verse of the Qur'an:

"Indeed, Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (Surah Ra'ad-Ayat 11)

We have committed treason against our religion and our Lord. Our disloyalty towards our Sustainer discredited us from the station of 'Kuntum Kheira Ummatin.' The awe and aspiration that the world had for Islam and Muslims is fast fading away. The norms and customs of a free, animalistic world are being fabricated in our society.

The first step towards Islam is believing that there is no god, except Allah ﷻ, and then pronouncing it. There is a dire need for realization of the disease that is penetrating our lives and our society, and let Satan not lure us in his trap of procrastination. We immediately need to seek the way back to our Lord; we need to repent. The mercy of Allah ﷻ is beyond measure. Like a mother, waiting for years for his lost son. Standing at the doorstep and looking at every passerby in search of a resembling face, after seeing her son's bright eyes she rushes towards him. The Lord of both the worlds rushes to welcome His servant's repentance with more love and affection.

Narrated Anas bin Malik: Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than anyone of you is pleased with finding his camel which he had lost in the desert." (Sahih Bukhari)

Today all our misery can be summed up in the two predicaments that have enveloped upon our lives and our streets: lack of prosperity and want of peace.

So let them serve the Lord of this House, Who feeds them against hunger and gives them peace against fear. (Surah Quraish Ayat 4-5)

Thus the blue print of our solution lies in front of us. We need to realize the spiritual fire that's engulfing us from 'with-in and with-out'. We need to understand the Western culture that is raising power thirsty animals under the curtains of success. We need to realize the absence of Divine Mercy that shielded the Muslims from all harms. We are the writers of our own story, the builders of our future and the founders of our destiny. In the words of Iqbal,

کی جگہ سے وفتا تو نے تو ہم تیرے ہیں
یہ جہاں چیز ہے کیا لوح و قلم تیرے ہیں

If you become subservient to the Messenger ﷺ of Allah/ the pen and the scrolls of fate are all yours.

اللَّهُ إِلَىٰ فِرَؤًا

Flee towards Allah (Suhah Adh-Dhaariyat-50).

The Big Bang

By Dr. Asad Zaman

Is there design in the creation of the universe, or did we come into being due to a cosmic accident? So much hinges on the answer that only ostriches would refuse to face it. If we were created by a random evolutionary process following a chance combination of atoms in a primordial soup, then our lives have no meaning. We live in a cold and callous universe, and all our struggles, passions, sacrifice, and devotion make no difference in the end. Contemplating the ultimate futility of all human effort, Bertrand Russell, one of the founding fathers of atheism as a philosophy, said that "only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built."

This is in stark contrast to a universe created by God, where the trees and the stars worship their Creator, and the sun and the moon follow exquisitely designed laws. Even an atom's worth of good that we do will be rewarded, while evil will meet with either the Mercy or the Justice of God.

Scientists were as firmly committed to the idea of an eternal uncreated universe as believers were to the creation of the Universe by God. This being a theological dispute, neither side expected to find supporting empirical evidence for their beliefs. The emergence of convincing evidence for the creation of the universe from

nothing was the most surprising discovery of the twentieth century.

Einstein's celebrated theory of General Relativity led to the puzzling prediction that an eternal and static universe would collapse to nothingness under the forces of gravitation. To resolve this difficulty, Einstein posited a 'cosmological constant,' a force that opposes gravity and keeps the universe from collapsing. Russian physicist Alexander Friedmann and Belgian Georges Lemaître both independently discovered that if the universe was expanding, instead of being static, there would be no need for this arbitrary assumption, which had no empirical support. Einstein was so committed to the idea of a static and eternal universe that he publicly ridiculed both of these scientists, who were then ignored and forgotten.

Strong evidence for an expanding universe came from observations by astronomer Edwin Hubble that distant galaxies were racing away from us at higher speeds, in conflict with the idea of a static universe. Hubble's Law not only showed that the universe was expanding, but also that it must have had an origin – a point in time at which it was created. Einstein was so surprised that he visited Hubble at Mt. Wilson observatory, and looked for himself before admitting his mistake. He later stated that the "cosmological constant" had been the biggest blunder of his career.

Other scientists were not so easily converted. British scientist Fred Hoyle fanatically strove to develop models of an eternal and static universe consistent with the empirical evidence. He

labeled the alternative theories as 'irrational and unscientific,' saying that the idea that the universe originated in a "Big Bang" was ridiculous. It is ironic that his term of ridicule went on to become the accepted name of this theory. Scientists strongly resisted the big bang because it creates uncomfortable questions about who created the expanding universe. The Quran answers this question clearly: "And it is We who created the universe with [Our] power; and, verily, it is We who are steadily expanding it."

In the meantime, evidence in favor of the Big Bang continued to accumulate. George Gamow had calculated that an explosion which created the universe would leave its marks in the form of a detectable and pervasive microwave radiation. When this radiation was eventually discovered, New York Times published the news in 1965 as the discovery of the century. A satellite launched in 1989 brought in even more convincing evidence. There were variations in this microwave radiation, exactly as predicted by the Big Bang model of the universe's origin. The famous physicist Stephen Hawking praised it as "the greatest discovery of the century, if not of all time."

At this time, the universally accepted cosmological model posits the existence of a void – no matter, no light, no energy, no space-time continuum, nothing at all. Suddenly, from nowhere, in an explosion emanating from a single point, the entire universe, together with space, time, and the laws of physics came into existence. Why? Scientists don't have a clue. Islam, on the other hand, provides an answer: "God said Be, and It is."



The Legacy They Left Behind

By Ukasha Niazi

A quotation reads: To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people only exist and that's all. The Subcontinent has proved to be a fertile ground for producing people who exclusively served the needs of this *Ummah*. Sheikh ul-Islam Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani says:

"It will not be an exaggeration to say that if we are Muslims here... it is only because of the efforts made by these scholars of subcontinent of India. [They] are the true representatives of the dictates of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ"

In fact, these scholars literally preserved the teachings of Islam in its original text and texture and delivered to us with an absolute care and complete responsibility. Amongst many other scholars of India, there is a major and perhaps the greatest role played by the scholars of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. The scholars from this seminary had many special attributes that made them valuable and ideal for others.

Here are brief biographies of some of those who 'lived' and did not just 'exist'.

Sheikh ul Hind ﷺ

Sheikh ul Hind, Maulana Mahmud ul Hassan ﷺ, was an Indian Muslim scholar and an activist of the Independence Movement, who co-founded the Jamia Millia Islamia and launched the Silk Letter Movement for the freedom of India. He was the first student to study at Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband.

His teachers included Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi ﷺ and Mahmud Deobandi ﷺ, and was authorized in Sufism by Imdadullah Muhajir Makki ﷺ and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷺ.

Sheikh ul Hind ﷺ served as the principal of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband and founded organizations such as the Jamiatul Ansar and the Nizaratul Maarif. He wrote a translation of the Quran in Urdu and authored books such as Adilla-e-Kāmilah, İzah al-adillah, Ahsan al-Qirā and Jahd al-Muqil. He taught **hadith** at Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband and copyedited the Sunan Abu Dawud. His major students include Ashraf Ali Thanwi ﷺ, Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ, Hussain Ahmad Madani ﷺ, Kifayatullah Dehlawi ﷺ, Sanaullah Amritsari ﷺ and Ubaidullah Sindhi ﷺ.

He was a staunch opponent of the British Raj and launched movements to overthrow them in India but was arrested in 1916 and imprisoned in Malta. He was released in 1920, and was honored with the title of "Shaykh al-Hind" (The Leader of India) by the Khilafat Committee.

There is a known incident about him which Mufti Shafi Usmani has narrated in his book. He writes that when Sheikh-ul-Hind returned from Malta prison and was delivering a sermon to few scholars in Deoband, he said: "In my days of imprisonment, I pondered upon two points that are major reasons for the decline of Muslims."

Mufti Shafi sb writes that at this instant, there was a pin-drop silence and everyone was all ears. He said: 'One reason is that we diverged our lives from the teachings of Holy Quran and second reason is our internal conflicts based on different creeds and casts.'

Sheikhul-Hind ﷺ also wrote religious edicts in support of the Non-Cooperation Movement and travelled to various parts of India, to enroll Muslims in the freedom movement. He presided the second general meeting of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind in November 1920 and was appointed as its president. The Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmood Hasan Medical College is named in his memory. In 2013, the Government of India released a commemorative postal stamp on his Silk Letter Movement. May Allah ﷻ have mercy on him and illuminate his grave. Ameen

Shah Waliullah Dehlwi ﷺ

Note: Shah Waliullah lived in the years that were much before the foundation of Dar-ul-Uloom

Deoband. However, many scholars believed that the beliefs and ideas of Shah Waliullah ﷺ were somehow involved in the foundation of Dar-ul-Uloom. Though his account cannot be expressed in one short page but at least you can get a glimpse of his life.

Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlwi ﷺ was born in a noble family in the year 1703 and was brought up in an Islamic environment. As his basic education, he studied primary school and along with that memorized the Holy Quran. Along with this, he acquired spiritual knowledge and learned Islamic obligations from his father Shah Abd ur Rahim who too was a great scholar of that era. Even when he was a child, he possessed an eagerness to study huge Islamic books and hence read many complex books about religious studies in his early age. Also, he received education regarding Hadith, Fiqh and Tasawwuf and was married at the age of 14. When he grew older, Shah Waliullah ﷺ prepared himself for the service of Deen and started teaching Islamic books in Madrassa Rahimia that was founded by his father in Delhi. He also wrote several important books about Islamic studies and famous ones among them include 'Hujatullah -el-Baligha' and 'Izalatul-Ikhfa'. Moreover, he played a key role in uniting the Muslims of the subcontinent and promoted the need of Jihad against non-Muslims. His voice for Jihad was raised at a time when non-Islamic practices were furtively creeping into the Islamic society. He died on Friday the 29th of Muharram 1176 AH/ 20 August 1762. After his death, his teachings were carried out by his sons and were readily accepted by many Muslims of the Subcontinent. His works on Hadith are commendable. May Allah ﷻ grant him higher ranks in Jannah. Ameen.

Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ

Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ was born in Kashmir on 16th November 1875 in a Sayyid family. He began studies of Quran at the age of four and later displayed an extraordinary interest in the study of Hadith. In 1896 (1314 AH), he went to Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi ﷺ for further studies of Uloom-e-Hadith in Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband. After graduating from Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband, he taught there for several years and often without taking salary. Allama Anwar Shah ﷺ was most famous for his extraordinary memory and remarkable intellect. He had an insightful and observant mind and thus remembered long extracts from huge books and would narrate them without having revised them. Once, some scholars were fighting a case against

Qadiyanis in Bahawalpur court. Shah Sb was also present at that moment. The defense lawyer of Qadiyanis read a wrong paragraph from an old book to misguide the cause of Muslim scholars. Just in the wink of an eye, Shah Sb spoke out in following words to the judge; "Milord! He is trying to manipulate the wordings in the book. He is reading out a wrong statement. I read this book around more than thirty years ago. Order him to correct the statement, otherwise I am urged to take the book out of his hands and read the right statement." The judge ordered him to read correctly and once he read the wordings, they were the same as Allama Anwar Shah Sb had narrated earlier. Upon this Shah Sb remarked: "This man is trying to misguide us, but I am also a student and thus have close connection with books. And, InshAllah, we will not be trapped by their wrong throws." Dear readers, please have a look at his fantastic intellect that he even remembered a short statement from an old book even after thirty years had passed. On the other hand, notice the humility he possessed. Instead of boasting about his unparalleled memory he humbly remarked 'I am also a student'. *SubhanAllah!*

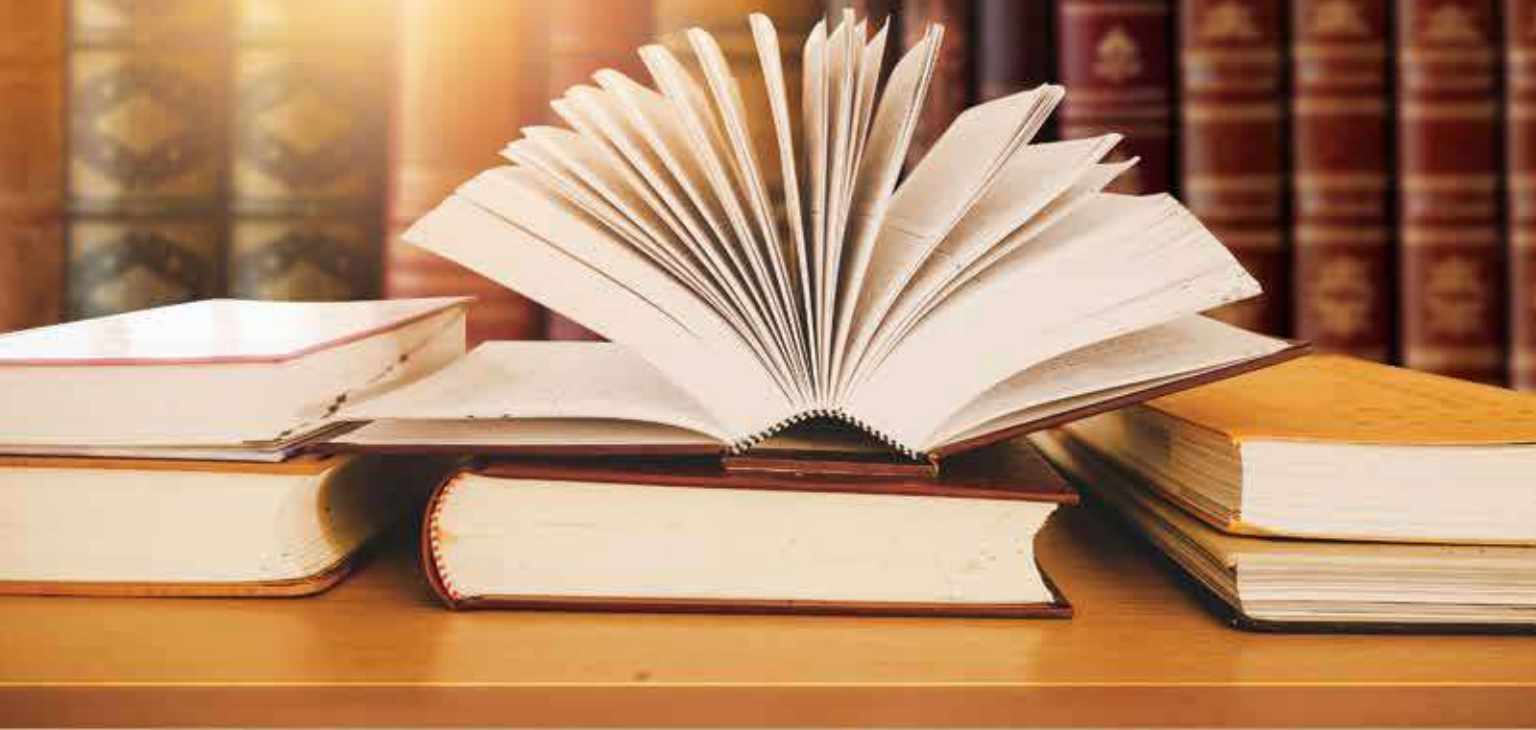
Allama Anwar sb read 'Fath-ul-Qadir' in less than two weeks. The students of religious studies know very well that this remarkable book is extremely complex, and many popular scholars were not capable of reading it completely or thoroughly, but Shah Sb not only read it in a very short period of time but also remembered long statements from this book. His rapid reading was not just a skim-through, rather he studied it with complete concentration and full-fledged consideration. As an example, once Shah ﷺ remarked: "All the Hadiths that are mentioned in Fatihul-Qadir are extracted from 'Nisbu-Raw'aiiah' (another huge book of Islamic studies) except for three Hadith". This remark shows his attentive reading of both important books and displays his wonderful memory.

It is narrated from Mufti Shafi Usmani ﷺ who heard it from Allama Shabir Ahmed Usmani ﷺ that when Shah Sb was on his death bed and was seriously ill, he would still be busy in reading. Shabir Ahmed Usmani ﷺ once visited him in his last days and found him deeply involved in reading a book of Fatwas. He abruptly questioned: "Please have a mercy on your health. Which fatwa is left that you skipped reading? Even if something is remaining then order us to read it out for you." Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ gently smiled and replied: "This reading is a long-lasting disease. It does not leave me." This was the reading passion of our elders!

Memoirs of Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani

دامت
برکاتہم

Translation: Kaiser Nizamani



The Land Near Allama Usmani's Grave

A notable event took place in that academic year (i.e. 1374H, equivalent to 1955) which I feel is necessary to mention in some detail:

At the time there did not exist any major *Madrassa* in Karachi except Dar ul Uloom, due to which the number of students was constantly increasing and the existing building in Nanak Warah became cramped. Everyone felt the need for the *Madrassa* to be shifted to a larger space. Who would have felt this need more than our respected father? To this end, he was actively searching for a bigger

place. After a prolonged effort, he obtained the large piece of land lying empty near the grave of Shaykh ul Islam *Hadhrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Sahib Usmani* (may Allah's mercy be upon him).

The events leading up to obtaining this piece of land and thereafter giving it up are an extraordinary chapter of our respected father's life. Regarding these events, I heard my *Shaykh Aarif Billah Hadhrat Dr Abdul Hayy Sahib Aarifi* and *Hadhrat Allama Sayyid Muhammad Yusuf Binnori* and several other scholars say that this single act of *Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad*

Shafi Sahib was enough proof of the exaltedness of his character, and his truthfulness and sincerity. The details of this event have not been published until now, even though they are extremely instructive, so I will narrate this incident in some detail.

Our respected father was a student of *Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani* (may his secret be sanctified) and also his companion in the Pakistan Movement and other efforts. Furthermore, he was a distant relative of our respected father, in that *Hadhrat Allama* used to call our paternal grandmother (may Allah's mercy be upon her) "aunt", meaning that our respected father was his distant maternal cousin. *Hadhrat Allama's* family members used to affectionately call him "*Phool Abba*" and his respected wife (may Allah's mercy be upon her) "*Phool Amma*". They were childless. His brother, late respected *Fazal Haq Sahib Fazli*, had attained worldly education, as a result of which he was an officer in the Postal Department of Deoband. *Hadhrat Allama* had adopted his daughter, who was married to *Maulana Muhammad Yahya Sahib*. *Maulana Muhammad Yahya Sahib* was a competent scholar.

At the time of *Hadhrat Allama's* passing away, the then-Prime Minister respected *Liaquat Ali Khan Sahib* had allocated a piece of land for his grave. A vast piece of land lay empty near the grave. On the one hand, our respected father wished for a *Darul Uloom* befitting *Hadhrat Allama's* stature to be established adjacent to his grave. On the other hand, in view of the services rendered to Pakistan by *Hadhrat Allama* (may his secret be sanctified), it was his right that his respected wife, his adopted daughter and his brother, who had migrated to Pakistan because of him and had left behind their properties in India, should be provided some place for residence. Therefore, our respected father, on behalf of the above-mentioned relatives of *Hadhrat Allama* and a few other prominent individuals, sent an application to the Government for the establishment of a *Darul Uloom* in memory of *Hadhrat Allama Usmani* (may his secret be sanctified) on that location, and that *Hadhrat Allama's* relatives should also be provided residence in that area. This application was filed on behalf of a few individuals, and as is the norm in governmental institutions, it remained in the cold storage and no action was taken on it for years, until another place had been found

for *Darul Uloom* in Nanak Warah. When the place in Nanak Warah became cramped and need of a new place was felt, a suggestion was put forth to our respected father that no action had been taken by the government regarding the land near the grave of *Allama Usmani* because the application was a personal one on behalf of a few individuals. Now that *Darul Uloom* was no longer just a dream, rather it was an officially registered institution, if the application were to be filed by *Darul Uloom* itself to obtain the land for itself, it was hoped that it would be successful. Acting upon this advice, our respected father, after informing *Hadhrat Allama's* relatives about this, invited the Chief Commissioner of Karachi to *Darul Uloom Nanak Warah*, so that he could personally witness and appreciate the lack of space and *Darul Uloom's* need. At that point the above-mentioned relatives of *Hadhrat Allama* were also present, and a verbal proposal was made in their presence that that piece of land should be allotted to *Darul Uloom* as a memorial of *Hadhrat Allama*, and *Hadhrat Allama's* wife and relatives should also be allotted residential plots in that land. After this, a formal application was sent to the Chief Commissioner on the 3rd of July 1953, about which *Hadhrat Allama's* relatives were aware. Talks with various government officials continued and it was learnt that this application could not go through without approval from the Municipal Corporation. Consequently, an application was submitted to the Municipal Corporation on 5th January 1954 in which, besides the request to allot the land to *Darul Uloom*, it was also requested that *Hadhrat Allama's* respected wife, his adopted daughter's husband, and his brother should also be allotted residential plots of 800 square yards each in a section of that land. Additionally, five of *Hadhrat Allama's* distant relatives were also included in that list, for whom residential plots were requested. (This was because *Hadhrat Allama* and his relatives had left behind their properties in India and transfers of left-behind properties were still in process. This was also rightful due to *Hadhrat Allama's* services and sacrifices for Pakistan). After a lengthy struggle, on the 3rd of May 1954 the Municipal Corporation's Standing Committee issued a letter of recommendation for this application to be accepted. Thereafter, on 23rd July 1954, the Land Manager of the Corporation accepted this application with some conditions attached. After our respected father accepted

those conditions, on 16 July 1954 the Corporation formally accepted both parts of the application in its Resolution #486. According to this Resolution, 16200 square yards were to be allotted to Darul Uloom while 2548 square yards were to be allotted to Hadhrat Allama's respected wife and other relatives. The land to be allotted to Darul Uloom was granted on lease, and it was stipulated that if Darul Uloom did not fulfil the conditions of lease the government had the right to reclaim that land. However, the residential plots to be granted to Hadhrat Allama's respected wife and relatives were freehold, i.e. they would be made owners of those plots. In the same Resolution, our respected father and Maulana Noor Ahmad Sahib were granted plots of 800 and 500 square yards respectively in their capacities as Rector and Director of Darul Uloom. However, our respected father رحمته الله filed an application that he and Hadhrat Maulana Noor Ahmad Sahib did not wish to take any land for their personal residence, and that the land allotted to them as their personal properties should also be allocated to Darul Uloom.

For legal follow-up of this Resolution, it was sent to the Chief Commissioner of Karachi. The Chief Commissioner, in his acceptance of this Resolution, wrote that 16200 square yard of the land was allotted to Darul Uloom, and the residential plots allotted to Hadhrat Allama's respected wife, son-in-law and brother by the Municipal Corporation were also accepted. However, the plots allotted to Hadhrat Mufti Shafi Sahib (Rector of Darul Uloom Karachi) and Maulana Noor Ahmad Sahib (Director of Darul Uloom Karachi), since they had themselves applied to forgo them, were also to be allotted to Darul Uloom. However, the application to grant residential plots to the five distant relatives of Hadhrat Allama was rejected. (This order of the Chief Commissioner, with reference number L.c.g.L 1.54, was released on 7 December 1954, with the Resolution from the Karachi Municipal Corporation's Land Manager Office attached with it. This order and Resolution, along with all related documents, are preserved in Darul Uloom).

Having fulfilled all legal procedures, our respected father رحمته الله announced the construction of Darul Uloom at that place. A signboard was erected on that land with the words: "Darul Uloom Karachi, in memory of Shaykhul Islam Hadhrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Usmani". Allah Ta'ala had bestowed the

special traits of relentless struggle, enterprise, and getting the most difficult jobs accomplished in a short period of time upon Hadhrat Maulana Noor Ahmad Sahib رحمته الله. It was he who had struggled day and night to get that piece of land. And when the land was finally acquired, he had had a few rooms quickly built so that construction works could be monitored and tracked from those rooms. He also got a telephone line installed for ease of communication, as well as an electricity connection.

Our respected father رحمته الله desired the official groundbreaking ceremony to be conducted by the senior scholars of the country. To this end; Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahib رحمته الله, Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahib Kandhlavi (RH) and Hadhrat Maulana Ahmad Ali Sahib Lahori رحمته الله from Lahore, Hadhrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahib رحمته الله from Multan, and Hadhrat Maulana Athar Ali Sahib رحمته الله from East Pakistan were invited, and a two-day annual gathering was announced for Sunday the 26th and Monday the 27th of Jumaduth Thaniya 1374H, equivalent to the 20th and 21st of February 1955, in which the foundation stone of the new building was to be laid.

Our respected father had also sent a letter of invitation to Hakeem ul Islam Hadhrat Maulana Qari Muhammad Tayyab Sahib رحمته الله, Rector of Darul Uloom Deoband, to which Hadhrat replied:

The Office of Darul Uloom Deoband, District Saharanpur

My respected brother, may Allah Ta'ala increase your exalted honour.

I humbly present the Prophetic greetings (*Salam*). I was much obliged by your honourable letter. Firstly, I present my utmost delight and congratulations at the wonderful news (laying of foundation of Darul Uloom). During my stay in Karachi, I would hear the names of various Darul Ulooms. Some of them successfully came into being while others remained in dreams. All of their founders expressed their desire to attribute them to the mission of Hadhrat Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Sahib رحمته الله. However, it is strange that the heart would not accept any of those plans with this attribution. It was firmly established in the heart that if a Darul Uloom were to be established under this mission, it would only be Maulana Mufti

Muhammad Shafi Sahib who would establish it. When you informed about the creation of Darul Uloom, and I also received a brief tract regarding it, my happiness knew no bounds, because I felt that that mission had finally started off today and that it would progress with time. Today, this worthless one's dream has become a reality. At the same time, I had fantasized that this Darul Uloom should be built at the same place as Hadhrat Allama's resting place. I would look at that place longingly; it felt as if that place desired for Darul Uloom to be built on it. All thanks is for Allah who let me hear the wonderful news that the planned Darul Uloom will be constructed near the one who planned for it, and that it has reached the place where it would receive constant spiritual support.

Darul Uloom Deoband also first began operating and only later were the foundations of its building laid. The same is happening with this Darul Uloom. This similarity is a good omen. If that Darul Uloom was established by its notable sincere custodians, then this Darul Uloom is being established by their true successors, who are following in their footsteps in terms of knowledge and actions.

I will try my utmost to participate in this blessed ceremony, but you know that this is not in one's control, especially within a limited time. Please do pray that Allah Ta'ala makes me successful in this. *السعي منا والإتمام من الله* (Making an effort is our job and making it happen is from Allah ﷻ).

Please accept my thanks for remembering me, to you and members of Darul Uloom. If all of us exert in our supplications then every difficulty will become easy. The exertion will be from the passion of our hearts. Please convey my *Salam* to *Khalifa Jee**. I pray for your children. Please convey my *Salam* and my request for *dua* to your respected mother and wife.

With *Salam*,

Muhammad Tayyab

From Deoband, 27/5/1374H

(*Hadhrat Khalifah Muhammad Aaqil Sahib (may Allah's mercy be upon him) is meant, who was a student of our paternal grandfather and used to teach Persian and Mathematics in Darul Uloom Deoband in his place. When Hadhrat Usmani and our respected father tendered their resignations from Darul Uloom Deoband due to the Pakistan

Movement, he also tendered his resignation and participated in the Movement with Hadhrat Allama Usmani. He was a childhood friend of our respected father and Hadhrat Qari Muhammad Tayyab Sahib).

Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Idrees Sahib Kandhlavi رحمته الله replied:

Respected, may your bounties and blessings continue forever,

I offer you the *Sunnah* greetings (*Salam*). I received your letter, which was a source of much felicity. *InshaAllah* I will be present with my heart and soul. However, I would like to request that firstly, if a topic could be specified on which to talk then I could prepare for it. When Hadhrat *Farooq-e-Azam* remarked, before a speech: " *زَوَّرْتُ فِي نَفْسِي مَقَالَةً* " (I prepared in my heart what I wanted to speak) then what to mention of us good-for-nothings.

Secondly, it would be good if the gathering could take place in front of the grave of Hadhrat Maulana Usmani.

Thirdly, I would like to request to free me in two days, so that I could do something else after the gathering. I am awaiting your reply.

With *Salam*,

Muhammad Idrees (may he be forgiven)

Hadhrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahib (may Allah's mercy be upon him) replied:

The Office of Madrasa Arabiyya Khairul Madaris, Multan, Pakistan

My noble and honourable Mufti Sahib, may your blessings continue forever,

Assalamualaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

After asking about your wellbeing, I would like to say:

Though such a long journey in February seems very difficult, but as they say " *الضرورات تبیح المحظورات* " (Necessity knows no rules). In compliance to your instructions, I will depart from Punjab on Friday, 18 February, and *InshaAllah* reach Karachi on Saturday, 19 February. I will stay at Maulvi Aftab Ahmad Sahib's place at Madrasatul Islam Sindh. I will present myself in your service by myself at

some time. Please do not make any arrangements for my reception. With *Salam*.

Requesting *dua*, lowly Khair Muhammad (may he be forgiven) from Multan

12 February 1955

Hadhrat Maulana Ahmad Ali Sahib Lahori رحمۃ اللہ علیہ wrote:
Anjuman Khuddamud Deen

Sheranwala Gate, Lahore

My master and the master of scholars and the learned, Hadhrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib, may your blessings continue forever,

Assalamualaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

Getting land for the establishment of Darul Uloom is a great blessing. *InshaAllah Ta'ala* this land will be a source of guidance for Muslims. I humbly pray in the Court of Allah that Allah Ta'ala brings it to its utmost completion during your blessed life, and that this spring of life satiates students of Islamic knowledge for ever and ever, and that God-fearing Islamic scholars, who are accepted in the Court of Allah, should continue being produced from it forever *وما ذلك على الله بعزيز*. (And that is not difficult for Allah). Due to my constraints, I am unable to attend. Please forgive me.

The lowliest of all creatures, Ahmad Ali (may he be forgiven)

Our respected father's رحمۃ اللہ علیہ teacher, Hadhrat Maulana Rasool Khan Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ wrote:

Honourable Maulana Sahib, may your bounties and blessings continue forever,

Assalamualaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

I received your venerable letter. It was a source of great honour and pride for me. May Allah Ta'ala continue bringing you success in your religious as well as worldly affairs forever. *Ameen*.

I will be most pleased to attend. I consider participation in this gathering a blessing. However,

you know about my daughter's court case. Its next hearing is on 7th February 1955. If that does not cause a hindrance, I will definitely take part in this blessing, *InshaAllah*.

Please do not send my transportation cost. If there are no hurdles, I will not be deprived from this ground-breaking ceremony. I am extremely thankful for remembering me. With *Salam*.

If you happen to meet respected Haji Wajeehud Deen convey *Assalam* from me.

Muhammad Rasool Khan (may the Most Merciful forgive him)

Maulana Azhar Shah Qaiser Sahib, the son of *Imamul Asr* Hadhrat Allama Anwar Shah Sahib Kashmiri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ replied:

Respected, may your bounties continue forever. I present the *Sunnah Salam*.

I received Darul Uloom's prospectus and your invitation and express my heartfelt gratitude. I read the announcement regarding the building with great satisfaction. What is the worth of my opinion? But I would at least say that on the one hand, an offshoot of the community of (scholars of) Deoband branched off and went to the people of Gujarat and Kathiawar, and they spread the *Deen* as far as Africa. On the other hand, at a later time they were entrusted with the responsibility of protecting Islamic practices in the newly-created country. Fortunate is the ground which opened its arms for Maulana Usmani, and blessed is the piece of land which received such a driven achiever as Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib. If the people of Pakistan were to ponder, they would realize that the groundbreaking and construction of Darul Uloom is a momentous event taking place in their country, towards which all, the rich as well as the poor, should contribute according to their means. With *Salam*.

Sayyid Muhammad Azhar Shah Qaiser

To be continued, InshAllah



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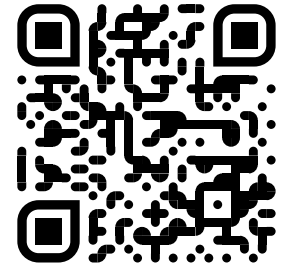


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