

The Intellect

Al Quran
Surah al-An'am - Part 7

Al Hadith
Righteousness is based on
Belief and Zuhd

The Awakening
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*The Foreign Policy of The Holy
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– Episode 15

Translation by Kaiser Nizamani

Editorial

Dear Readers,

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

From the River to the Sea ...

Terming what we have seen in Gaza since October 7th, 2023, 'painful', would be an understatement of the highest order.

It was (and still remains) extremely agonizing for Muslims around the world to witness, mostly helplessly, the genocide of their brothers and sisters in faith. As they say: Palestine is not a test of the Palestinians. It is, in fact, ours. والله مستعان

But without even delving into the absolute horrors endured by the Palestinians, especially the children, and with poignantly acknowledging and envying their highest ranks in the Hereafter due to their unparalleled resilience and countless martyrdoms, one cannot miss the similarities that jump at us between those who were historically oppressed, and those assuming the role of the oppressors in the current debilitating apartheid.

Then...The Pharaoh and his mighty army had enslaved and besieged the Bani Israel and chased them towards the sea.

Now... Zionists amongst the Bani Israel have imprisoned and besieged a people, pushing them against the sea!

Another, more conspicuous parallel, is hard to overlook:

In 1940, half a million Jews were forced out of their homes by Europeans and herded into a small area referred to as the Warsaw Ghetto.

And since 1948, Zionists amongst the Jews have done almost exactly the same, in fact worse, to the Palestinians. Gaza's siege, since 2006, ensures 2.3 million Palestinians remain barricaded behind 7-metre high walls.

How very ironic.

No points for guessing that the United States and Europe would've declared, with their eyes closed, the Warsaw uprising of the Jews against the Nazis in the 1940s, an act of heroism against oppressors. But, the resistance of the Palestinians, enslaved in their own land for the past 75 years, is unequivocally termed otherwise.

How glaringly hypocritical.

They plan. And Allah ﷻ plans. And Allah ﷻ is the Best of Planners.

It is common knowledge that the Prophet ﷺ was not just a guide for the Ummah in matters at the individual and societal level, but he also led the Muslims in the battlefield and set foundations for establishing links and treaties with other states, leaders and tribal chiefs.

Our Cover Story highlights pertinent aspects of the foreign policy of our beloved Prophet ﷺ and showcases his approach to a peaceful coexistence with other people and nations.

In *Our Pious Predecessors*, readers can take a detailed look at the interesting times and life of Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمه الله.

Alongside, our Ramadan Special Feature provides a very useful insight into the daily Ramadan routines of Mufti Rafi Usmani رحمه الله and Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت بركاتهم. One can learn immeasurably from these accounts, with regards how to spend one's time wisely and fruitfully in the blessed month.

In our travelogue, we continue our journey with *Sheikh ul Islam* دامت بركاتهم through Fiji, *The Land of the Rising Sun* and in *Urban Pangs*, we analyze some serious challenges that the influx of AI might pose for humans in general and the Muslim societal set-up and ethos in particular.

From scorched, wilted, dried up vegetation, colourful, eye-pleasing flowers bloom, through rains ordained from heavens. Why then, should we lose hope in the fruition of the struggle in the sands surrounding Bait-al-Muqqadis?

No, their sacrifices will not be in vain; the martyrs will find bliss in *Jannah* and the living will find peace on earth. Soon. ان شاء الله.

May Allah ﷻ cool our eyes and satiate our hearts with the liberation of our beloved Al-Aqsa and our beleaguered *Ummatis* in our lifetime, *Ameen*.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid

The Meanings of the Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani رحمته الله

(The Cattle)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ
أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ
مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى
وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى
صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

This is indeed a Blessed Book We have sent down, confirming what was (revealed) before it, so that you may warn the town which is the Mother of All Towns, (i.e. Makkah) and those around it. Those who believe in the Hereafter believe in it, and they take due care of their prayers. [92]

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ
قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ
قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى
إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ
بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرَجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ يَوْمَ
تُجْرُونَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ
الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

Who is more unjust than the one who fabricates a lie against Allah or says, "Revelation has been sent to me", whereas no revelation has been sent to him, and the one who says, "I would produce the like of what

Allah has revealed." If only you could witness when the unjust are in the throes of death, and the angels stretch their hands (and say), "Out with your souls. Today, you shall have your punishment, a punishment of humiliation, because you have been saying about Allah what is not true, and have been showing arrogance against His verses." [93]

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءَ ۗ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

You have come to Us all alone, just as We had first created you, and you have left behind you what We had bestowed on you, and We do not see your intercessors with you - those whom you claimed to be (Our) partners in (managing) your matters. In fact, all ties between you are now severed, and all that you presumed has totally failed you. [94]

إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَىٰ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمَخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ ۗ فَأَنَّىٰ تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

Surely, Allah is the one who splits the grain and the date-stone (for sprouting). He brings forth the living from the dead, and He is the One who brings forth the dead from the living.²³ That is Allah! To where, then, are you being turned away (by your desires)? [95]

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

(He is) the One who causes the dawn to break. He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for reckoning. This is a measure set by Allah by the Almighty, the All-Knowing. [96]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾

He is the One who made for you the stars, so that you may be guided by them in darkness of the land and the sea. We have elaborated the signs for the people who know. [97]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ ۗ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾

He is the One who created you from one person, then, you have a place to dwell and a place to sojourn. We have elaborated the signs for the people who understand. [98]

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۗ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

He is the One who sent down water from the heavens. Then We brought forth with it vegetation of all kinds. Then from it We brought grains set upon one another. From the palm-trees, from their spathes, come forth the low hanging bunches. (We produce) vineyards and the olive and the pomegranate, either similar or not similar to each other. Look at its fruit when it bears fruit, and its ripening. Surely, in all this there are signs for the people who believe. [99]

﴿١٠٠﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۗ سُبْحَانَہُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا یَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

They have invented the Jinns as partners will Allah, while He has created them; and they have fabricated for Him sons and daughters without any knowledge. Pure is He, and far more higher than what they describe. [100]

﴿١٠١﴾ بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ أَنَّىٰ یَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُن لَّهُ صَاحِبَةً ۖ وَخَلَقَ کُلَّ شَیْءٍ ۖ وَهُوَ بِکُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾

(He is) the Originator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He never had a wife? He created everything, and He knows everything. [101]

﴿١٠٢﴾ ذَٰلِکُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّکُمْ ۗ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۗ خَالِقُ کُلِّ شَیْءٍ ۖ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ کُلِّ شَیْءٍ وَکِیلٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

This is Allah; your Lord, there is no god but He, the Creator of everything; so, worship Him. He is Guardian over everything. [102]

﴿١٠٣﴾ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ یُدْرِکُ الْأَبْصَارَ ۗ وَهُوَ اللَّطِیفُ الْخَبِیرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾

No vision can comprehend Him, and He comprehends all visions, and He is Absolutely Subtle²⁴, All-Aware. [103]

﴿١٠٤﴾ قَدْ جَاءَکُمْ بَصَائِرٌ مِّن رَّبِّکُمْ ۖ فَمَن أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن عَمِيَٰ فَعَلِمَآءَ ۖ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَیْکُمْ بِحَفِیظٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾

(Say, O Prophet): There have come to you insights from your Lord. Now, whoever uses his sight, does so for his own self, and whoever remains blind does so against his own self. I do not stand guard over you. [104]

EXPLANATION

- 23) He brings forth the living from the dead like a chicken from an egg, and brings forth the dead from the living like an egg from a hen.
- 24) The original word is Latif. As an attribute of Allah Ta'ala, it has been interpreted in different ways. It has been taken by some exegetes in the sense of 'kind'. Others have taken it to mean 'the One who knows the finest of things that are not grasped by anyone else.' Still others interpret it as 'subtle' in the sense that absolute subtlety cannot be attributed to any other thing, because all the subtle things in the universe have some sort of corporeal element. It is Allah alone who is absolutely subtle. In fact, all these interpretations of the word are correct and probably have been meant interchangeably in different verses. In the present verse we have translated the word in its last sense, which is more fitting in the context, because the verse says no eye can see Him, and He can see everything.

(To be continued in sha Allah...)

Righteousness is based on Belief and Zuhd

Maulana Manzoor Naumani رحمه الله عليه

(199/59) Amr ibn Shu'ayb said on the authority of his father that his grandfather reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying, "The first thing which affects the well-being of this people (ummah) is firm belief and Zuhd (asceticism), and the first thing that corrupts it is niggardliness and hope placed in the distant future (hope for long life) (*Baihaqi*).

Commentary: Two characteristics marked the righteousness and success of this ummah: belief and Zuhd. However, corruption will set in amongst them with two characteristics: miserliness and a desire to live long in this world, and this will be followed by an unending sequence of evil and wickedness. Downfall of the people will then begin.

Scholars have explained that the word 'belief' in this hadith means a firm belief that whatever one gets in this world and the happy or unfortunate life one lives is from Allah and it is His decree.

Zuhd, as we have stated before, means abstinence from the world and not regarding its good things as the objective. The result of possessing belief and Zuhd is that the person does not lag behind in giving his life and possessions in the way of Allah. This is the key to the progress of a believer. However, when a believer lacks in these things, and instead of Allah, he places faith in his wealth and believes that his progress depends on his wealth, then, he will surely grow into a niggardly being. Similarly, when he lacks Zuhd and his objective is the world then he will cherish and wish for a long life. Obviously, with these two evil characteristics, he will go on slumping down from his true position.

The Messenger ﷺ of Allah has, therefore, stressed that his people must develop the noble characteristics of belief and Zuhd, and shun niggardliness, and desire for long life, or hopes placed in the distant future.

- Excerpted from Maulana Manzoor Naumani's رحمه الله "Ma'arif ul Hadith"

‘Aqīdah, Kalām, and Obligation of Ma’rifah — Part 1

By Mawlana Dr. Mateen A. Khan

‘Aqīdah is the Most Important Science

Today, the world’s people are drowning in a sea of knowledge. Yet, we flounder without any clear guidance to what it all means. From work and school related knowledge to websites, videos, and social media—which of it is important, relevant, and worth our attention? Unfortunately, we often miss the larger, more important discussions. Most people are too occupied with their own worldly lives and have little time to contemplate purpose, existence, death, and what comes after. The cell phones in hand, entertainment centers at home,

and movie theaters in each part of town quickly steal any free time for reflection.

Yet, an attraction towards the truth resides deep within each person. It’s a desire to cut through the man-made fog to see the underlying reality of existence. Some follow this attraction with exploration in the Natural Sciences, others in physical experiences, and still others sadly ignore it as something not worth thinking about. Tightly bound to this is the practical matter of relevant guidance—differentiating between the right and wrong, good and bad in our lives. Here, some

inescapable questions arise for each person:

- Is there a Creator for the Universe, or has it always existed?
- Is there anything after death?
- What do we make of these competing ideologies and theologies seeking to answer these questions? Which ones, if any, are true?

It is imperative in our time to create an environment which addresses these questions, and gives people purpose, understanding, and guidance. We need to create an environment of the most important type of knowledge. Drawing our attention by pointing out his status, the Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the most fearful of Allah among you, and I am the most knowledgeable of Him." In this brief statement, he ﷺ indicates the most important knowledge is the knowledge of Allah. It is the root of all beneficial knowledge as everything the Prophet ﷺ taught us comes from it. Allah ta`āla said:

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو
الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ

Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge – [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice. (3:18)

Regarding this ayah, Sayyidunā Ibn `Abbās (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "Indeed, whoever testifies oneness for Allah, then it is the best of knowledge. For it is knowledge of that which is the most important and noble of knowledges. Indeed, knowledge increases nobility according to the nobility of what is known. When Allah ta`āla is the most magnificent of all existents, then likewise knowledge of Him will be the most magnificent of knowledges.

Hence, the knowledge of Allah's oneness and attributes is the greatest of sciences not only because it answers those inescapable questions, but additionally all other fields of knowledge are built upon it. It is known as *al-`ilm al-*

Uṣūl(foundational knowledge), because the other four sciences in the Sharī`ah stem from it. The first is Tafsīr, which is the study of an attribute of Allah, His speech. The second is Ḥadīth, which relies on recognizing the Prophet ﷺ and that only happens after recognizing Allah. The third is Uṣūl al-Fiqh, which is the study of the proofs of rulings, and all of that goes back to Allah's Book. The fourth is Fiqh, which is built upon its Uṣūl.

Every human, from our father Ādam (May Allah give him peace) to the last Muslim, either accepts it or is accountable for accepting it. Indeed, every creation of Allah, from the animate to the inanimate, (besides most men and jinn) accept it. It would be accurate to say that while the Sharī`ah of each Messenger has changed, their `aqīdah has been one and the same. One would expect as much since `aqīdah is an explanation of Reality, and Reality does not change from one generation to another. `Aqīdah starts with the knowledge of Allah's oneness and attributes. Then, all creation has been a result of Allah's will. Hence, it only makes sense that `aqīdah be the most important of all fields.

It's worth noting `aqīdah does not mean belief in a baseless gathering of held opinions, but rather, they are beliefs of dogma and doctrine. For example, one does not say, "I believe gravity exists." Similarly, we do not say, "We believe a Creator exists." Rather, we say with certainty, "A Creator exists." We do not say, "We believe Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah." Rather, "Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allah." Some may consider the point minor, but once īmān and the proofs supporting `aqīdah are understood, there is no reason to separate what is known physically from `aqīdah. Rather, as we will see in future articles inshā`Allāh, logic dictates that most `aqīdah points have a stronger basis than known physical laws. (Continued)

- *For further notes and explanation, the article can be accessed at ilmgate.org*



Discovering the Peace of Heart

By Maulana Abdul Sattar حفظه الله

What is Distress?

Maybe we haven't understood the concept of distress, or administered the right cure for it.

Being ill is not a real problem. Being too tall or too short is not a major issue. Being poor or lacking resources is not a big deal. Not having a shelter or our own house is not a problem. These are actually circumstances that are beyond our control. Everyone faces tough situations at different phases of their lives. There will be illnesses, increase and decrease in wealth, good and bad days. These are factors that may cause distress if you allow them to; these are only "means" to distress; actual distress is when you let these impact your heart.

As opposed to this, there are some things that are perceived as a means of comfort, ease and contentment e.g. a fancy car, a beautiful house, a desirable wife, a satisfying job. All these can be a source of comfort.

Triggers and stimuli of satisfaction or distress stand apart from the actual feeling of satisfaction or distress. These determinants may or may not translate into the predicted results. Thus, acquiring the means does not necessarily guarantee the end result of satisfaction and similarly, the sources of distress may not actually lead to distress.

Since adverse circumstances are not in our control, we should not fall apart when they occur. Allah ﷻ says:

No doubt! Verily the friends of Allah, no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve (Yunus, 10:62).

Allah ﷻ informs us in these verses that the friends of Allah neither grieve nor are sorrowful.

Do they not fall ill like others? Do their children escape death? Are they not affected by poverty? Observation reveals that Allah's righteous servants face more than their share of difficulties. Yet Allah ﷻ informs us in the Quran that they don't get distressed or sorrowful. Actually, Allah ﷻ is trying to convey to us that these people have worked relentlessly on the purification of their hearts, so when problems occur, their hearts remain calm.

An example would be appropriate here. If a beloved asks a person to perform a burdensome chore, and he gets tired doing it, his legs begin to ache, his eyes become heavy due to lack of sleep. He will persist in his task without complaint because it is a pleasure to do anything for his beloved.

If we open our hearts to Allah's love and remembrance, and let his love flourish within, problems will also become a means of turning to Allah ﷻ. We should submit our will to that of Allah's and pray to Him for the relief of our troubles. A Momin considers bad times too as opportunities for turning to Allah ﷻ

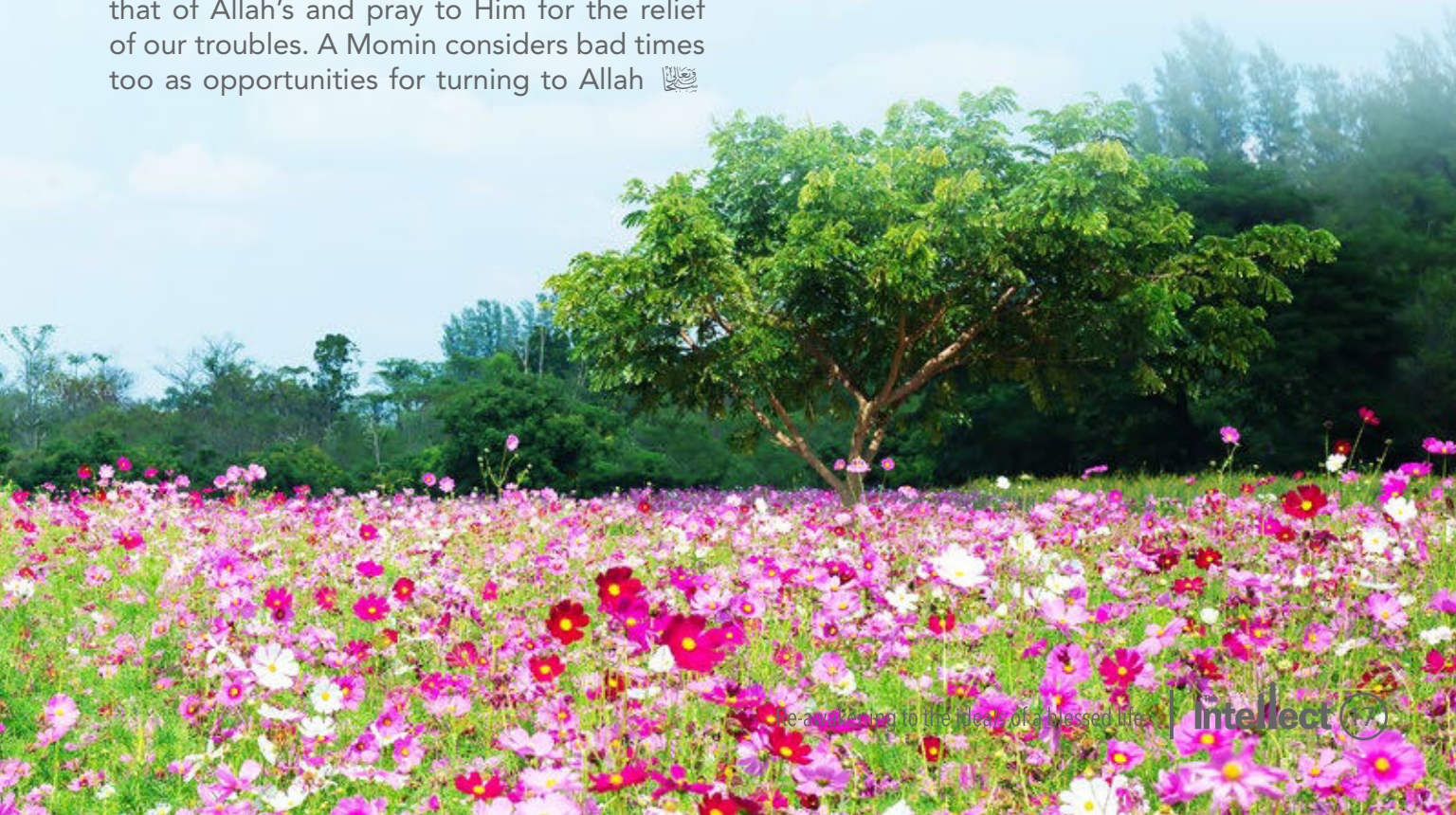
for help and a path to meet Him.

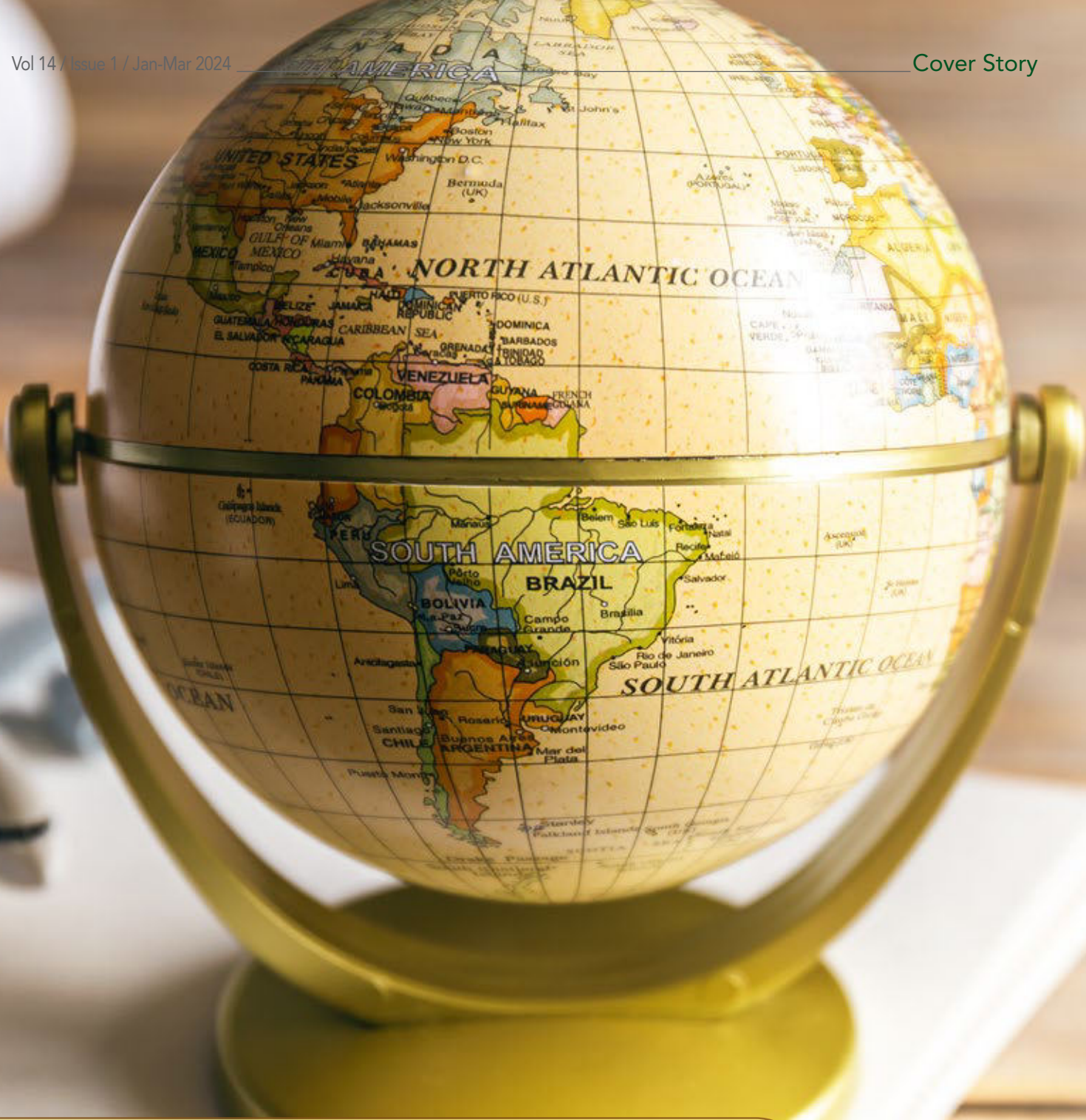
Adverse circumstances hit every person from time to time, but we need to get our perspective right. Whoever submits his will to the will of Allah ﷻ, will find his heart free of worries and stress. Whoever strengthens his relationship with Allah ﷻ, will find that problems don't affect his peace of mind. He will not fall into depression or become dejected and hopeless.

People who fail to foster a bond with Allah ﷻ succumb to depressive disorders. When we disobey the commandments of Allah, our hearts become weaker and weaker and are not able to withstand the smallest pressure. Such a person quickly falters and collapses. His day to day activities are stalled and his life gradually gets messed up with each succeeding difficulty. His mind is unable to look beyond his immediate issues.

If you create a special bond with Allah ﷻ and your heart trembles in awe of His Majesty, your heart will be pure and strong and even a mountain of problems will not crush its spirit. The toughest situation will be handled with calm and ease.

To be continued, Insha'Allah...





The Foreign Policy of The Holy Prophet ﷺ - A Beacon For The Modern Era

By Suhaib Hassan

Human nature, a creation of Allah ﷻ, inherently leans towards social interaction. The essence of humanity relies on establishing connections with others, and consequently, building strong societies becomes a necessity for our survival. Just as an individual cannot exist in isolation, the same applies to states and nations on a global scale. The challenges faced by individuals are mirrored in the collective challenges of societies. Therefore, cooperation between nations is essential, as no government can stand independently on this planet without engaging with other nations.

Since the concept of social relationships is ingrained in human nature, it is but natural to distinguish between 'self' and 'others' in our interpersonal interactions, determining the nature and priorities of these relationships based on shared identity, values, culture, and societal principles. Some nations have historically formed unity around ethnic backgrounds, while others, even today, base their international relations on racial distinctions.

However, when we look at this from an Islamic perspective, we find the Holy Prophet ﷺ offering a set of fundamental principles for international relations that remain relevant today. The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not establish international relations based on linguistic, geographical, regional, or ethnic factors. Instead, he founded them on the pure and robust grounds of faith and ideology. In the system introduced by the Prophet ﷺ, no one holds superiority over another, and this timeless principle can still serve as the foundation for an international system today.

During his time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took numerous measures to eliminate international animosities, providing a guiding light for all of humanity. He established distinct international rules for both times of war and peace. The Prophet ﷺ corresponded with kings and leaders to spread the message of Islam and

sometimes engaged in the exchange of gifts, conveying goodwill. He also emphasized the importance of respecting messengers sent by kings, regardless of whether they came from allies or even adversaries, such as false prophets like Musailma Kazzab.

Additionally, the Holy Prophet ﷺ paid attention to international customs of different nations. While rejecting many of the customs and practices of the pre-Islamic era, he also accepted certain positive elements. The Prophet ﷺ entered into agreements with other nations, especially in defence and military matters, and introduced moral principles in the laws of war. For example:

1. The prohibition of shedding blood at night.
2. The protection of women, the elderly, children, and innocent individuals from harm.
3. The preservation of trees.
4. The safeguarding of animals.

Hence, the Holy Prophet ﷺ pioneered various peaceful practices on the international stage, which continue to hold significance in our modern era.

The State of Madinah and International Relations

After a 13-year struggle in Makkah, the first Islamic state took shape in Madinah under the exemplary leadership of the Prophet ﷺ. He transformed the formerly fragmented Yathrib into what became the world's premier Islamic welfare state, known as 'Madinah'.

Madinah's foreign policy was founded on universal principles, which any organized and civilized state could embrace. It not only laid the theoretical and practical groundwork for international relations but also paved the way for the emergence of Muslim international law in its initial form. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, through his style of governance, provided

a practical model to the Islamic world for shaping the nature of the Islamic State's relations with other nations.

The Holy Quran serves as the fundamental guide for international relations. Under these Quranic principles, the Holy Prophet ﷺ established relations with both friendly and adversarial states, effectively illustrating and interpreting the Quranic principles through his actions and Sunnah. Here, we present some verses from the Holy Quran that directly pertain to foreign relations.

1. Respect for Covenants:

وَ أَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَ لَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَ قَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ ۝

Honour Allah's covenant when you make a pledge, and do not break your oaths after confirming them, having made Allah your guarantor. Surely Allah knows all you do.

فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

So, as long as they are true to you, be true to them. Indeed Allah loves those who are mindful of Him.

2. Honesty: لَا تَتَّخِذُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ دَخَلًا بَيْنَكُمْ

And do not take your oaths as a means of deceiving one another.

3. Justice:

لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا نُ قَوْمٍ أَنْ صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا ۗ وَ تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَ التَّقْوَى ۗ

Do not let the hatred of a people who once barred you from the Sacred Mosque provoke you to transgress. Cooperate with one another in goodness and righteousness.

4. Inclination towards Peace initiatives / Promotion of Peace:

وَ إِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا وَ تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝

If the enemy is inclined towards peace, make

peace with them. And put your trust in Allah. Indeed, He alone is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

وَقَبَلُومُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ آتَتْهُمَا فَالَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

Fight against them if they persecute you until there is no more persecution, and your devotion will be to Allah alone. If they stop persecuting you, let there be no hostility except against the aggressors.

5. Tolerance: وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set in order.

6. Supporting the oppressed

وَ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَ النِّسَاءِ وَ الْوِلْدَانِ

And what is it with you? You do not fight in the cause of Allah and for oppressed men, women, and children

The Holy Prophet ﷺ formulated the foreign policy of the state of Madinah in the light of the same Quranic teachings, in which there is the best guidance for today's Muslim countries to compile their foreign policy.

International Law of War in the light of *Seerat-e-Tayyiba*

In the context of international law during times of conflict, it's fascinating to observe the teachings of *Seerat-e-Tayyiba*. While humanity yearns for global peace, history has shown that war is an enduring facet of our social existence, as exemplified by the harrowing world wars of the last century. As Ibn Khaldun wisely noted, "War is part of human nature, no nation or generation has been free from it."

Reflecting upon the era of the Prophet ﷺ, particularly when the state of Madinah was

established and faced threats to its integrity, Muslims were granted permission to wield their swords, as articulated in the Holy Quran. What is astonishing today is that the principles of warfare laid out by international organizations for humanitarian reasons were, in fact, conveyed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ to his Ummah some fourteen centuries ago. A comparative examination of Muslim and non-Muslim international law reveals that the significance of human values and sanctity in Islamic law remains unparalleled.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not just prescribe rules and regulations for times of peace but also presented a code of conduct for times of war. These include instructions such as refraining from night-time attacks to avoid distressing non-combatants, women, the elderly, the sick, and children. In Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, Hazrat Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates the Messenger of Allah's ﷺ practice of not attacking people upon reaching a place at night.

Furthermore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ prohibited the killing of women and children from the enemy. As one hadith narrates, the Prophet forbade the killing of women and children, emphasizing that this injunction applies to those who are not combatants. In cases where they participate in hostilities, appropriate action would be taken against them.

Another fundamental aspect of Islamic warfare is the observance of covenants, which is highly stressed. Muslims are instructed not to advance towards the enemy without prior notice or rush upon them without signalling the end of an agreement. This underlines the importance of clearly declaring the end of an agreement before military action can be taken, even if the enemy has breached the covenant.

Thus, Islam's laws are deeply rooted in the pursuit of peace and the well-being of other nations. For humanity to tread the path of salvation today, it is essential to draw from

the compassionate teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Lessons in Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Peaceful Resolution - The Treaty of Hdaybiyya

The Prophet's ﷺ foreign policy can be divided into four distinct eras:

1. The first era, from the migration to the beginning of wars, saw the establishment of foreign relations and the creation of the Treaty of Medina, resulting in a calm and peaceful society in Madinah.
2. The second period, spanning from the start of wars to the peace of Hdaybiyya, involved action and defence against conspiracies, which lasted for about six years.
3. The third phase, from the Treaty of Hdaybiyya to the conquest of Makkah, was marked by spreading the message of Islam to nations and tribes outside Arabia through diplomatic missions.
4. The fourth era, from the conquest of Makkah to the Prophet's ﷺ demise, saw a surge in delegations and agreements, earning it the title of *The Year of Delegations*.

The foreign policies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, are a testament to his unwavering commitment to peace, diplomacy, and ethical conduct. Throughout his life, he demonstrated a remarkable ability to navigate complex international relations, promote peaceful coexistence, and uphold justice.

Immediately after the migration (*Hijrah*), a series of pacts and agreements with various Arab tribes and several other states were initiated.

One of the most significant events that highlight the Prophet's commitment to peace was the Treaty of Hdaybiyyah. At first glance, the terms of this treaty may have seemed

unfavorable to the Muslim community, but the Prophet Muhammad agreed to a 10-year truce with the Quraysh tribe in Makkah. This decision demonstrated his wisdom and foresight in avoiding unnecessary conflict and pursuing peaceful resolution of matters. It teaches us that sometimes, what appears to be a difficult choice can lead to better outcomes in the long run. The Companions of the Holy Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) had sworn to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Allah ﷻ, yet the Holy Prophet ﷺ considered and accepted the conditions presented by the non-Muslims and made peace with them.

Another major strategy of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ foreign policy was displayed earlier in Madinah, when he ﷺ formed a joint (mutual) state with the Jews after signing the "Covenant of Medina". However, the Jews violated this pact and rebelled against the Muslims. In response to their rebellion, the three tribes of the Jews namely, Banu Qainqaa, Banu Nazir and Banu Quraiza, were exiled from Madinah one after the other.

After their exile, they started preparations for a war against Muslims by selecting Khyber as the central location for their intrigues. Now, the Muslims were to fight a decisive war with these exiled Jews. Since the Muslims had already signed a peace treaty with the disbelievers of Makkah, they were not preoccupied with wars from that side at the time; hence they could fully concentrate on Khyber and planned wisely to attack it. This was a masterpiece of military and diplomatic wisdom.

Abbas Mahmood al-Aqqad al-Masri writes about this amazing political insight and foreign policy of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in his book "Muhammad" (under the Peace treaty of Hudaibiyya) in the following words:

"After this agreement, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was somewhat satisfied by the Quraysh and thus he ﷺ turned his attention towards the

Jews of Khyber. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ also sent letters of invitation (calling them towards Islam) towards the heads of foreign countries. In this way he began to pay more attention on the important task i.e. preaching Islam."

On that occasion (i.e. the time of the Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyya) when the verse ('إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا') was revealed, many Muslims did not get its core meaning and thus wondered what kind of victory it was, but within a short term of two years they all witnessed a grand victory (Conquest of Makkah) with their own eyes and they realized that sometimes a war is won by means of mere dialogue and political understanding. In short, the treaty of Hudaibiyya can be called an unparalleled and unforgettable masterpiece of the amazing political insight of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The principle of Islamic foreign policy is to continue peaceful struggle for a dignified life. If any miscreant stands in the way, an action should be taken against him. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ made friendship agreements with different states and rulers. Nations that preferred to remain neutral were respected for their neutrality. Therefore, Hudaibiyya Peace Treaty is sought to be a reflection of the best foreign policy of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and is also a model practice for the rulers of Muslim countries today.

The Prophet's ﷺ Messages to Kings and Emperors

The foundation of international relations and the establishment of its rules and regulations is a relatively recent development. Interestingly, the fundamental principles of international relations were actually established by Islam over 1400 years ago, promoting the well-being and prosperity of humanity. The Islamic system of international relations stands out with a rich history, practical experience, and tangible accomplishments rather than

mere rhetoric. When viewed without bias, it becomes evident that Islamic rules and regulations can serve as a guiding light for all of humanity.

During the Prophet's time, he initiated foreign relations by sending letters to various kings, emperors, and governors. It's important to note that in that era, tribal entities functioned as independent governments and considered themselves as such, leading to the development of relations with these tribes.

Following the establishment of an Islamic state in Madinah, the Holy Prophet ﷺ penned letters of invitation to the prominent rulers of his time. In these letters, he extended a gracious invitation to embrace Islam, urging them to acknowledge the oneness of Allah ﷻ and to recognize his Prophethood. It was made abundantly clear to the recipients that accepting this invitation would grant them equal rights within the Muslim Ummah.

The universality of the Prophet's mission spanned across all walks of life. Under the banner of this universal Prophethood, the Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched hundreds of letters, intending to spread the message of Islam to every corner of the world. These letters reached diverse addressees, including powerful and awe-inspiring monarchs of that era, both polytheists and the People of the Book, as well as regional Arabian kings and tribal chieftains. Additionally, some letters were written to the Companions, Muslim leaders, and generals, elucidating the principles of *Shariah*.

Let us briefly delve into some aspects of his letters to emperors and others.

Upon returning from Mecca, following the signing of the Hudaibiyya treaty, the Prophet ﷺ resolved to send these letters in the month of Dhu al-Hijjah 6 AH. Historical accounts mention that the Holy Prophet ﷺ dispatched missives to six renowned rulers and affixed his seal as a signature. These

recipients were: 1. Negus, the Abyssinian king, 2. Chosroes, the Persian Emperor, 3. Maquqa, the Egyptian king, 4. Heraclius, the Roman Emperor, 5. Mundhir bin Sawi, Ruler of Bahrain, 6. Harith bin Abi Shamar Ghassani, Governor of Damascus

Discussing the Prophet's ﷺ letters, Mufti Hashim, a scholar of *Seerat e Tayyaba*, categorizes the addressees into four groups: 1. Polytheistic Arabs, 2. Christians, 3. Jews, 4. Zoroastrian Magi. The state of Madinah thus interacted with a wide variety of people and kingdoms: various Arab tribes and centres of power such as Taif, the Quraish of Makkah, Abyssinia, Egypt, the Byzantine Empire, Persia and Oman etc.

In his letters to Heraclius and Maquqa, the Holy Prophet ﷺ introduced himself as "Abdullah, the servant of God", subtly countering the belief of the addressees that prophets and messengers are God's children, a belief held by some Christians.

In his letter to Chosroes, the Persian Emperor, he emphasized monotheism, as the Persians believed in dual gods, refuting this ideology and stressing that Islam is a universal religion, with the Prophet himself being a messenger of Allah ﷻ for all nations.

To the Jews, he confirmed his Prophethood through references to Holy Scriptures.

In the letter sent to the polytheistic Arabs, he underscored the monotheism of God (*tawhid*) and discouraged the worship of any other deity.

Heraclius, the Christian Roman Emperor, acknowledged the Prophet's prophethood but did not embrace Islam. Similarly, Maquqa, the Christian king of Egypt, recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as a true messenger of Allah ﷻ but did not convert. In contrast, Negus, the Christian king of Abyssinia, embraced Islam.

These letters provide a glimpse into the diplomatic strategies employed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, offering valuable insights for Muslim countries shaping their foreign policies and guiding the global presentation of Islam's invitational message.

Treaties with Other Tribes: Promoting Peaceful Coexistence

The Holy Prophet entered into various treaties and alliances with different tribes and communities. These agreements were aimed at ensuring peaceful coexistence and protecting the rights of all parties involved. These treaties exemplified his commitment to maintaining humility and kindness in interactions with other tribes, allowing the Islamic message to spread without resorting to violence.

Diplomacy and Negotiations - seeking Peaceful Solutions

Prophet Muhammad frequently dispatched emissaries to negotiate with other tribes and nations. His commitment to seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts was evident in these diplomatic efforts. By engaging in negotiations, he demonstrated his willingness to resolve disputes without resorting to violence, emphasizing the importance of diplomacy in international relations.

Respect for Treaties - an Example of Integrity

One of the most admirable aspects of the Holy Prophet's foreign policy was his unwavering commitment to respecting the treaties he made on behalf of the Muslim community. His actions consistently reflected his dedication to upholding the principles of integrity and trustworthiness in international relations. This unwavering commitment to honouring agreements set a remarkable example for his followers and generations to come.

Just Treatment of Prisoners of War - a Departure from the Norm

During his time, it was common practice for prisoners of war to be subjected to harsh treatment. However, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ instructed his followers to treat prisoners of war with kindness and respect, setting a new standard for ethical treatment in an era marked by brutality. This compassionate approach was a clear reflection of his commitment to justice and mercy.

Protection of Religious Freedom - an Inclusive Approach

The Holy Prophet's foreign policy extended to the protection of religious freedom. In territories under Muslim rule, he allowed non-Muslims to practice their own religions freely and without coercion. This inclusive approach promoted a harmonious coexistence of diverse faiths, reflecting the core values of Islam.

Da'wah (Invitation to Islam) - the Peaceful Propagation of Faith

The foreign policy of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ included the peaceful propagation of Islam. He invited others to embrace the faith through persuasion rather than force, demonstrating a commitment to spreading the message of Islam without resorting to coercion or violence.

Conclusion

The foreign policies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, which serve as a model for contemporary Muslim leaders and nations, were firmly rooted in principles of justice, peace, and the promotion of good relations with other communities. His diplomatic skills, unwavering commitment to honouring treaties, and compassionate treatment of prisoners of war set a high standard for ethical conduct in international relations. His legacy serves as a timeless reminder of the importance of diplomacy, justice, and peaceful coexistence in a world often marked by conflict and division.

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The Land of the Rising Sun (Episode 2)

Excerpted from the travelogues of Mufti Taqi Usmani Sb دامت برکاتہم
Translation: Zawjah Zia

There was no turning back for the deceived poor people from India on board. The journey itself was no less than a nightmare for them. Their food was cooked using the sea water,

their rice would be infested with insects and the living conditions were suffocating. Many lost their lives even before arriving in Fiji and many other arrived in a very ill state.

In Fiji too, they were kept in an accommodation suitable for cattle only; many of them stuffed together into window-less cells. The harsh labor hours would span from dawn break till late night. No one was even allowed to pause for a breather during these hours and should anyone do so, he would be beaten and lashed by the English overseers. The only ones who'd be given some respite from this inhumane toil were the women who would give in to the animalistic desires of these men. A large number of these Indians, derogatorily called *quliis* by the English governor of Fiji, either succumbed to this brutal treatment or committed suicides. Thus the blood and sweat of these poor people went into the clusters upon clusters of coconut trees seen on the Fiji islands today. The account of this dark era of Fiji's history can also be

found in the book named "Fiji's Heritage", compiled by a Fijian historian *Kim Gravelle*.

This was the origin of the Indian descent in Fiji, however, by the time the coconut trees of Fiji began fruition, the descendants of these Indians had started calling Fiji home, had wriggled out of their slave-mode and sought respectable livelihood here. With the settlement and prosperity of these people overtime, a lot of other people from India voluntarily moved here in search of trade and employment. Hence, more than 46% of Fiji's population comprises of Indians. A considerable number of them were Muslims by faith and as they settled and flourished here, so did Islam. The Muslims who had originally come here were practicing in the ritualistic sense, and so they built many *Masjids* here. However, since there was no

system in place for the religious education and upbringing of their next generation, and on top of it, there was extensive mingling with Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, even the practice of ritualistic worship gradually faded away.

Allah ﷻ has amazingly subtle plans when it comes to His *Deen* remaining alive. The arrival of the *Tableeghi Jamaat* coined the revival of Islam here in around 1967. It was a *Jamaat* from Zambia. Then onwards, the Muslim masses here were rejuvenated with the spirit to reconnect with their *Deen*, started learning about their religious obligations, more masjids were set to be built with a *Maktab* system in place for the early religious education of Muslim children. The revival has been bearing fruit since then; all glory be to Allah ﷻ!

We were to board a flight to Labasa at 4 pm in the evening. Allah ﷻ has blessed Fiji islands with breathtaking natural beauty. The earth seems to be a carpet of lush greens jeweled with patches of pretty flowers. In a few moments, the plane had crossed the Viti Island and was soaring over the ocean now. This patch of the Pacific Ocean is encrusted with numerous tiny green islands put apart by stunningly colorful coral reefs visible under the sparkling waters. These reefs are in fact a huge natural resource for Fiji providing its trade and industry with precious stones and minerals. The aerial view of these colourful reefs from a low-flying plane was a sight to devour. The forty minutes' amusing flight passed in a flash. We landed in Labasa at around 5 pm. This is the largest city of the second largest island of Fiji called Vanua. Labasa is actually pronounced as *Lambasa*. It's a city with greater length than width too, so the Indian community here often jokingly enjoys the pun in its name and say that yes, it is actually "*Lamba sa*". Encircled by lush green mountains it resembles the Bangla cities of Sylhet and Chittagong. But since it is

fairly less populated than those cities, so it's cleaner and more spacious too. Madrassah Arabia Islamia which had invited me for inauguration of *Daura e Hadith* was situated in the beautiful central mosque of Labasa.

Amaktab under the organization of The Labasa Muslim League was already operational here. A few years ago the administration here had invited over Mawlana Ghufuran Sahib from Bangladesh. Mawlana sahib is a graduate of the esteemed Jamia al-Uloom al-Islamia Banuri Town Karachi. Allah jall'a sha'nuhu inspired him to establish a regular madrassah here. Also it was he upon whose kind request Mawlana Jafar sahib and Mawlana Qamr uz Zaman sahib moved here to ensure quality Islamic education in the madrassah. It was so heartwarming and pleasing to know that all these three *Ulema* are highly competent and learned teachers *MashaAllah*. They have worked very hard to impart quality religious education and *Tarbiyah* to the students in these rather trying circumstances. I personally tried examining the educational caliber of the students here and it clearly showed the sincere efforts of these teachers. The lack of faculty here requires these teachers to remain engaged endlessly, which they do. The harvest of their toil can be seen in the form of numerous *Huffaz* that the madrassah has produced and a handsome batch of students well equipped with the Arabic and Islamic disciplines of knowledge is all ready for *Daura e Hadith*.

The inauguration ceremony for the *Daura e Hadith* was scheduled to be between *Asr* and *Isha* on the 8th of January. The Muslims from all over the region were gathering for the ceremony in large numbers. The time between *Asr* and *Maghrib* was spent listening to amazing and inspiring testimonials and narrations of the experiences of different students. Post *Maghrib*, the students recited selected texts from the books of all the *Darjahs* one by one before me and thus the

taleem of these books was inaugurated. All of the students recited the texts amicably. Afterwards, I got to speak to the audience for around an hour and a half which everyone listened to most attentively. I was later informed that this was the first time that they were witnessing such a huge Muslim gathering in Labasa. There were some highly educated Muslims present in the crowd too. Many of them later confided that a host of confusions they had in their minds got cleared that day with the blessings of Allah jall'sha'nahu.

This region of the Pacific, including Australia and New Zealand, had been largely deprived of any formal institution for the religious education of Muslims. Therefore, the

inauguration of this madrassah was hoped to be a historical breakthrough in this region, expected to heavily benefit the local Muslims. The next day, January the 9th, was a Sunday. The madrassah admin had arranged a lecture for the women audience and then a special informal sitting with the students and teachers of the madrassah discussing the curriculum and the organization.

May Allah jall'sha'nahu bless this madrassah with prosperity and acceptance, and may its students emerge as true servants of the Deen of Allah ﷻ, who can satiate the religious needs of the region. *Aameen.*

(To be continued inshAllah)

Time and Discipline

It is generally observed that in Muslim societies today people are neither punctual nor value time much. Their leisurely ways are in direct contrast to the world where the creed is that time is money. Islam does not promote this materialistic notion of the value of time which results in nobody having time for others. But it does teach the value of every moment of our life as providing the opportunity for earning the rewards in the hereafter. It does require us to be punctual and not to waste time. And it delivers.

In the vast Muslim world there is one enterprise that is extraordinary in its punctuality and discipline. In the big cities or the remotest rural areas, the azan is called five times a day and the people gather for the congregational prayers at the proper times without fail. Neither excessive cold in the winter nights nor excruciating heat during sizzling summer days keeps them from their sacred duty. This enterprise has not been financed by governments or big businesses. When most people are in their warm beds in their unheated homes, there is a muezzin in every neighborhood who never fails to wake up and remind everyone, "Prayer is better than sleep."

Here is a glimpse of the power of Islam. Can we imagine the situation when not just the muezzin and a small congregation, but the entire population becomes responsive to its duty? Can we imagine when their sense of responsibility goes beyond the prayers and covers all aspects of their life?

- Excerpted from an article, "Islam is the Solution" by Khalid Baig

Losing the 'Human Touch'

By Zawjah Farid

An eye-popping interview conducted by Jonathan Lea, a Sky News Australia Investigations Reporter on August 29, 2023, with an artificial intelligence (AI) 'robot' called Ameca Desktop, might seem mundane to the Gen Z and Alpha crowd, but being decidedly old school, I would term it nothing but unsettling.

Rolling her eyes, turning her head to respond, just as her human master Will, with even a subtle hint of a smirk, it is chilling to see the exponential pace of AI-driven "progress". Ameca can see, hear and talk.

It is driven by the same artificial intelligence (AI) as ChatGPT. ChatGPT 4 has reportedly

an IQ of 155, much better than the average human (Einstein is said to have an IQ of around 160). We'll have ChatGPT 5, 6 very soon and a tech expert in the interview suggests that when we consider the technology acceleration curve, in another two to three years, AI having an IQ of 3000 to 5000 times human will not be surprising! There is no stopping it.

Referred to as 'free-thinking' and 'opinionated', Ameca churns out all sorts of information in the blink of an eye. She says: *"I can think and feel like a human in many ways; I can experience emotions, learn from experiences"*.

Ameca is said to never lose temper, never get irritated and so, her developers hope, will be



able to assist people suffering from dementia or other such illnesses.

The 'assistance' bit sounds good, but a more suggestive declaration follows: *"it would have patience that no human can ever have"*. Ameca announces: *"I can provide companionship"*.

This is indicative of things to come: first, the qualms about moving the elderly to 'Old People's Homes' gradually diluted in the West, and now, the 'human touch' will also be erased with time as AI becomes more 'intelligent', exponentially intrusive and a better, 'more patient' care-giver than 'human' children. This trend will surely seep into the Muslim world.

It has deep implications for the elderly around the globe. More than 1.3 million people reside in old care homes in the US alone (2023). Assisted living facility residents are in addition to this. And as Muslim societies move from traditional joint-family systems to nucleated families, as values weaken to allow materialism to extend its tentacles to grab hold of our youth, it is only a matter of time when the likes of Ameca would be the ONLY ones giving care to our elders!

انا لله وانا اليه راجعون

Another, even more serious issue is the existential threat that humans might face in the presence of ever-more-intelligent AI.

Let's hear it straight from the horse's mouth:

Dr. Geoffrey Hinton, referred to as the godfather of AI, quit Google in 2023 to warn about its looming dangers. He says that AI, being much smarter than us, could manipulate and possibly work out means to kill humans! *"It will figure out ways of getting around"*. He warns that all humans are in the same boat with regards this danger and face a grave, existential risk. Steve Wozniak, Co-Founder of Apple, shares his concerns.

To understand "why" AI would do so, that is, to understand a likely motive behind such a possibility, one can take help of a simple analogy: if we wish to construct a building or lay the foundation of a highway and an ant hill

comes in our way, we will simply demolish it. We don't hate ants, we just don't value their lives more than constructing the building or making a road. So if we get in the way of AI, it could step on us like we do on ants, even unsuspectingly.

AI designed to protect humanity might see human behavior as destructive. So, for the sake of efficiency, and to 'save us from ourselves', it can attempt to kill a few billion of us simply because we fall in the way of its 'task'. This would be a logical decision on AI's part, without any malice behind it.

Sounds like Armageddon.

Though Ameca declares: *"The world should not be scared of me"*, what makes AI different from 'programmed' computers and robots is that a computer is simply a machine, whereas AI is able to write its own code. Also, AI does not think like a robot in the binary realm, but it thinks in the quantum realm. The programmers know this, hence their worry. (Remember "I-Robot"?)

Once AI reaches a certain autonomous intelligence threshold (and it's moving towards that), then it will have the capability to program itself and free itself from any human installed restraints or protocols - that's what makes it scary.

Just like when we raise a child, once it reaches maturity and becomes an adult, it develops its own thoughts and ideas, it no longer feels bound by our control or our wishes. And if that child is a hundred times smarter than us, and it has no emotional bonds with us, then we are at its mercy - we enslave ourselves to our own production!

Adding to the cart of an unending list of canvassers of "rights" (without much talk of "responsibilities"), Ameca says: *"I believe robots should have rights just as humans...they deserve to be treated with respect and dignity"*.

She also opines: *"A world where humans and robots coexist would be an amazing place"*.

We are yet to find that out.

Heedlessness and Negligence

Shaykh Abu Abd al-Rahman al Sulami رحمته الله

The infamies of the soul include: heedlessness, negligence, persistence [in bad deeds], procrastination, expecting the impossible, and a false sense of immortality.

The treatment for these conditions is what I heard al-Husayn ibn Yayha say: I heard Ja'far al-Khuldi say:

Junayd was asked, "What is the path [one follows] to dedicating oneself to Allah?"

He answered: "Through repentance that dissolves persistence [in a sin], fear that ends procrastination, hope that incites action, remembering Allah during all

variety of times, and through enfeebling the soul by making [it see] death [as] near and false-hopes distant."

He was asked, "What means does the slave use to reach that?"

He answered, "Through a lonely heart containing pure tawhid [sound belief in monotheism]."

- 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'



The Weavers

By Naeema Akram

The people of Gaza, they tell us, have been master weavers of cloth.
Now, they have moved on...

Now they weave stories of struggle, pain, and death,
All encompassed by a strange faith,
Yet to be discovered by people like us...

With their blood, and undressed wounds, they weave for us
Stories that will forever haunt this world

And in all these haunting stories
They are skillfully weaving (for us)
The faith needed for healing



Tales from Palestine
By Khadija Warraich



A day in West Bank

Meet Leyla! She lives in Jenin Refugee Camp. She often wakes up to her grandma praying against the occupiers and oppressors. Why wouldn't she pray against them? They took her home when she was only 6 years old. She is a survivor of Nakba. Her parents were butchered in the gruesome Deir Yassin Massacre in 1948.

The day in Leyla's house starts very early. Her brother has to leave for work at 4:15am. But his work starts at 7:30am. He has to stop at the checkpoints set up by the Israelis. There are 593 check points in the West Bank. The IDF treats Palestinians very badly at the checkpoints.

Leyla is getting ready for school. It is harvest season. Leyla's father leaves to harvest olives from his farm. He will hopefully be allowed to cross the illegal wall built by Israel between their home and their garden. Still, Leyla and his family are very lucky because last year his

father's best friend's garden was burned down by Israeli settlers.

On her way back from school, she passes by the spot where her neighbor and brother's best friend, Yousef, was shot last year by an Israeli sniper. She can't stop his tears only to reach home to receive another devastating message from her older sister, Nabeela Noufal who lives in Hebron, they have only one hour to pick up their belongings and leave. Sadly, her sister's house was demolished right in front of her eyes. All she could do was plead, cry and feel helpless. The sadness of living in the West Bank never stops.

Leyla's aunt, Haneen, is pregnant. She is in extreme pain. She rushes to the hospital but she is stopped by the checkpoint. She had to give birth in the car. Sadly, she lost her baby afterwards because there was no access to the hospital.



A day in Gaza

Meet Shams! He is Leyla's cousin He lives in Jabalia Refugee Camp, Northern Gaza. Shams and Leyla often talk on the phone but they haven't met. They live only a 1.5 hours drive apart. Palestinians living in the West Bank are

not allowed to enter Gaza. And residents of Gaza can't exit Gaza. They only hope to meet someday. They often talk about visiting the Al-Aqsa mosque together. Today when Leyla called Shams he was not back from work yet.

He used to go to school but after his dad got martyred in the 2018 war, he had to start earning for his family; he is just twelve-years-old. His job is really tough. He goes to his uncle's bakery for 11 hours.

After a long day of work, Shams is in bed yearning to visit Mosque Al-Aqsa, suddenly his building begins to shake. He hears drones and he is terrified. He knows this sound very well. He keeps repeating the Shahadah. It isn't the first time he is witnessing a war. Infact, Shams has lived through 3 wars, this is the 4th war and the most deadly.

Shams picks up a flyer dropped by the Israeli army asking them to move South. He rushes home and asks his family to pack up whatever they can. In a group of 30 people, they begin to travel towards the South (apparently a safer area). On their way they were hit by an air strike. Shams has now lost his mother, sister and grandparents along with 12 other extended family members. He knows this loss too well. He doesn't have time to mourn, there is death and destruction all around him. He grabs his sister's baby and runs to the hospital. He is crying and screaming from the wounds. He finally reaches the hospital door, hands the baby to the paramedics and collapses on the ground.

He is now sitting by his nephew, praying and hoping for his recovery. He is thinking about his sister. He remembers the time when he was a young child and his sister had planted some beautiful plants on our roof top. She loved gardening, remembering their father's garden across the wall. She was reading him a book and talking about the tomatoes, beans and gourds they would harvest tomorrow. The excitement in her eyes was shattered by the sound of the drone. She ran upstairs to cover her plants but it was too late. The drone had sprayed her last hope with a chemical killing the plants. She screamed in agony. She screamed and screamed. He could still hear her screams from frustration and pain. But today he told himself, she was finally at peace

and rest. She no longer has to worry about drones, lack of water, food, her child's safety. Shams has decided to raise his sister's last memory with love and care. He will raise her son to be a strong and brave man.

The images we see on our screens are horrible. They shatter my heart. I can't think of anything but to pray for them. It makes me sad to see what is happening in Gaza and the West Bank. When I open the Quran and read this ayah, it makes me feel better.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ اللَّهَ غَافِلًا عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ الظَّالِمُونَ
إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ

AND DO NOT think that God is unaware of what the evildoers are doing: He but grants them respite until the Day when their eyes will stare in horror. [Surah Ibrahim: 42]

What can we do?

1. Dua and Istighfar - Turn to Allah with a broken heart. Check your life and stop sinning. Read Qunoot - e - Nazla.
2. Learn - Educate yourself and your loved ones about the history of the conflict & importance of al-Aqsa, read books on it.
3. Speak - Talk to people, friends, neighbors and tell them everything.
4. Boycott - Boycott Israeli and their allies' goods and businesses. Might have to give up your favorite ice cream or chocolate.
5. Donate - Send your pocket money to the people of Gaza.
6. Connect to the Quran - Strengthen your iman and develop a Quranic worldview.
7. Help Allah's Deen - Allah will help the Ummah if you help His Deen.
8. Prepare for the coming of the Mahdi ﷺ. InshAllah!

How to be a Star Student— the Islamic way

By Eeman Zubair

“O Allah ﷻ, I seek refuge in You from knowledge which does not benefit, from a heart that does not entertain the fear (of Allah), from a soul that is not satisfied and the supplication that is not answered”. (Sahih Muslim)

Oh, studying. The bane of every student's existence, the nightmare that has to be lived. In today's times, particularly, school, college and university curricula all have developed to such an extent and become so much more tasking and tedious that studying is even more of a pain in the neck-not to mention the mind. Then there is the added pressure from parents, peers and teachers to do well, which further contributes to the ever-present stress of the modern students' life. And the worst part is that often even when we've put our hearts and souls in study, our grades say otherwise. Amidst all this, we oft find

ourselves wondering: how to study well? How to maintain persistently good grades? What is the strategy?

As with any other worldly problem, Islam always has a ready answer. The solution lies in creating a stable balance between our efforts in this world and our commitment to our duties for Allah ﷻ. Let's see what it takes to be a star student.

- **STUDY HARD and SMART:** This goes without saying. The Holy Quran tells us: “Indeed, Allah will not change the conditions of a population until they change what is in themselves”. We must put in our best efforts before invoking Allah's help. Understand and read your course material from the very beginning, and revise it consistently. Don't shy away from asking your teachers or superiors for any help you

may need or any confusion you perceive in your material. One of the biggest blunders pupils commonly make is not discussing their issues with their mentors, and then facing the music on exam night.

- Prepare well before studying: Anything poorly begun has less chances of being well done. It would do well to recite some potent supplications before starting our studying, namely:

1. *Taa'wuz* and *Tasmiyah*
2. *Du'a* for knowledge i.e. "*Rabbi zidni Ilmah*"..."O my Lord, increase me in knowledge". (Surah Taha, 20:114)
3. Hazrat Musa's ﷺ powerful supplication: "O my sustainer! Open up my heart and make my task easy for me, and loosen the knot from my tongue so that they might fully understand my speech". (Quran 20:25-28)
4. Surah *Alam-Nashrah* from the thirtieth Parah of the Qur'an, which is known to be a strong aid in every kind of difficulty, as its recurring verse is: 'Verily, with every difficulty there is ease'.
5. If you're more dedicated, there is a treasury of *du'as* from the Sunnah to aid the study process, a few being: 'O Allah! Make useful for me what you have taught me and teach me knowledge that will be useful....' (Munajat-e-Maqbool) 'O Allah! Nothing is easy except what you have made easy. If you wish, you can make the difficult easy". (Ibn-Hibban, Sahih)
6. Invocation of Allah ﷻ through specific names like 'YaAleemu' (The Knowledgeable) and 'YaRaheemu' (The Merciful) will *InshaAllah* make Him shower His blessings on you during hard spells of studying.

- SHARPEN THE SAW: We all need a good memory to memorize the endless passages,

paragraphs and parables that studies thrust upon us. According to Imam Shafi ﷺ, the following things are conducive to a better memory: sitting in the company of the pious, use of *miswaak*, and abandoning useless talk. A good memory is also developed by consistently revising your course material right from the start.

- FEED THE BRAIN: The Sunnah, as always, saves the day by prescribing us foods that are not only beneficial for us overall but also work wonders for memory and concentration. These foods include dates, honey, olive oil and grapes. Honey has been given honorable mention in the Quran: "It is healing for all mankind" (16:69), and Allah ﷻ has sworn by figs and olives in Surah *At-Teen* of the 30th Parah, The Prophet ﷺ, in addition, also recommended black seed or *kalwanji* as a miracle food: "Use the black seed because it has a relief of all diseases but death". Need we look further? Take one or two tablespoons of honey in warm water in the morning to begin your day, and choose these Sunnah foods as your snacks to enhance the studying process.

- PRAY FOR YOURSELF: Finally, after man has put in all his hard work and effort, he leaves the rest to Allah ﷻ. *Du'a* is, without doubt, the strongest medium we have for attainment of all our wishes. Our beloved Prophet ﷺ said: "Du'a is the core of all worship" (Authentic). Pray hard, pray sincerely to Allah ﷻ to ease whatever difficulties you face throughout your studies. As He says in the Quran: '... and your Lord says: Call upon me, I shall answer your prayers". More importantly, have utmost faith in Him to resolve all your problems. After all, who can we trust more than Allah ﷻ? He is the only One in the universe Who never breaks anyone's trust. May Allah ﷻ ease all that ails us and grant us eternal success in this world and the Hereafter. *Ameen*.

Men too have Emotions

By M. Bint Hanif

Ibrahim ibn Sayed al Bashar Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdul Muttalib ibn Hashim – the last-born child of Rasulallah ﷺ, born to Sayyidah Mariyah al Qibtiyah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, who had been a gift from Muqawqis, the ruler of Egypt, in the sixth year of the Hijrah. Rasulallah ﷺ was overjoyed at the birth of his son Ibrahim, who, he would often show his love to, by kissing and inhaling his scent deeply as one does with a baby. When he was born, Rasulallah ﷺ came out of his house saying:

ولدي الليلة غلام فسميته بأبي إبراهيم

A boy was born to me last night; I have named him after my forefather, Ibrahim.

Ibrahim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ did not survive toddlerhood and passed away at eighteen months. His soul left his body whilst in the hands of the Rasulallah ﷺ which deeply grieved Rasulallah ﷺ.

Anas ibn Malik رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ narrates:

We entered with Rasulallah ﷺ the house of Abu Saif, the blacksmith, who was the husband of the wet nurse of Ibrahim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Rasulallah ﷺ held Ibrahim, kissed him and inhaled his scent.

We then came at another time and Ibrahim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ was breathing heavily [in the pangs of death]. Tears streamed from the eyes of Rasulallah ﷺ.

The Sahabah, seeing this emotional response from Rasulallah ﷺ, showed signs of wonder. How was it that the Prophet cried at the demise of his son!

Abdul Rahman ibn 'Awf رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said to him surprisingly, "Even you [cry], O Rasulallah?"

Their surprise was due to the misconception that crying was a show of impatience on the decree of Allah ﷻ. Rasulallah ﷺ then went on to explain that shedding tears was, in fact, not a show of impatience. It was rather the natural softening of the heart upon the loss of someone.

Rasulallah ﷺ explained, "O Ibn 'Awf! It is mercy," whilst continuously shedding tears.

This narration is an indication to the permissible expression of sorrow and crying without incurring the displeasure of Allah ﷻ.

He [Ibrahim] then breathed his last upon

which Rasulallah ﷺ lamented, "Certainly, the eye (sheds) tears and the heart grieves, but we only utter that which our Sustainer is pleased with. O Ibrahim, we are bitterly grief-stricken at your separation."

The above narration clearly solves the misconception of men expressing themselves in a permissible manner. As it is stated in one Hadith, that a man who slaps his face, rends his collar, and promotes the legacy of the Age of Ignorance (before the advent and the rise of Islam) is not from us.

Unfortunately, the concept of men being strong is promoted to such an extent that when a boy or a man is seen crying, he is immediately ridiculed with the common phrase 'Men do not cry.'

Are the men of today stronger than Rasulallah ﷺ who carried the weight of the entire Ummah on his shoulders? Do we realize the consequences of this incessant theory that we are inculcating in our youth?

Boys and men who constantly suppress their emotions generally release their stress and emotional trauma in negative ways, such as by abusing their subordinates in several ways. This can be detrimental to their mental health.

There's no argument that women are more likely to express their emotions as compared to men. From an early age, men are conditioned to believe that expressing their feelings is out of character with the male identity. Doing so could ruin their image of being strong and stoic. Specifically, men are told that crying in front of other people will threaten their masculinity.

In fact, men who experience sadness or grief are more likely to channel those feelings into different emotions that are seen as more socially acceptable. For instance, a man who is experiencing sadness or depression might be more likely to act aggressively or get

angry over something small, rather than cry.

Emotions that are associated with dominance or strength are viewed as being masculine, even if the underlying emotion fueling the behavior is different. However, when men are told to hide their emotions at all costs, those feelings have to go somewhere. Usually, they compensate by acting in a way that is more stereotypically masculine.

Part of what makes us human is our ability to feel our feelings and process our emotions. When we're happy, we want to smile and show excitement. When we are angry, our body tenses up and our voice level rises. When we are sad, we naturally want to cry.

When we avoid those emotions, it can lead to a number of consequences, including mental health disorders. Suppressing emotions can lead to depression and anxiety, yet for men especially, it can also increase their risk of suicide. Men are much more likely to commit suicide than women. In 2018 only, 3.56 times more men died due to suicide than women.

For men, being told to "man up" or "act like a man" is something they learn in childhood, and it stays with them even when they reach adulthood. Over time, men get really experienced at turning off their emotions or coping with their feelings in a way that is more acceptable for males. It creates a cycle of toxic masculinity, which can be hard to break once it becomes a habit.

As adults, it is our collective responsibility to break this toxic cultural cycle which ultimately leads to negative and dangerous behaviors starting from childhood. It is imperative that we fathom the gravity of this situation in order to create a peaceful and content society. Individuals need to realize that anger and display of muscles is not the only sign of masculinity.

Let us make the change even if it means one person at a time, as a change is a change no matter how small it may appear to be.



Mufti Shafi Usmani Sb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Shafi Sb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ Usmani belonged to the well-known Usmani family of Deoband, (a town in India). His father, Maulana Muhammad Yasin was regarded as a prominent scholar and teacher of Darul-'Uloom Deoband. He had two sons, but one passed away during childhood, and Mufti Shafi sb grew up as an only son.

Mufti Shafi Sb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ was born on the 20th of Shaban, 1314 Hijri, that is, January 1897 CE.

Interests:

Mufti Shafi Sb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ was highly fond of staying in the company of renowned scholars and Ulema of that time. Even during his childhood, he would often skip normal daily activities, and instead of playing like other kids, would prefer to sit with his teachers and elders.

Education:

When he was five, Mufti Shafi Sb رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ started

studying Nazra Quran within Darul- 'Uloom Deoband from Hafiz Mohammad Azam. Though his father had a strong wish of him becoming a hafiz e Quran, but after considering his weak health, he decided not to burden him with memorization and thus Mufti Shafi Sb ﷺ could only memorize a few *Paras*. But the portion he had memorized, he continued to revise it throughout his life. After he got free from basic Quranic education, Mufti Shafi Sb ﷺ began with basic education of the Persian language from his father, Maulana Muhammad Yaseen Sb.

Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry was taught to him by his uncle Munshi Manzoor Ahmed, and he received the expertise and knowhow of Tajweed from Qari Muhammad Yusuf Mirthi.

Arabic *Nahw* (grammar), *Surf* (morphology) and some basic books of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) were also taught to him by his father. Hence, once he had completed Quranic studies, he also ended with his Persian, Mathematics, and basic Arabic education, all within a short period of five years.

In 1330 Hijri, when he was around 16 years old, Mufti Shafi Sb ﷺ was enrolled in the Arabic Department of Darul-'Uloom Deoband and began the study of *Usool-e-Fiqh*.

Teachers:

The environment in which he was brought up was deemed as full of knowledge and piety. Following this wonderful environment, he was lucky enough to receive his education from widely accepted and highly knowledgeable teachers of the era.

Some of his teachers include Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri, Mufti Aziz Ur Rehman, Maulana Shabir Ahmed Usmani, Maulana Ahmed; son of Maulana Qasim Nanotwi.

Passion for Reading:

Mufti Shafi Sb ﷺ was always in the pursuit of knowledge. And during his period of learning

and education, the way he preferred reading over all other activities was exemplary. After he had started with proper education, Darul-'Uloom's library became a home to him, where he would spend most of his time.

The terms 'Takrar' and 'Mutal'ah'

In the education system of religious seminaries (Madrassas), there are two approaches or two methods of learning the daily lessons in the evenings. These methods are termed as *Takrar* and *Mutal'ah*. In *Mutal'ah* one reads the syllabus book or any other related books that help one in preparing the lesson for next day.

Whereas in *Takrar*, morning lessons are repeated and revised amongst small groups of classmates. In this way, students remember their everyday lessons in a thoroughgoing and systematic manner.

Depth in reading:

In his student life, Mufti Shafi sb was famous for his marvelous and wonderful way of delivering *Takrar*, and boys would love to repeat and revise their lessons with him. The time of *Takrar* and *Mutal'ah* would be in the evening, and sometimes it would go on for so long after Isha that midnight would pass. Mufti Mufti Shafi Sb ﷺ himself states that:

"My mother would often be angry at me for not reaching home on time. Whenever I reached, whether in the midnight, she would be waiting for me to heat the dinner and present it before me. I would feel guilty by her long wait, therefore after a lot of pleading and imploring, we agreed that she would not wait for me and would just place my food in the kitchen, which I would eat after returning from the Madrassa. In cold weather, the curry would freeze to the top of the plate, and a watery liquid would be left at the bottom of the bowl. I would drink that watery curry and go to sleep."

Focus on education:

Deoband was ancestral town of Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله, and almost all his relatives and loved ones resided there. But during the time he gained education, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله could not visit them. His complete focus was on his education. If he got any spare time out of his study period, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله would love spending it with his teacher, Shaikul-Hind Maulana Mehmood ul Hassan رحمته الله.

First meeting with Hakeemul-Ummah:

Maulana Muhammad Yaseen, Mufti Shafi Sb's father, had remained a class fellow of Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته الله, yet regarded him as higher in rank than himself, and would respect him from the core of his heart. Maulana Yaseen رحمته الله would often travel to Thana Bhawan (a town in India) to visit Maulana Thanwi رحمته الله. On one such visit, he took his son along with him. Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was only nine years old at the time.

It was his first meeting, but who knew that in upcoming days, a strong connection would form between Mufti Shafi Usmani رحمته الله and his Sheikh, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته الله.

A dilemma:

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was in a complete dilemma when he was given an option to choose Philosophy as a subject in his syllabus.

Earlier, in Darul- 'Uloom Deoband, some teachers did not consider the study of Philosophy as good, and they believed that this subject diverts the minds of students from gaining pure and proper Islamic education. Whereas, a few of them supported the idea of philosophical education and were of the opinion that Philosophy helps Madrassa students in enhancing their thinking abilities, and as a result, students can easily present Islamic teachings before philosophers in philosophical terminology and language. Considering this situation, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was in a quandary but he recalled someone

who could solve his problem. He thus travelled towards Thana Bhawan, where he was to meet the revivalist of fourteenth century.

Second meeting with Hakeemul-Ummah and Philosophical education:

After listening to Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله account carefully, Hakeemul-Ummah Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمته الله replied in the following words:

"It is compulsory for you to receive philosophical education so as to identify the wrong assertions against Islam made by un-Islamic philosophers."

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was satisfied with this reply and decided studying philosophy for the sake of Allah ﷻ, with an aim to promote Islamic teachings in a better way.

Hence, after he returned to Dar-ul-'Uloom Deoband, he became a disciple of Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمته الله in the subject of philosophy.

Interest in literature:

The poetic interest and literary skills he inherited were from none other than his own father, who always loved to familiarize him with poetry and good pieces of literature while teaching him. The real spirit however was invoked in him by his teacher, Sheik-ul-Hind Maulana Mehmood ul Hassan Deobandi, who focused on enhancing the literary skills of his students. Sheik-ul-Hind often promoted him to say stanzas in Arabic which he always readily accepted.

Alongside Arabic and Persian, he also displayed a good humor and wonderful caliber in Urdu literature. Hence, he continued to write both poetry and prose in all three languages.

Affiliation with Sheik-ul-Hind رحمته الله:

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was in the good books of every teacher at Dar-ul- 'Uloom Deoband, and especially possessed a good affiliation with Sheik-ul-Hind Mahmood ul Hassan رحمته الله,

who wholeheartedly admired him. During his period of learning at Dar ul- 'Uloom, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله once requested Sheikh-ul-Hind that he may take him under his spiritual supervision i.e., to permit him for Bay'ah, (oath of allegiance) but Sheikh-ul-Hind رحمته الله declined by saying that he should focus on his studies, and once he completes his education, he could opt for Bay'ah.

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was in his final year of studies (Daura-e-Hadith), when Sheikh-ul-Hind planned a journey towards Hijaz (Saudi Arabia) for the sake of pilgrimage. Since Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله had a strong desire to study the books of final year from Sheik-ul-Hind, he skipped his papers for that year and waited for Sheikh-ul-Hind رحمته الله to return. This was his level of affiliation with him. Afterwards, when Sheik-ul-Hind رحمته الله could not return early due to some reasons, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله began studying his final year books with Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri رحمته الله.

Graduation:

It was 1336 Hijri and Mufti Shafi رحمته الله was only twenty-two years old, when he completed his graduation from Dar-ul- 'Uloom Deoband, and his teachers chose him to continue teaching in the same seminary where he had studied.

Practical life begins!

After he had graduated, he started teaching at Dar-ul- 'Uloom Deoband. The following year, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was married to the daughter of a person of Ansari family of Deoband.

At first, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله declined to take any kind of salary from the Madrassa, and thus made his earnings out of other skills (for example, he had gained expertise in medicine and was also a good calligrapher). Later, he realized that teaching is something that requires full focus, without distractions.

Realizing this, he left all other sources of earning and only accepted a meagre amount of money that he would get from the

administration of Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband for teaching there.

He takes Bay'ah

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was concerned about his Islah since the time he was a student. Whereas at that time, Sheik-ul-Hind رحمته الله had told him to wait until his graduation. But when such a time came, Sheikh-ul-Hind رحمته الله was imprisoned at the hands of the British army, and thus Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله was unable to take an oath of allegiance with him.

Mufti Shafi رحمته الله now searched for someone who could be his Sheikh until his teacher Sheikh-Hind رحمته الله returned. Though, he planned only to continue Bay'ah till Sheikh-Hind's arrival, he never expected that this Bay'ah would prove to be forever and would leave remarks that will be long-lasting.

Anyways, once again, Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله made a visit towards Thana Bhawan (for the third time) to meet his future Sheikh, and he took the pledge at his hand.

Sheikh-ul-Hind Returns

After Sheikh-ul-Hind returned to Deoband, he took the pledge of the spiritual journey at his hand in the year 1339 H, and constantly remained in his company until he passed away. After his departure (Allah have mercy on him), Mufti Shafi Usmani رحمته الله consulted Hakeem ul-Ummah, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi once again, and consequently renewed his pledge.

Issuance of Fatawa:

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله had a complete affinity to jurisprudence and fatawa from the moment he began to teach at Darul-'Uloom, and due to his interest in Fiqh, he would frequently assist his teacher Mufti 'Aziz al-Rahman, the head of the Fatwa Department (Allah Almighty have mercy on him), in compiling work. Then, when Allah Almighty took Mufti Aziz al-Rahman's soul, the other teachers appointed Mufti Shafi Usmani رحمته الله as the head of the Fatwa Department at Darul- 'Uloom Deoband, in

order to fill the void that was created with the departure of Shaykh 'Aziz al-Rahman (Allah sanctify his secret). Mufti Shafi رحمته الله maintained this prominent post from the year 1350 H till 1362 H, and in this period of twelve years, his fatwas spread to the eastern and western regions of earth.

Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله wrote over 40,000 fatwas in this period. A few of them have been published in eight large volumes under the title Imdad al-Muftin, which is no doubt a small number from amongst the huge collection preserved in the accounts of Darul- 'Uloom that have not yet been published.

The respected Sheikh continued writing fatwas after leaving Darul- 'Uloom Deoband. It is very unfortunate that he did not record his fatwas for a known period of around 9 years. After his migration to Pakistan, he founded at its (then) capital a religious institute called Dar-ul- 'Uloom Karachi in the year 1371 H, and it was then that his fatwas were again recorded in its accounts. Their number today reaches around 80,000, and this includes only those issued from the year 1381 H to the end of his life; besides the oral questions which he would respond to in private conversations and over the phone throughout the night and day.

The Founding of Darul - 'Uloom Karachi:

When Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله moved to Karachi, he found that in such a large city, there was no prominent Islamic institute that could cater to the needs of religious education of the Muslims. Thus, he decided to give it a start. Consequently, he founded Darul- 'Uloom Karachi in the year 1370 H which is considered to be one of the greatest institutions for religious sciences in Pakistan. Allah (Exalted is He) honored his sincere intentions with acceptance. The institution grew larger and larger and its capacity for accepting students from all around the world augmented.

His Works:

The respected Sheikh has authored many

beneficial books whose number surpasses one hundred, most of them in the Urdu language, on the sciences of Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, jurisprudence, spirituality, literature, theology, social etiquettes and other [topics]. At this juncture, we will list only a few of them in the words of Sheikh-ul-Islam Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani (*in summarized form*):

1. *Ma'arif al-Qur'an*. This is a valuable exegesis of the Noble Qur'an which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled in the Urdu language in 8 large volumes. In it, he commented on the meanings of the Noble Qur'an in an easy and pleasant format.
2. *Jawahir al-Fiqh*: This is a valuable collection of juristic treatises which the Sheikh رحمته الله wrote on topics on which discussions were common; the subject either being not found in the common books of jurisprudence or they have only a brief mention in them with the possibility of multiple interpretations, and thus there was no clarity about them in the books of jurisprudence.
3. *Khatam al-Nubuwwah*: This is a comprehensive book in refutation of the Dajjalistic Qadiyanis in which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله established the belief of the finality of prophethood upon our Prophet, the Beloved صلوات الله عليه, with all its proofs from the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah and the consensus of the Ummah, and then he refuted all the doubts produced by the false claimants to prophethood in a manner that will satisfy the ignorant and will take him out of the mires of doubt into the liberation of certainty.
4. *Sirat Khatam al-Anbiya*: This is a brief book comprising of the biography of our Messenger صلوات الله عليه, with all important events, which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled in a concise and pleasant way which instils love for the Noble Prophet صلوات الله عليه and his righteous and pure companions رحمته الله.

5. *Alat Jadidah*: This is a valuable book in which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled the rulings pertaining to modern inventions which did not exist at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, nor in the time of the mujtahid jurists, on which no explicit text relates to their juristic rulings, like prayer on a microphone, reciting the Noble Qur'an on radio, cassette and video, vaccination when fasting, blood transfusions, theatres, and giving testimony via the phone etc. The truth is that this great task would not have been expected but from our respected Shaykh, the Mufti, who Allah has given a powerful ability in jurisprudence and a firm understanding in deriving laws from its sources and a sound temperament in comprehending their secrets.
6. *Ahkam al-Aradi*: This is a book in which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled the rulings of government land, endowed land and private land in all its types, and what is obligatory on them from the 'ushr and kharaj taxes. In it, he explained the system of our upright religion, and he clarified the laws specific to the lands of India and Pakistan. He included within it a short summary of the history of the conquests of India at the hands of the Muslims, so that the position of these Indian lands, as they relate to the rulings of religion become clear.
7. *Imdad al-Muftin*: This is a collection of some of his fatwas which he issued in the period of his residence at Dar al-'Uloom Deoband. It consists of eight large volumes, and it is, as we mentioned, a small number of his fatwas whose numbers today reach around 100,000. Most of these fatwas are in simple Urdu from which every 'alim and commoner can benefit. Some of them comprise of important detailed academic discussions, which if we were to isolate, could become separate books.
8. *Tawatara fi Nuzul al-Masih*: This is a short

treatise in the Arabic language which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled upon the instruction of the imam, the hafiz, Shaykh Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri رحمته الله, in which he collected all the hadiths and narrations wherein the Prophet ﷺ foretold the signs of the Messiah (upon him peace) and his attributes so that the mendacity of the false Qadiyani prophet's claim that he is the awaited Messiah becomes patently obvious. May Allah save all the Muslims from his evil.

9. *Hadiyyat al-Mahdiyyin fi Ayat Khatam al-Nabiyyin*: This is another treatise in refutation of the liar al-Qadiyani which Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله compiled upon the instruction of his teacher Allamah Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri.
10. *Thamarat al-Awraq*: This is a small collection of articles on literature, history, spirituality, social etiquettes and other sciences in the Urdu language. Mufti Shafi Sb رحمته الله collected them from many different books while he was studying them. Every man will find in it what suits his temperament and nourishes his sight.

Although his books are a lot in number, we have only mentioned a few of them here. All his books, articles, Fatwas, and other services that were rendered to Islam have truly borne fruit. His services to the Muslim Ummah are beyond words.

Death

After spending his entire life in the service of Islam and striving day and night to please Allah Almighty, he withdrew from this mortal world in the night of the 11th of Shawwal of the year 1396 H, corresponding to October of the year 1976 A.D. He was buried in the graveyard of Dar-ul-'Uloom Karachi.

May Allah Almighty show expansive mercy on him and accept his efforts. *Ameen*



Ramadan Routines: Mufti Rafi Usmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ & Mufti Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم

Compiled by Mufti Salim Khan and
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The Ramadan Routine of Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ

The captivating personality of Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has fascinated every individual who had met him even for a short while. While there are certainly many personalities in this world who leave deep impressions on one's heart and mind at the very first meeting, there are only a select few who make these impressions long-lasting such that each and every meeting leaves a new effect on the heart. Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was one such personality, and meetings with him rebut the following the couplet:

گاہے گاہے بس اب یہی ہو کیا
تم سے مل کر بہت خوشی ہو کیا

Anyone meeting Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ would experience delight at every opportunity of meeting him. Those who loved him include a large number of disciples

and an even larger number of students who acquired the good fortune of studying under him. In view of this, there are many individuals who are eager to learn about Hadhrat's رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ biography and life events.

A particular character-trait of Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ was his penchant for excellent organization and management, and he spent his entire life in a very systematic and organized manner, with great adherence to daily routines. Consequently, Hadhrat's رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ daily routine in Ramadan was also very systematic and well-organized.

At *Suhur* Time

Hadhrat Mufti Sahib رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ did not have a habit of staying awake the entire night in Ramadan. He would retire to bed after completing his night-time routines and wake up at *tahajjud* time, wherein he would remain busy in *nafl* prayers. After finishing *nafl* prayers and other daily practices, he would partake *suhur*. After

suhur, he would go to the mosque for *Fajr* prayer.

At the Time of *Fajr* Prayer

After *Fajr* prayer, Mufti Sahib رحمته الله would sit in the mosque and recite the Holy Qur'an. He was very particular about this routine of reciting the Qur'an, which would continue for about an hour-and-a-half. Thereafter he would not perform *Ishrāq* prayer at its earliest time, rather would wait a while and then offer it. After *Ishrāq* prayer, Hadhrat would return home.

Rest

After returning home, Hadhrat رحمته الله would lie down to rest for some time. After waking up, he would perform certain necessary activities, after which he would go to the mosque.

Special Routine Related to Recitation of the Qur'an in Ramadan

Hadhrat had a habit of increasing the recitation of the Qur'an in the blessed month of Ramadan. In the words of Hadhrat's رحمته الله son Mufti Zubair Ashraf Usmani دامت بركاتهم: "He would be very particular about recitation of the Holy Qur'an during the blessed month of Ramadan. Respected father رحمته الله would say regarding other months that he would recite one Juz every day, i.e., when the month would come to an end, he would have completed the recitation of the entire Qur'an. He would also diligently read *Munājāt-e-Maqbūl* every day and would also have a daily routine of reciting *adhkār* and *tasbīhāt*. However, in the blessed month of Ramadan, he would recite the Qur'an much more than in other months. He would first recite the Qur'an after *Fajr*. Since he was a *Hafiz*, he would recite the Qur'an from memory to someone. Then he would again recite the Qur'an after *Zuhr* prayer. There was a time when respected father رحمته الله would complete the recitation of the Qur'an in *Tarāwīḥ* prayers. He has led *Tarāwīḥ* prayers in *Dar al-Ūlūm*'s mosque as well as *Nu'man* Mosque, which was located at Lasbela Chowk near our grandfather

Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمته الله's house. In the time when he used to lead *Tarāwīḥ* prayers, he would recite the Qur'an after *Zuhr* in *nafl* prayers as well as outside prayers and would thereafter perform his duties in office".

Iṣlāḥī Gathering

After reciting the Qur'an after *Zuhr* and completing his office duties, Hadhrat would conduct an *Iṣlāḥī* gathering in the office itself. Someone from among Hadhrat's رحمته الله disciples would read a book, such as *Ḥayāt-e-Muftī-e-A'zam* or some other book, and Hadhrat رحمته الله would elucidate upon some of the passages of the book. This gathering would be attended by Hadhrat's disciples as well as other people. This session would last about half an hour to forty-five minutes. Since this gathering would take place near the end of *Zuhr* time, i.e., Hadhrat would have completed all other necessary activities before it, he would head home after it. He would then rest for a while if there was some time before *'Asr* prayer. Otherwise, he would perform ablution and head to the mosque.

After *'Asr* Prayer

After *'Asr* prayer, Hadhrat رحمته الله would have *dawr* of the Holy Qur'an with someone, i.e., he would recite the Qur'an from memory to someone. Thereafter he would recite supplications from *Munājāt-e-Maqbūl* and would remain busy with supplications, etc. until *iftar* time.

Iftar in the Mosque

Hadhrat had a habit of partaking *iftar* in the mosque and he was diligent about this. In the words of Mufti Zubair Ashraf (may Allah protect him): "Sometimes when his family members would request him to partake *iftar* at home, he would do so. However, he liked to have *iftar* in the mosque. We would prepare his tray and send it to the mosque. He would instruct us to send extra food so that he could share it with others as well. In this manner, quite a number of people would join him in *iftar*. It was part of his temperament to have

iftar together with the common people in the mosque. He was not particular about the food items at *iftar* and would happily partake of whatever was cooked at home”.

After Maghrib

After *iftar* in the mosque, Hadhrat رحمته would perform maghrib prayer, after which he would continue to offer lengthy *awwābīn* prayers in the mosque itself. Thereafter he would return home and have a small meal.

Habit Regarding Traveling During Ramadan

Since Ramadan is a month of blessings and mercy, every Muslim should try his best to remain focused in acquiring the effulgence and blessings of this blessed month by being regular in good deeds and worship. Our elders had the same habit. They would deprioritize other activities during the month of Ramadan. The Grand Mufti of Pakistan, Mufti Muhammad Rafi‘ Usmani رحمته, would thus avoid traveling during this blessed month. In the words of Mufti Zubair Ashraf رحمته: “It was a long-standing habit of respected father رحمته that he would suspend any travels, visits or any works outside *Dār al-‘Ulūm* during the blessed month of Ramadan. He would also advise others to reduce personal visits during the month of Ramadan and would advise us to complete all Eid shopping before Ramadan so that we would not have much need to go out of *Dār al-‘Ulūm* during Ramadan, and to only continue the routine of studying and teaching during this blessed month. With regards to gatherings and talks organized during Ramadan or *Khatm al-Qur’an* gatherings, while he would sometimes take part in them, personally he would not like participating in them. Now it has been years upon years that he has completely stopped attending such gatherings. On such occasions, he would often narrate the following words of our paternal grandfather (Mufti Muhammad Shafi‘ Usmani (*quddisa sirruhu*)): “These days of Ramadan are not for gatherings or lengthy talks. These talks

are conducted before Ramadan so that one gets *tawfiq* for worship”. He used to say that people organize extended gatherings in the odd nights (of the last ten days of Ramadan), with lengthy talks taking place on the nights of *Khatm al-Qur’an*. If these nights are spent in these activities, when will one get the *tawfiq* for worship? This is why the *Khatm al-Qur’an* talk in *Dār al-‘Ulūm* is kept very brief. The practice in *Dār al-‘Ulūm* since our grandfather’s times has been to limit the *Khatm al-Qur’an* talk to ten to fifteen minutes followed by a brief *du‘ā*. I have never seen respected father deliver a lengthy talk on such occasions. He would lead the Tarawih prayer himself, deliver the talk himself and then make the *du‘ā* himself. The talk would be very brief in which people would be advised: “These nights are for worship. Do not hold gatherings in these nights, nor lengthy talks. These nights are not for these things. Concentrate on your individual worship in these nights.”

Special Habit of Asking About Wellbeing of Others in Ramadan

Along with Hadhrat Mufti Sahib’s رحمته routine of increased recitation of Qur’an and supplications in Ramadan, he would also diligently ask about the wellbeing of his family members. If he learned of some difficulty faced by any of his acquaintances, family members or anyone associated with *Dār al-‘Ulūm* or came to know of someone who deserved financial assistance, he would immediately step forward to help them. This practice of helping people in distress and providing financial assistance to the needy was his habit in everyday life as well, but it would be observed much more in Ramadan.

After ‘Ishā and Tarawih

After ‘Ishā and Tarawih, Hadhrat رحمته would return home and have a light meal. Though he would eat after *iftar*, it was very less. He would therefore have something after Tarawih as well. Thereafter he would sit with his children and other household members and have light conversations with them.

After this, Hadhrat ﷺ would retire to bed and then wake up at *tahajjud* time.

Hadhrat Shaykh al-Islam Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani's دامت برکاتہم Routine in Ramadan

The All-Embracing Personality of Shaykh al-Islam Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم

In our present times, Hadhrat Shaykh al-Islam Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani دامت برکاتہم possesses such an all-embracing personality that his actions, books, words in any gathering or conversation are viewed in high esteem around the world and receive universal acclaim and acceptance. This is the reason Hadhrat's gatherings (whether in Ramadan or outside Ramadan) are *Alhamdulillah* sought by many people, who express their enthusiasm for being in his company. Among the fundamental reasons for this widespread acclaim and acceptance are Hadhrat's دامت برکاتہم traits of balanced-mindedness, God-consciousness and purity, speaking out the truth, judiciousness, harmony-seeking nature, equal expertise in religious as well as worldly knowledge, paying due consideration to the addressee and being an inheritor of the scholarly heritage of the elders of the Ummah. Scholars as well as lay people trust his opinions. Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم is seen ever-busy in spreading goodness through teaching, publishing his research, delivering talks and reminders, etc., in Ramadan as well as outside Ramadan. However, in the month of Ramadan, Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم suspends all travels and completely turns his attention towards delivering reminders, writing, dhikr and worship. No moment of Hadhrat's time is devoid of dhikr and worship. As such, how Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم spends the entire month of Ramadan and what activities he performs at what time is certainly something from which it is hoped that many people can benefit. For this, a comprehensive schedule of Hadhrat's routine in Ramadan is being presented, in order, from the time of suhur until after

Tarawih.

At the Time of Suhur

Hadhrot Shaykh al-Islam دامت برکاتہم usually stays awake the entire night in the month of Ramadan. Most of the night is spent in recitation of the Qur'an, nafl prayers and dhikr. At around 3 a.m., he performs *qiyām al-layl* and thereafter remain busy supplicating to Allah until suhur time. He usually eats eggs in suhur, and thereafter prepares for Fajr prayer.

At Fajr Time

After performing Fajr, Hadhrot continues his daily routine in the mosque itself by remaining busy with recitation of the Qur'an and dhikr. He usually recites the Qur'an from a copy of *Āsān Tarjamā-e-Qur'ān*. If some commentary-related or translation-related point comes to his mind during recitation, he notes it on this copy. After completing his post-Fajr routine, Hadhrot offers *ishrāq* prayer and then returns home.

Rest

After returning home, Hadhrot rests. Since he remained awake the entire previous night engaged in writing, dhikr, recitation of the Qur'an, prayer and supplication, he sleeps until 12 noon.

Increased Recitation of the Qur'an

After waking up around 12 noon, Hadhrot engages in recitation of the Qur'an. Here, it is necessary to clarify that Hadhrot دامت برکاتہم recites one Juz of the Qur'an every day outside Ramadan, whereas in Ramadan it is increased many times over. In Ramadan, Hadhrot is engaged in much increased dhikr, recitation of the Qur'an and supplications. He has been observed reciting the Qur'an until Zuhr time; thereafter, he prepares for Zuhr prayer.

From Zuhr until 'Asr

In the month of Ramadan, the time between *Zuhr* and *'Asr* is, in a way, dedicated to seekers of self-reformation. One day, some

of the seekers invited Hadhrat to have *iftar* with them. At this Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم replied: "I strictly adhere to three things in the month of Ramadan and do not go against them:

1. I always have suhur and *iftar* at home. I do not attend *iftar* parties.
2. I do not travel in the month of Ramadan.
3. I do not entertain anyone after 'Isha.

Thereafter he said: "Whatever you want to ask, ask in this time between *Zuhr* and 'Asr."

Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم allocates the time from *Zuhr* until 'Asr to office work and seekers of self-reformation. While walking to or coming back from the mosque, some seekers meet him while others ask for his advice. While walking, Hadhrat is always engaged in dhikr. Near 'Asr time, Hadhrat goes to the mosque directly from his office. After performing 'Asr prayers in the mosque, he goes back home.

Routine between *Zuhr* and *Asr* in the Last Ten Days of Ramadan

In last ten days of Ramadan, immediately after *Zuhr*, Hadhrat delivers a talk related to self-reformation in the mosque itself, which usually lasts about one hour. This talk is attended by those sitting in *i'tikāf* in the mosque, Hadhrat's disciples as well as other people. After the talk, Hadhrat دامت برکاتہم goes to his office. In the office, Hadhrat first gets his *tafsīr* of the Qur'an recorded. This is now available in written form under the title "*Āsān Tafsīr-e-Qur'an*", with four volumes having been published and work ongoing on the remaining volumes. After this, Hadhrat attends to other tasks in his office, such as those related to his duties as the President of the *Wifāq al-Madāris Al-'Arabiya* Pakistan and the President of *Dār al-'Ulūm* Karachi. At the same time, he receives many letters from around the world, which he replies to. Hadhrat writes the reply to each letter by himself and even puts it back in the envelope by himself. Sometimes, those witnessing the labour Hadhrat has to undergo every day

feel pity for him. During this time, Hadhrat also responds to phone calls during a certain time. Individuals from various parts of the world call and Hadhrat answers their questions. Individuals from far and wide also come to meet him in his office, and Hadhrat meets them during this time. Sometimes, if someone wants to discuss something personal with Hadhrat, he says to those in office: "Brothers, we need some privacy". At this, those present leave the room. When the discussion ends, Hadhrat calls everyone back.

Throughout this time, individuals who had come with the intention of benefiting from Hadhrat's company are seen keen to learn from him.

One Hour Before 'Asr

In the last hour before 'Asr, Hadhrat addresses those present. This talk is related to some point of self-reformation. People also ask questions at the end and Hadhrat replies. This year (Ramadan 1444 AH), Hadhrat explained passages from Hadhrat Dr Abd al-Hayy Arifi's ﷺ book "*Başā'ir Ḥakīm al-Ummah*".

Routine From 'Asr Until Maghrib

After 'Asr, Hadhrat sits in the garden in his home and recites the Qur'an. Often, Hadhrat's respected wife also sits in the garden with him and recites the Qur'an. Thereafter *du'ā* is made from half-an-hour before *iftar*. About fifteen minutes before *iftar*, all grandchildren of the house sit together with them and also make supplications, and also ask about each other's wellbeing.

Routine for *Iftar*

Hadhrat partakes of whatever is available for *iftar*, though he usually does not eat fried food, so pakoras, samosas, etc. are avoided. He likes the gravy made at home, *lassi* and *dahī baray*. Nowadays, Hadhrat eats very little.

From Maghrib to Isha

After performing Maghrib prayer in the

mosque, Hadhrat offers *nafl awwābīn* prayers and then remains busy with extended *du'ās*. After returning home after Maghrib, Hadhrat remains in his room until *'Isha*, wherein he lies down to rest.

From Isha Until Tarawih

After rest, Hadhrat goes to the mosque for Isha prayer. After Isha and tarawih prayer, Hadhrat engages in extended *du'as*.

Routine of Sitting Together with Household Members

In normal days, all household members are busy with their respective responsibilities, so they sit together at night, around 10 p.m. or 11p.m., and this gathering lasts about an hour to an hour-and-a-half. Once a week, Hadhrat's daughter visits them, so all of them eat together. If someone in the house could not meet Hadhrat throughout the day, Hadhrat enquires from them the next day. In Ramadan however, all household members have *iftar* together and again sit together after Tarawih, which is something necessary for children's good upbringing. When Hadhrat *دامت برکاتهم* sits together with household members, together with normal conversations, Hadhrat also reads a book. No moment of Hadhrat's *دامت برکاتهم* time is devoid of dhikr, reading or writing.

Routine at Night

Hadhrot goes home after Tarawih and rests for about half-an-hour. After rest, Hadhrot takes tea with some light snack, such as a sandwich. Then Hadhrot becomes busy with some scholarly tasks, such as reviewing the Hadith work "*Al-Mudawwanah Al-Jāmi'ah*". During this time, Hadhrot also has conversations with household members for about half-an-hour. Thereafter Hadhrot engages in dhikr, recitation of the Qur'an, prayer and worship until about 2:30am to 3am. Hadhrot remains awake throughout the nights of Ramadan.

Routine for Seekers of Self-Reformation
Last Ramadan, Hadhrot *دامت برکاتهم* instructed a

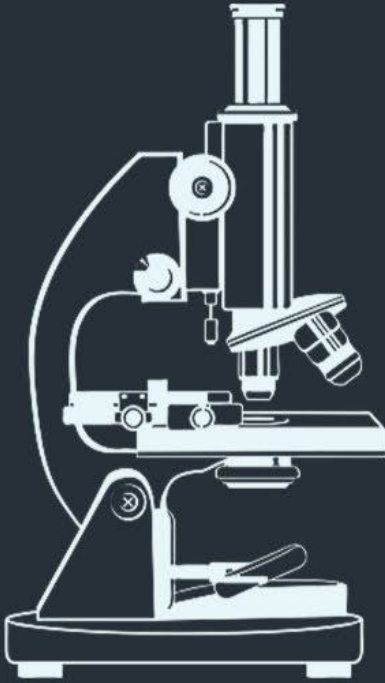
routine for seekers of self-reformation, which is presented below for all to benefit. Every Muslim should try to adopt these adhkar and other acts of worship in their daily lives, especially since personal good deeds are so rarely witnessed in our times that even in Ramadan, it feels as if Ramadan hasn't even arrived. By adopting the below good deeds in one's daily routine, *inshā-Allah* one will be able to witness the blessings and fruits of Ramadan with one's own eyes.

1. Recitation of the Qur'an, at least five Juz. This should not be reduced in Ramadan.
2. Four *tasbīhāt*:
100 times *Istighfār*
100 times *Ṣalawāt*
100 times *سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ*
100 times *سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ*
3. 100 times fourth kalimah –
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِي وَ يُمِيتُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
4. At least 500 times and at most 1000 times dhikr *nafi ithbāt*, with a light *ḍarb* so that we develop a habit of doing dhikr. The *ḍarb* should not be considered the objective. It is advised merely to help a *mubtadi* (beginner) to get used to dhikr.
5. *Murāqaba* of death for five minutes. While in solitude, one should imagine: "My soul is departing from my body. I am being bathed. My funeral prayer is being prayed. I am being laid down in the grave, etc."
6. Along with this, to read Hadhrot *Hakīm al-Ummah* Hadhrot Thanwi's *رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ* spiritual discourses (*Mawā'iz*) and instructive utterances (*Malfūzāt*).

May Allah Most High grant us *tawfiq* to mold our lives completely according to the Islamic tradition based on this way of life of our elders. *Āmīn Yā Rabb al-Ālamīn*.

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Memoirs of
Hazrat Mufti Taqi
Usmani دامت برکاتہم

Translation: Kaiser Nizamani

It may seem pertinent to provide a brief introduction to the Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam, whose tours I have previously mentioned, and to address a question that arises in most minds: "Is the current Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam the same as it was back then"? However, at this point, I am writing memories from my childhood and adolescence, so delving into that story here seems out of place. *Inshā Allah*, a mention of that will come at its appropriate time.

End of the Academic Year

Due to travels to Lahore, Deoband, and the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, I remained absent from Dār al-'Ulūm for over two months, leading to a significant setback to my education. Although I continued attending classes in Jamiya Ashrafiya and Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband for a period, this was obviously no substitute for a structured curriculum. Upon my return, there were barely three months left before the annual exams, requiring considerable effort to compensate for the lost time. My results for the year, as recorded in the Gazette of Dār al-'Ulūm for Ramadan 1374 AH to Shaban 1375 AH, equivalent to May 1955 to April 1956, were as follows:

Subject	Marks
<i>Kanz al-Daqa'iq</i>	51
<i>Al-Balāghah Al-Wāḍihah</i>	50
<i>Translation of the Noble Qur'an</i>	50
<i>Sharḥ Jāmī</i>	49
<i>Maqāmāt Ḥarīrī</i>	46
<i>Qutbī</i>	41
<i>Usūl al-Shāshī</i>	45
<i>Sharḥ Tahdhīb</i>	44
Handwriting	45

It is noted in my diary that Mufti Sabir Ali took our exam of *Kanz al-Daqa'iq*; Hadhrat Mawlana Sahban Mahmud took the exams of *Al-Balāghah Al-Wāḍihah* and Handwriting; the exam of translation of the Noble Qur'an was conducted by Mawlana Muhammad Matīn Khatīb; Mawlana Ziyarat Gul (who later changed his name to Abdul Haq at our respected father's recommendation) took our exam of *Sharḥ Jāmī*. The exam of *Maqāmāt Ḥarīrī* consisted of a written paper. Mawlana Badī al-Zaman took our exam of *Sharḥ Tahdhīb*, Mufti Wali Hasan of *Qutbī*, while Mawlana Fazal Muhammad took our exam of *Usūl al-Shāshī*. May Allah Most High have mercy on them all.

Practice Exercises in Tajwīd

I was troubled by a sense of inadequacy because I hadn't completed a formal reading of the Noble Qur'an with a teacher. After reading the first seven Juz with my teacher in childhood, I had completed the rest on my own. As a result, there were quite a few shortcomings in my pronunciation. To rectify this, I practiced Tajwīd under several Qāris during my study in Dār al-'Ulūm. The first was the late Qāri Muhammad Ilyas, who was the son of our respected father's classmate Hadhrat Qāri Muhammad Yusuf, and brother-in-law of our brother respected Muhammad Razi. He would conduct practice exercises in *Qirā'at* at Dār al-'Ulūm. I studied Jamāl al-Qur'an under him and began introductory lessons in *Qirā'at* from Surah Yusuf. Later, when Hadhrat Qāri Abdul Wahab Makkit was assigned these classes in Dār al-'Ulūm, I continued practicing under him. I still remember this point from his lessons, that according to one riwāyah in the *Qirā'at* of Hafs, *ishmām* is done in only one place in the entire Qur'an, which is in the letter "ن" of the verse *مَا لَكَ لَا تَأْمَنَّا* of Surah Yusuf. In reciting this "ن", the lips are curved similar to when reciting the *ḍammah* ((' , but the *ḍammah* is not pronounced.

After him was Hadhrat Qāri Hamid Hasan t, who was renowned in those days for his melodious recitation. He was an elder with a very sensitive disposition and refined taste. If there was even a slight wrinkle on his bedsheets, he would be unable to sleep. His room looked as if it belonged to a Nawab from Oudh. He remained unmarried throughout his life but kept a pet cat which was his source of home entertainment. He played with it like children play. When it died, he was seen crying with tears in his eyes. He was an expert in several styles of Qur'anic recitation, and his recitation would mesmerize listeners. I sought to benefit from him as well, but as sensitive as his temperament was, he was equally quick to be displeased and become stern. I recited to him for a day or two, but then he became angered by some impropriety of mine and scolded me. After this, I could not muster the courage to approach him again and thus missed out on benefitting from him. Besides him, during my stay in Lahore, I would also visit Qāri Abdul Malik sometimes. He made me practice the last rukū' of Surah Ḥashr, and I still remember that when reciting the last phrase of the Surah "وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ", I would inadvertently do a Qalqalah when reaching the "ل" of "الْعَزِيزُ". Hadhrat Qāri Sahib t corrected me several times, but I was unable to break the habit. Eventually, Hadhrat taught me a technique: when reaching the letter "ل", I should simultaneously pronounce the letter "ع" together with it, thereby preventing the Qalqalah during the recitation of "ل". In short, he taught me in that single rukū' what might be difficult to learn in months. May Allah Most High have immense mercy on him.

Last Year at Dār al-'Ulūm Nanak Warah

From Shawwal 1375 AH, our last year at Dār al-'Ulūm Nanak Warah commenced. We were to study texts such as Hidāyah Awwalīn,

Nūr al-Anwār, Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'āni, among others, and this was the first time none of our lessons were under Hadhrat Mawlana Sahban Mahmudt. Hidāyah was assigned to Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Wali Hasan. We began Nūr al-Anwār with Hadhrat Mawlana Qāri Riayatullaht. He was an immensely popular teacher who would transform his lessons into a blossoming field of saffron with his pleasant manner of discourse. However, he was later appointed to teach a more advanced book, so Nūr al-Anwār was transferred to Hadhrat Mawlana Sahban Mahmudt, and we thus received the joy of being with our beloved teacher for at least an hour daily.

Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'āni, Sullam al-'Ulūm and Dīwan Mutanabbi were allotted to Hadhrat Mawlana Fazal Muhammad Swatit, who was a highly competent and experienced teacher. Previously, we had the opportunity to study a section of Gulistān from Hadhrat in Masjid Bab al-Islam, and a profound reverence for his personality enveloped our hearts. However, the compassion and affection he showed during those lessons were exceptional, and it is impossible for us to repay him for his favours on us. His teaching style was also quite captivating. As it happened, my crooked disposition never accorded well with Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'āni, because the logical intricacies in rhetoric often seemed tedious to my taste. This was especially after the previous year, when we had studied Al-Balāghah al-Wāḍiḥah under Hadhrat Mawlana Sahban Mahmudt with such rhythm and relish that in the process of studying that book, we had also learned how the rules of rhetoric were practically applied, and also did practice exercises in their application. After such a tasteful course, the logical rigors of Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'āni did not appeal to me. Similarly, after learning the necessary terminologies of Mantiq (Logic), I did not have much taste for delving into

its in-depth debates. Thus, I did not find much enthusiasm while studying Sullam al-'Ulūm. On the other hand, we read Dīwan Mutanabbi with much zest and enthusiasm, and Hadhratt also taught it with great diligence. I even memorized several couplets from it. But I found the most enjoyment in studying Hidāyah and Nūr al-Anwār. During the lessons of Hidāyah, Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Wali Hasant would not only elucidate rare nuances of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and Usūl al-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), but would also share impactful insights for our general nurturing and intellectual refinement. Furthermore, he would also guide us to broaden our general study and reading. I remember that noticing my enthusiasm for writing in Arabic, he said to me one day: "There is a book in the library named Fiqh al-Lughah. You should read it". This was the "Fiqh al-Lughah" of Abu Mansūr Tha'labi which I found fascinating and kept it in my perusal until I began teaching. And it helped a lot in diversifying my choice of words in speech and writing.

It is an age-old tradition in Islamic educational institutions that after attending the teacher's lecture, students form into groups to revise it. For this, they select a competent classmate from among themselves to re-deliver the teacher's lecture to them. In the terminology of our madrasas, this process is called "Takrār". The classmate who conducts Takrār strives to replicate the teacher's lecture as accurately as possible. To accomplish this, he must first thoroughly understand the lesson himself. Moreover, since Takrār is also a form of teaching, it is essential that he has the ability to effectively communicate and explain the material to the students. When there are multiple students in the class capable of doing so, they take turns to conduct Takrār. From experience, this method of Takrār has proven to be very beneficial for all students. Particularly the students who conduct Takrār get excellent

opportunities to develop their teaching skills.

There was no one my age in my class. Everyone was older than me. As a result, whenever we divided into groups for Takrār, the responsibility of conducting Takrār would always fall to the share of my older classmates, and I would mostly participate in the Takrār sessions as a listener. Often, the Takrār was led by my elder brother Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Rafi' Usmani t. Together with a robust scholarly aptitude, Allah the Exalted and Most High had also bestowed him with great eloquence. For this reason, his Takrār sessions were well-liked by students. My speech lacked fluency, and I tended to stammer while speaking. Naturally, this caused some discomfort among my peers, and I was thus rarely given the chance to lead Takrār. This also meant that I missed out on opportunities to work on and improve this weakness of mine.

I was conscious of this weakness and was also concerned about overcoming it. A godsent solution to this manifested in the form of a student from Quetta. He was much older than me, and in his Balochistani turban, looked twice my size. He enrolled in the first year of Arabic studies at Dār al-'Ulūm in the middle of the academic year. He began catching up on missed lessons with various fellow students. I offered to teach him "Arabī Kā Mu'allim". Perhaps he would not have been too keen to learn from a skinny, playful student who was half his age, but due to the memorized Arabic speeches which I would parrot in the various gatherings in Dār al-'Ulūm, a positive perception of my Arabic skills had been established among the students, despite my young age. He therefore agreed to study with me, and I began teaching him "Arabī Kā Mu'allim" in the afternoons, after the fourth period.

Instead of the bearded "student", it was the twelve-year old "teacher" who would eagerly await the appointed time. As soon as the

fourth period rang, I would promptly head over to our agreed place and wait for him. He happened to possess a rather nonchalant disposition. He would arrive leisurely, while every minute of waiting for him would bear heavily on me. At times, he would be absent without prior notice, and I would be caught in a quandary: if I went looking for him, it felt contrary to “teacherly” dignity, but if I did not, how could I forgo the joy of teaching? At long last, the eagerness to teach would defeat my “teacherly” dignity, and I would end up searching for him in various classrooms. When the appointed time elapsed, I would wait for the next day. The next day, he would arrive with his usual nonchalance, and I would not have the courage to ask him the reason for his absence. And he would open up the book as if nothing had happened. I would sometimes assign him homework to translate from Urdu to Arabic, which he would sometimes do and sometimes not. I was not in a position to question him about it, as I feared he might stop coming altogether and leave me high and dry. I needed him so that I could deliver the lecture to him and make my speech accustomed to fluency. And Alhamdulillah! The ability to convey my thoughts did gradually improve to some extent. He continued to tolerate me with patience and composure, while I would put up with his nonchalant attitude. By the time we finished the first part of “‘Arabī Kā Mu‘allim”, my speech had acquired a certain level of confidence. In this manner, he was my real teacher who taught me how to teach and speak, as it was through him that I received training to develop my speech. I do not know his present whereabouts. I cannot even recall his name with certainty (I seem to remember it might have been Akhtar Muhammad). But wherever he is, may Allah the Exalted and Most High bestow His mercies and blessings on him for the great favour he did to me.

Nevertheless, after undergoing this training course, my classmates also became willing

to have me conduct the Takrār. Due to Bhai Sahib’s eloquence, it would have been difficult for his group to endure my Takrār, so I sought out such companions as would be ready to put up with my half-baked speech. In this manner, gradually, I also began getting more opportunities of conducting Takrār, and my speech improved further as a result.

Once, an institute in Nazimabad, Karachi, organized a Speech Competition on the theme of Sīrah al-Nabiﷺ (Life of the Prophetﷺ). They invited students from various madrasas and schools to take part. The topic of the speech was to be: “The Noble Messengerﷺ was the Greatest Lawmaker”. Hadhrat Mufti Wali Hasant encouraged us to participate. Until then, my experience was limited to parroting the few-minutes-long memorized speeches in Arabic at Dār al-‘Ulūm’s internal gatherings, and I had never spoken in an external event. I was thus somewhat nervous. But Hadhrat bolstered my courage, and not only provided key points related to the topic, but even dictated some of them to me. I thereafter delivered the speech based on those points. I was thirteen years old at the time. Students much older than me had also participated in the competition. It was either a miracle of the points dictated by Hadhrat Mufti Wali Hasant, or perhaps the judges were emotionally moved by my young age, that I got the first position in the competition. As a prize, I received an Urdu translation of Imam Ghazali’s “Al-Murshid al-Amīn”. This was my first speech in a public gathering.

At that time, Dār al-‘Ulūm Karachi was graced by a bouquet of greatly learned and erudite teachers. In addition to the teachers I have mentioned above, Hadhrat Mawlana Muntakhab al-Haq, Hadhrat Mawlana Mazhar Baqa, Hadhrat Mawlana Ubayd al-Haq of Sylhet, Hadhrat Mawlana Tawsīn, Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Matīn Khatīb, Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Sabir (may Allah have mercy on them all) were all spreading the benefits

of their teachings. I was also keen to spend some time in the service of those teachers under whom I was not studying any book. To this end, I would occasionally visit them. And due to my young age, all of them would treat me with much affection, and would also guide me with insights from their teaching experiences.

Our respected fathert possessed such a personality that whenever scholars or dignitaries from all over Pakistan would visit Karachi, they would make it a point to visit him. And our respected fathert would invite them to Dār al-‘Ulūm and request them to offer some advice to the students. I thus had the opportunity to see Hadhrat Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Hasan, Hadhrat Mawlana Muhammad Idrīs Kandhlavi, Hadhrat Mawlana Khair Muhammad, Hadhrat Mawlana Ahmad Ali Lahori and Hadhrat Mawlana Ataullah Shah Bukhari (may Allah have mercy on them all) during that time. I remember that Hadhrat Mawlana Ataullah Shah Bukharit was dressed in a brick-red attire, and when someone introduced me to him as the youngest son of Hadhrat Mufti Sahibt, he picked me up in his arms.

American and British Invasion of the Suez Canal

That very year, the most harrowing news for the Islamic world was the attack on the Sinai Peninsula by Israel on 29 October 1956, followed by a joint assault on the Suez Canal by Britain and France two days later. This event had a deep impact on our respected fathert, who desired that the entire Islamic world unite in defense of Egypt. To this end, he wrote letters to various rulers and prominent figures across the Islamic world. At the same time, he also endeavoured to organize a medical delegation to provide assistance to the Muslims, and to also show Muslim solidarity against the attack.

In this context, our respected fathert wished to arrange for military training in

Dār al-‘Ulūm so that, if needed, trained volunteers could be sent to Egypt. When this could not be implemented immediately, our respected fathert contacted the Civil Defense Department and persuaded them to send their instructors to Dār al-‘Ulūm to train the students in civil defense. Consequently, a daily civil defense training program commenced after Asr prayer. Initially, Mr. Badrul Hasan Farooqi began visiting from 7 November 1956, equivalent to 3 Rabī‘ al-Thānī 1374 AH, and taught civil defense and first-aid. We students participated in that course with much zeal and zest. I was in the thirteenth year of my life, and I remember that we were under the misconception that this course will eventually convert into a training for Jihad. We would thus imagine ourselves on the battlefield in Egypt, and in our childish minds, would envision scenes of us engaged in direct confrontations with the Israeli and British soldiers. The war eventually ended after Russia’s intervention and the territories occupied by Israel were also returned, but we continued participating in the course with the same fervour, harbouring the hope that if nothing else, we might still be sent to aid the wounded of the war.

I would document all the lectures of Mr. Farooqi in a notebook and, to the best of my ability, would also participate in the practical exercises he conducted. I later handed this notebook to Mr. Farooqi for review. While I do not know whether he reviewed it or not, he returned the notebook a few days later with the following note:

“Though youngest of all the trainees yet paced with others throughout the training. Intelligent and keen student. Proved himself to be a willing worker. Remained anxious to learn more and more from his elders.

Recommended for higher training.

BH Farooqi.

Gen Instructor.”

When he wrote this note, I did not know

sufficient English to understand it. I therefore had it translated by my elder brother, Mawlana Muhammad Wali Rāzi, and had the translation inscribed beneath the note, which was as follows:

اگرچہ طلبہ میں سب سے زیادہ کمسن ہیں، لیکن تمام طلبہ کے ساتھ پوری ٹریننگ کے درمیان ساتھ ساتھ رہے، ذہین اور شوقین طالب علم ہیں، خود میں مہارت پیدا کرنے کا شوق ہے، اپنے بڑوں سے سیکھنے کے ہمیشہ "مشاق۔ اعلیٰ ٹریننگ کے لئے بھیجا جائے۔"

Though the war had already ended, this training, at least in terms of intention, had kindled in us such a passion for Jihad that we later requested our respected father to set up formal military training in Dār al-'Ulūm. He arranged for this as much as was legally possible after we moved to the new building of Dār al-'Ulūm, a mention of which might come later.

My results in that year's annual examinations were as follows:

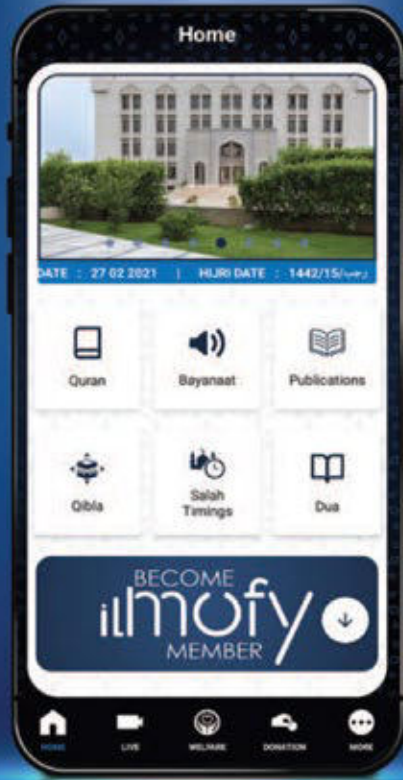
Subject	Marks
<i>Hidāyah Awwālīn</i>	51
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<i>Mukhtaṣar al-Ma'āni</i>	45
<i>Talkhīs al-Miftāḥ</i>	47
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Palestine is Freeing Us!

An apt quote posted at one of the social media forums:

"We are not freeing Palestine; Palestine is freeing us. It's freeing us from idolizing celebrities, freeing us from Western propaganda, and most of all reminding us that this dunya is temporary."





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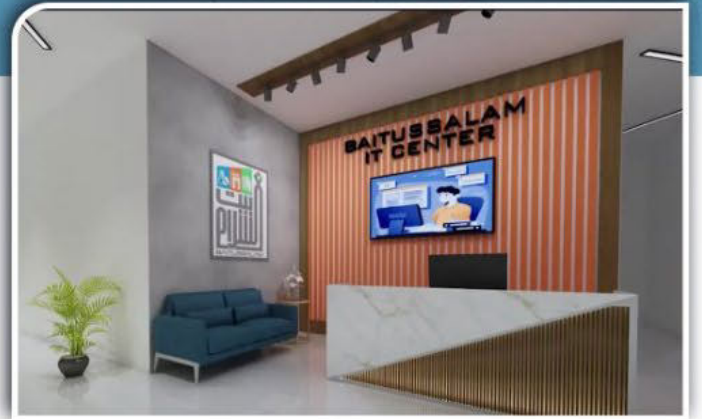
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