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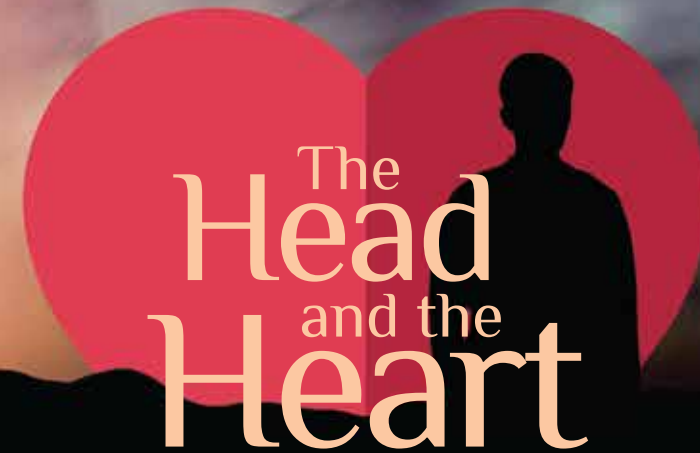
# The Intellect

Reawakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life

Al-Quran  
Surah Nisa – Part 3

Al Hadith  
Reliance on Allah ﷻ

The Awakening  
The Contentment of Heart



## The Head and the Heart

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Re-awakening to the ideals of a Blessed Life

**The Intellect**



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# Editorial

Dear Readers,  
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

“The Day when neither wealth will be of any use (to any one) nor sons, except to him who will come to Allah with a sound heart” (Ash-Shuara 26: 88-89)

*Qalb e Saleem* is a sound and healthy heart. According to Sayyidina Ibn-e-Abbas رضي الله عنه it is a heart which testifies to the *Kalima*, absolutely clean from impurities of shirk. The same view is held by Mujahid رضي الله عنه and Hassan Basri رضي الله عنه. Saeed Bin Musaib رضي الله عنه says that a healthy heart can only be that of a *Momin*; a disbeliever’s heart is diseased – “... *Fi Qulubihim Maradun...*”

In As-Saffat 37: 83-84, Allah سبحانه says:

“And certainly one of his adherents was Ibrahim. (Remember) when he came to his Lord with a pure heart.” (As-Saaffat 37: 83-84)

This “pure” heart is one that is free of adulteration from wrong beliefs and imbalanced emotions. Ibrahim عليه السلام was tested time and time again, and he came out successful in not one, but all his tests. Can we forget his compelling monologue with the stars, the Moon and the Sun?

So why this strong and repeated emphasis on the heart in the Qur’an? Does the heart have the ability to ‘think’? Is its judgment superior to that made by the head? In the head vs. heart debate, who eventually comes out on the top?

Our *Cover Story*, “*The Head and the Heart*” elucidates this interesting subject.

In Parenting, “*Save our Children*” is a gripping, realistic, yet painful account. Anyone associated with the education sector these days would testify to the ‘learning’ realities that form a part of our schools’ formal and informal curricula – from objectionable content in fiction and non-fiction works to depiction of alien cultures and amoral values in plays and functions, parents of young Muslims can find loads of reasons to be alarmed about. It’s the educationists’ and parents’ collective responsibility to steer the ship into the right direction.

*Action Alerts* emphasizes on the importance of Zakat.

A number of Muslims discharge this obligation in Ramadan, with the expectation of greater reward, while many others do so in other months, depending on when they first became *Sahib-e-Nisab*. Everyone knows the

percentage to be doled out, but not many people make the effort of finding out the exact rules governing this indispensable *fard*. For instance, many people give out zakat to people who they consider to be ‘deserving’ but do not investigate whether the zakat duty will actually be discharged by giving it out to this person? In fact, a proper calculation needs to be made to ascertain whether a person can or cannot be eligible to receive Zakat. Further, many assets are not considered while calculating Zakat, while they actually should be, either due to pure ignorance or simple carelessness on the part of the giver. So what’s the point in attempting to fulfill an obligation half-heartedly with the chances of the *fard* not being discharged at all!?

With the availability of full-fledged, authentic Zakat calculation charts and even Excel sheets, Muftis available 24/7 through Whatsapp Dar-ul-Iftas, special *fatawa* helplines running for the ease of the public by most prominent Madaris, is there any excuse for us not to understand the basic rules of this obligation and dispense our Zakat properly?

*Urban Pangs* touches a raw nerve with regards the “role” of the cotemporary woman. With education and careers taking precedence, the role of a woman as a homemaker has taken the backseat; if not considered an extra wheel! The article does not debate the virtues or otherwise of being a career woman or a housewife; it in fact speaks about the sense of (artificial) ‘loss’ that is often felt by ladies who give up thriving careers or academics to settle down as housewives and explains how this façade of a ‘loss’ can be made into a productive and fulfilling ‘gain’.

Coming out on the other side of Ramadan, most of us revert to our ‘old ways’. This, despite the fact that a *Momin*’s real Eid is to carry on the good chores that he started in the holy month. Being out of Ramadan should not become a license to revert to backbiting, pointless arguing, wasting time and what not. So let us add this essential life skill to our mental to-do list.

Wassalam,

Zawjah Farid

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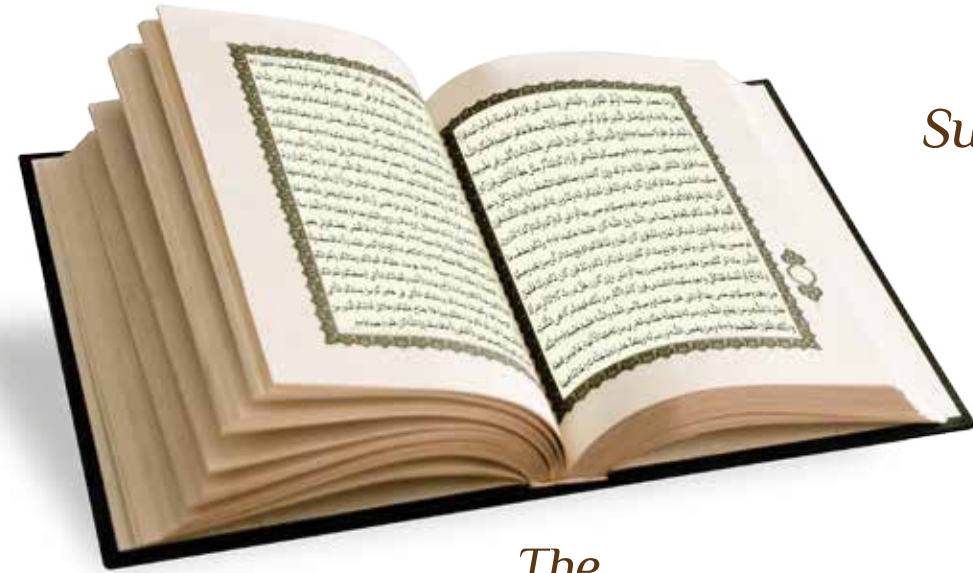
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Surah An-Nisa'  
Translation with Arabic Text

The  
Meanings  
of the  
Quran

By Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُن لَّهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ أَلْتَرْبَعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوَصِّينَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَأَلْتَرْبَعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُن لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلَهُنَّ أَلْتَرْبَعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ تُوَصَّوْنَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلِئَلَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ وَلَهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَجِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا الشُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي أَلْتَّارْتَلْتِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍ وَصِيَّةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ خَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

12. For you there is one-half of what your wives leave behind, in case they have no child. But, if they have a child, you get one-fourth of what they leave, after (settling) the will they might have made, or a debt. For them (the wives) there is one-fourth of what you leave behind, in case you have no child. But, if you have a child, they get one eighth of what you leave, after (settling) the will you might have made, or a debt. And if a man or a woman is Kalalah (i.e. has neither parents alive, nor children) and has a brother or a sister, then each one of them will get one-sixth. However, if they are more than that, they will be sharers in one-third, after (settling) the will that might have been made, or a debt, provided that the will must not be intended to harm anyone. This is a direction from Allah. Allah is All-knowing, Forbearing.

تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

13. These are the limits set by Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, where he will live forever. That is a great success.

وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾

14. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits set by Him, He shall admit him to the Fire, where he will remain forever. For him there is a humiliating punishment.

وَأَلْسِنِي يَأْتِيَنَّ أَلْفَسْحَشَةً مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

15. Those of your women who commit the shameful act, have four witnesses (against them) from among you. So, if they testify, then confine those women to their homes until death overcomes them, or Allah prescribes a way for them. 9



وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَأَذُوهُمَا فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

16. Those two of you who commit it, chastise both of them. 10 However, if they repent and make amends, then, overlook them. Surely, Allah is Most Relenting, Very-Merciful.

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

17. The relenting taken by Allah upon Himself is for those who do evil in ignorance, then repent shortly thereafter. So, Allah relents towards them. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٨﴾

18. The relenting is not for those who do the evil deeds, until when the time of death approaches one of them, he says, "Now I repent", nor for those who die while they are still disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَجْزَلَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضَلُوهُنَّ لِتَذْهَبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفِجْشَةٍ مُبَيِّنَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْعًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

19. O you who believe, it is not lawful for you that you should forcibly take women as inheritance. 11 Do not hold on to them so that you may take away some of what you have given them, unless they commit a clearly shameful act. 12 Live with them in the recognized manner. If you dislike them, then it is quite likely that you dislike something and Allah has placed a lot of good in it.

وَأِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ زَوْجٍ وَءَاتَيْتُمْ إِخْدَاهُنَّ قِنْطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ شَيْعًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿٢٠﴾

20. If you want to take a wife in place of the one (you have), and you have given her plenty of wealth, then do not take any of it back. Would you take it through imputation and open sin? 13

## Explanation

9. In the beginning, punishment for adultery committed by a married woman was to confine her in her home for good. But the verse itself alludes to the fact that this law will be replaced by another one. This is the meaning of the last sentence 'or Allah prescribes a way for them.' This way was then prescribed by the beginning verses of Surah An-Noor and by detailed explanations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

10. It could mean that the punishment of adultery is not restricted to married women, but whenever a male and female, married or unmarried, indulge in adultery or fornication, they must be chastised by any means. According to some commentators, reference here is to sodomy. No specific punishment in either case. The direction is that they should be chastised. Different method of chastisements have been suggested by different jurists.

11. There was a vicious practice in vogue whereby the husband of a woman would pass away, his legal heirs used to take her as the part of inheritance, in the sense that at times they would marry her against her will, and at times they would not allow her to contract a new marriage at all. In some cases they would keep her in their homes as a prisoner, and would not allow her to go out unless she would forgo her property in their favour. The present verse condemns and prohibits all of these practices.

12. Some husbands wanted to divorce their wives for no fault of the women, but simply because they disliked them. Still, they used to hold on to them without giving their rights as due. The intention was that the woman, disgusted by her husband's behavior, should offer some of her dower or other property to the husband to secure her release from his bond of marriage. The verse forbids husbands to holding on to their women with this selfish intent. The only exception given by the verse is that if the women commit adultery, they may be confined to their homes as mentioned above in verse 15 or if they commit any shameful act, even though it is short of adultery, the husband is allowed to subject her release to the condition that she gives back some of the dower he had given to her.

13. This means that if you demand any monetary return in lieu of divorce, it would imply that you are accusing them of a shameful act, because such a demand is allowed as per verse 19 only when she commits a shameful act. Thus, it is a false imputation.

(Continued insha'Allah...)

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# Reliance on Allah سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى

One of the fundamental truths we have learnt through the Prophets ﷺ is that whatever is taking place in the world and everything that is reaching us or is kept away, is from Allah ﷻ and by His leave. The causes which, apparently, bring about a result are simply the ways and means, decreed by the Lord Himself, of carrying the things to us in the same way as the pipes through which the water is brought to our homes, are merely the means to carry the water, but they do not specify or determine its distribution, nor can they interfere with it in any manner. The causes are not the 'author' of things. Allah ﷻ alone is the doer and it is His writ that runs the world.

To put one's trust in Allah ﷻ to be steadfast on one's loyalty towards Him, to keep one's eye set upon His power and beneficence, to make Him the centre of one's hopes and fears, and to supplicate to Him for one's needs with complete faith in the reality we have just indicated, is called *Tawakkul* (Reliance on Allah ﷻ in religious parlance).

It stands for just that, neither more nor less. The denial, rejection or abandonment of efforts is not necessary for *Tawakkul*. It is the *Tawakkul* that has been practiced by the Prophets ﷺ, particularly, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his companions ﷺ and by men of high virtue and spirituality in all ages. They all believed that the law of cause and effect was under the control of Divine Will and normally made use of the means as well, in accordance with that belief, and considering that Allah ﷻ, in His infinite wisdom, had so willed it, but put their trust wholly in what has been decreed by the Almighty. The causes to them were no more than the water-pipes, as we have explained. Hence, they paid fullest regard to the good pleasure of Allah ﷻ and His commandments while making use of worldly means and resources, and believed that the Divine Will and Power was not bound by the causes and the Lord could do anything with or without them, if He liked; sometimes they even experienced it in their lives.

In short, repudiation or relinquishment of earthly means is neither a part of *Tawakkul* nor an essential condition for it. However, if anyone is overwhelmed by the inner state of Allah-realization and forsakes the causes, no blame will be

attached to him. It will, on the other hand, be a sign of perfection in his case. Similarly it will be quite proper and justifiable for a man to take to the path of rejection of the causes with the object of freeing himself from their hold and placing reliance wholly upon Allah for setting an example to others. But the actual significance of *Tawakkul* is just same as we have indicated, and it is what has been advised and set forth in the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions.

In any case, *Tawakkul* is the logical effect and outcome of perfection in faith and monotheism, and whosoever is not blessed with it, his faith and belief in the doctrine of Divine Oneness remains incomplete.

The place of submission to Divine Will is even higher than that of *Tawakkul*. It denotes that a bondsman resigns himself with a willing heart to whatever happens to him and in whatever state he finds himself, believing that everything agreeable or disagreeable that reaches him is from Allah ﷻ and, therefore, it is for his good.

• It is related by Abdullah ibn-e-Abbas رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Seventy thousands of my followers will be admitted to Heaven without Reckoning, i.e., without the balance sheet of their deeds being examined on the Day of Judgement. They will be the bondsmen who do not take recourse to sorcery or augury, but place reliance on their Lord and Creator" (Bukhari & Muslim).

**Commentary:** Two evils were most common among the Arabs at the time of the advent of the Prophet ﷺ. One was that when anyone or his children fell ill, he went to the sorcerer imagining that magical formulas and other forms of exorcism were the easiest and most effective way to drive off the disease or any other distress, and secondly, when intended to do a thing that could be both beneficial and harmful, and end up in success as well as failure; they resorted to augury, and if it not augured well, they gave up the idea, thinking it was ill-omened. The holy Prophet ﷺ condemned both the practices on various occasions and advised the people not to have recourse to witchcraft in illness or to augury or divination for knowing beforehand whether the step they were going to take would be fruitful or not, but to believe that health and sickness, and gain and loss were wholly in the control of Allah ﷻ, and as such reliance ought to be placed in Him alone, and only such measures adopted to gain an object that were not displeasing to Him. The world is governed by the Will and Command of Allah ﷻ, and not by causes, and it would be the height of folly indeed, to adopt ways and methods He did not approve of for the accomplishment of a purpose.

From it some people have concluded that the bondsmen to be admitted to Paradise without Reckoning will be those who observe *Tawakkul* by totally renouncing material means and resources and forsaking the causes, but it is not correct. The holy Prophet ﷺ would, certainly, have made it clear had it been in his mind while, in this tradition, he has mentioned only two things, exorcism and augury, from the whole range of means that are supposed to help one to attain a purpose. It distinctly shows that the bondsmen referred to in it will be those who place their trust solely in Allah ﷻ in the time of their need, and as a result of it, do not resort to practices that are displeasing to Him.

The above tradition, thus, is enough to show that the denial and rejection of means for the completion of an end or purpose for which the Lord Himself has prescribed them and are also not forbidden in the Shari'ah is not what is required by *Tawakkul*, but only the means that are abhorrent to Him and also not have been permitted in the Shari'ah.

Nevertheless, for *Tawakkul* it is necessary that means are considered merely to be a route or a path and a veil or curtain of the wisdom of Allah ﷻ, and real trust is put in Him, and this is what, basically distinguishes between the conduct of a man who believes in and practices *Tawakkul*, and a man who does not.

As for the 'seventy thousands' bondsmen, this figure is generally used in Arabic to emphasize the abundance of a thing and here too, it apparently is employed in the same

sense, i.e., to denote that a large number of Muslims will enter Heaven without the scrutiny of their deeds, as a result of abstinence from the sinful practices of witchcraft, fetishism and divination.

Hence, in another version of the same narrative it is added that "with each of these seventy thousand bondsmen, another seventy thousands will be admitted to the Heaven without Reckoning."

It is further worthy of note that this tradition is not simply by way of prophecy, foretelling an event that is going to happen on the Day of Resurrection, but its real purpose is to stress upon the Muslims' need to lead a life of *Tawakkul* so that they are included among the bondsmen

• It is related by Umer ibn Khattab رضي الله عنه "I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, ' If you put your trust in Allah, as is His due, He will give you sustenance in the same way as He gives to the birds which come out of their nests hungry in the morning and return in the evening with a full stomach" (Tirmizi and Ibn Majah).

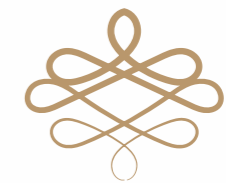
**Commentary:** this hadith shows that if people placed reliance in Allah ﷻ for the necessities of life as they ought to, Allah ﷻ would treat them in the same manner as He treats the birds, which get their sustenance without having to toil hard for it.

• Sayyidina Amr ibn Al-'Aas رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The heart of the son of Adam has a piece in every valley (wadi), and if anyone lets his heart follow all the pieces, Allah will not care in which valley He destroys him, but to anyone who trusts in Allah He will supply enough for all the pieces" (Ibn Majah).

**Commentary:** Man has an eye on every field and if he pursues his all desires then Allah ﷻ does not care about him and where he perishes. Man must depend on Allah ﷻ for all his needs and observe His commands.

(Continued, *insha'Allah*)

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





# The Sajjdah of Sahw

by an Individual Praying in Congregation

By Mufti Taqi Usmani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

**Q.** If one is offering prayers (salah) in congregation (jama'at) and he commits a mistake under which sajdah for repentance becomes mandatory, then can he offer such a sajdah at the end of the prayers (salah)? If yes, please specify the correct procedure for the same and clarify the situation under which one must perform such a sajdah while in congregation prayers?

**A.** If a person offering his salah with jama'at commits a mistake behind his Imam which is normally remedied by the sajdah of sahw, he need not, and should not, offer the sajdah of sahw, because the sajdah of sahw is obligatory only on a person praying individually or on a person leading the prayer. As for a person praying behind his Imam as a muqtadi, the rules of sajdah of sahw are not applicable on him. His salah will be valid without the sajdah of sahw, unless he leaves an obligatory (Fardh) act altogether, like the sajdah or ruku' etc. in which case the sajdah of sahw will not be sufficient to correct the error, but his salah will be void and he will have to offer the prayer once again.

As for those mistakes which are remedied by the sajdah of sahw for an Imam or a person praying individually they are forgiven for a person praying behind the Imam, and his salah is deemed to be complete without the sajdah of sahw.

However, if the person has missed one or two rak'at from the jama'at and he is offering the missed rak'at on his own after the congregational prayer is over, and he makes a mistake for this duration, he will have to offer the sajdah of sahw, because while completing the missed rak'at he is deemed to be a person who offers

the prayer individually, and the sajdah of sahw is obligatory on him like any other individual.

**Q.** Is it permissible under the Shari'ah to make supplication (dua) while one is in sajdah? It is commonly observed that some people after completing their prayer (salah) fall in sajdah and offer supplications in that position. Please explain the correct way in this respect.

**A.** Supplication during sajdah is permissible but the following points should always be kept in mind:

(a) While offering sajdah in a regular prayer (salah) the medium of supplication should always be Arabic language. It is not permissible to use any other language during salah.

(b) One should restrict himself as far as possible to the supplications contained in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah. However, if one likes to pray in his own Arabic words, the prayer should be restricted to those things only which cannot be asked from a human being such as

اللهم اغفر لي ولزوجتي ولوالادي

"O Allah, forgive my sins and the sins of my wife and my children."

This Arabic supplication is permissible because forgiveness of sins cannot be

asked from a human being but those things which can be asked from human beings cannot be asked in a prayer offered while performing salah, such as "O Allah, make me marry such and such woman". If somebody prays for such mundane things which can be asked from a human being also, the salah will be rendered void, even if the medium of prayer is Arabic language.

(c) Although offering supplications during sajdah is permissible with the conditions mentioned above, it is more advisable to avoid it during Fardh salah and restrict it to Nawafil only.

All the rules mentioned above relate to the supplications offered in sajdah which forms part of salah. However, if someone makes a sajdah out of salah for the purpose of supplications only, there is no prohibition, nor it is necessary to observe the conditions mentioned in (a), (b) or (c) above. In such a position one can pray in whatever language one deems fit.

It is, therefore, permissible to make sajdah for the purpose of supplication after the salah is over. However, this should not be made a permanent practice after every salah, because the holy Prophet ﷺ used to pray after salah in a sitting position, and it is in no way advisable to leave this Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ forever.





# The Contentment of Heart

Translation Series of Hazrat Maulana Abdus Sattar's *منازل القرآن*  
Spiritual Discourses

## Desire of Man - Peace

*Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!*  
(Ar-Rad 13:28)

*Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fasiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah). (At-Tauba 9:24)*

It is the desire of every human being to live a peaceful, tranquil life. For the attainment of this goal, he toils from morning till evening. He uses his faculties, ideas, and resources in search of a life of comfort and ease. He is convinced that once he achieves a certain standard of living, he will be at peace. Men, women and children all try to fulfill their desires in order to get satisfaction.

## Everyone is Distressed

Examine the world closely and witness the spectacle. Peace is like an elusive bird that has simply flown away.

Look around. Life seems like a series of troubles and turmoil. Everyone around us is distressed. We often find people around whose issues and problems exceed ours. However, everyone considers themselves as the most unfortunate ones. They plan and strive for a way to surmount their problems in order to lead a contented life.

Even children feel resentment towards the mother who scolds, the father who shouts and the older siblings who bully; the child feels that growing up is the solution to all evil in his life. He impatiently waits for the years to pass till he has a say in all the issues that concern him.

Young men, who are no more children, are still not satisfied because they are yearning for a suitable life partner. They think marriage would give them ultimate happiness.

Moving on to married couples, they long for a child to fill the

vacuum in their lives. If only they had a child, life would be a bed of roses.

And now the ones with children; obviously, things are not perfect for them either. Their child is dull and has a weak academic record. Disappointment sets in. Obviously, they had expected their kid to be brilliant at studies. If only their son had enviable degrees, life would be perfect.

Another stage is where the kids have graduated with flying colours. But the impressive degrees are yet to secure them a promising job. Of course, a well-positioned job in a multinational would contribute to their sense of well-being.

The son lands in an enviable position in the corporate world and brings home a hefty sum every month. However, new worries set in. They are unable to find the perfect match for him—as soon as they arrange a match with a beautiful, well-to-do girl, it will pave way for a contented life.

A lovely daughter-in-law has arrived, yet happiness continues to elude them. Their own daughter is not happy in her marriage and does not get along with the in-laws. And the 'lovely' daughter-in-law does not seem so lovely anymore.

## No Peace and Contentment in Worldly Things

The search for contentment goes on. We have failed to find it. We have searched for it in wealth and returned empty handed; looked for it in big houses and fancy cars and came out disappointed; fished for it in impressive designations and an elevated status, in the pursuit to look beautiful and attractive, but peace remained elusive; grappled for it by committing to a life of sins – drinks, drugs, immoralities, but found our dissatisfaction increasing. As one worry fades into the background, another raises its ugly head – there is no end to it, no light at the end of the tunnel.

## 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 points in 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 His friends do not grieve, nor do they become sorrowful.

Do they not fall ill like others? Do their children escape death? Are they not affected by poverty? Observation reveals that

Allah's ﷻ righteous servants face more than their share of difficulties. Yet Allah ﷻ informs us in the Qur'an 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.

For example, 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. Yet, 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 ﷻ 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 ﷻ 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 of pressures. 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 with the awe of His Majesty, your heart will become pure and strong; so much so that a mountain of problems will not crush its spirit. The toughest situation will be handled with calm and ease.

## How to Lead a Contented Life?

If you want to lead a contented life, the key is not the accumulation of wealth or the acquisition of worldly things. We need to change the direction of our life and mend our hearts. Circumstances will then become conducive to peace and tranquility within the soul.

Yes, illnesses will come but the mind will not get stressed out about them; children will fall sick or get hurt, but the heart will not get distressed. Yes, the means of livelihood may be meager, businesses may have ups and downs, but you will not agonize over it. If people criticize you or belittle you, you won't break down. All because you realize that all circumstances that are beyond your control are the will of Allah ﷻ and He is Al-Hakim (The Wise) and Al-Halim (The Forbearing). He knows what is good for us and we know not what benefits us most. If we really love Allah ﷻ, we will be content with whatever he sends our way. Problems will come and go, but they will not rob you of your peace of mind.

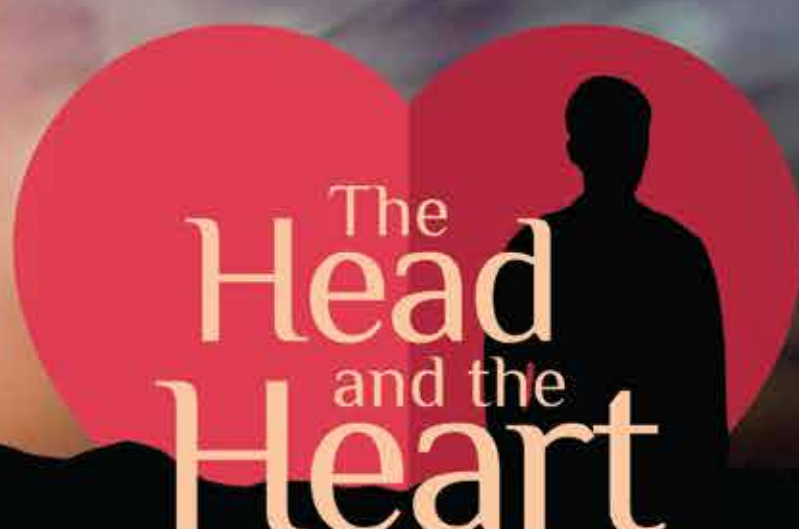
Allah ﷻ mentions in the Holy Qur'an...

*Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest...*  
(Ar-Ra'd 13:28)

Allah's ﷻ remembrance and leading life according to the revelation of Allah ﷻ renders one's heart peaceful.

*Continued, insha'Allah.*





# The Head and the Heart

By Zawjah Zia

The dilemma and the debate are not new at all.

Popular wisdom has always described the heart as being the main source of emotion, courage, happiness or sorrow, and wisdom, etc. It is no wonder that there is no language spoken in this world that does not have expressions such as, 'a feeling in my heart', 'loving with all my heart', 'the depth of my heart', 'my heart wants', 'my heart understood', 'my heart will never forget', 'engraved in heart', 'listen to your heart', 'follow your heart', 'a heart of gold', 'a heart of stone' or the most popular, 'a broken heart'.

As Muslims, our vocabulary about the heart and its states and features has been further enhanced by the divine knowledge that introduces us to 'the blind heart', 'the sinning heart', 'the dirty heart', 'the locked heart', 'the veiled heart', 'the confused heart', 'the dead heart', 'the alive heart' or 'the pure heart'.

The list can go on. In fact, Allah ﷻ has told us that even our eternal fates depend upon the states and performances of our hearts; the rest of the body shall only follow the fate of the heart.

*"A day when there will be no benefit in wealth or children, but only in he who comes to Allah with a pure heart"* (Ash-Shu'ara:88-89).

But wait. It is here that Science jumped in. For centuries, it has claimed that it is the brain which is the sole conductor of the human body's symphony, even the actions of the heart. The heart is more like just an emotion-driven, blood-pumping organ in a human body, but when it comes to the logical understanding and wise functioning of a person in this world, he needs his brain more than anything else.

So you see, according to this scientific stance, when my child says *"mera icecream khanay ka dil chah raha hai"* (my heart wants to have an ice-cream), before deciding to fulfil or not to fulfil that demand, I should explain to him that dear child, you have it all wrong! Actually what is happening is that your stomach is empty and your blood is running low on sugar and so your brain is receiving these signals and so it is the brain that is telling you to feel and say what you just said! Where and why did you bring the heart in?

I, however, never made this correction, I must admit! I am sure none of us has; not because we don't have trust in this 'organs-and-brain' scientific connection, but because there's always this very humanly, unspoken yet uncontested, acceptance of the all-encompassing domain of the heart, no matter what the science says.

Now the things have changed even science-wise too. Quite like the innumerable other universal scientific theories that initially seemed to oppose the information in the Qur'an and the hadith texts but later evolved to exactly match it, the science seems to be coming around regarding the brain-heart power-tussle too.

The emerging field of neuro-cardiology has been increasingly engaging the interest of the people of science and medicine for around the past decade and a half. For a layman's account, recent research in this field shows that there's more to this 'blood-pump' than the human knowledge has reached.

*"I agree with the fact that the heart is more than a pump," said Dr. Ronald Freudenberger, chief of cardiology at Lehigh Valley Health Network. "The heart has many functions that we are probably not aware of. We are finding new attributes of the heart; new roles for the heart."*

In fact, it is now being said that the heart has its own 'brain' - that the heart also has a center which receives and carries information. The 'heart brain' as doctors loosely refer to it, enables the heart to learn, remember, and make decisions apart from the cerebral cortex. Further research shows that the heart can also even influence the brain by continuously sending signals related to perception, cognition, and emotions.

Amazing as it is, the more one goes through the different research pieces being produced about it, the more awestruck he gets by the absoluteness and infiniteness of Allah's 'ilm. Though still not widely practiced as a clinical speciality, the research in neuro-cardiology is making the collaboration between cardiologists and neurologists more prevalent. That is just why this draft aims at gathering a few chunks out of this very interesting research, so they can become a food for loving *tadabbur* (contemplation) upon the Knowledge, Might, Majesty and Power of our dear Lord ﷻ.

Our beloved Prophet ﷺ said, "Surely, in the body there is a small piece of flesh; if it is good, the whole body is good, and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted and that is surely the heart" (Al-Bukhari).

Endorsing the same heart-power, Dr. Ronald Freudenberger further says in his research that, *"The heart possesses its own nervous system, with a network of 40,000 neurons. It releases hormones that enable it to not only self-regulate but also to send messages to the brain that may have an effect on the whole body. Scientists have known about the heart's neurological connections since the beginning of the last century, but that information has come back to the forefront recently, as more physicians delve into the study of heart-brain interactions to solve medical enigmas."*

*Those interactions work like a network of computers, it's like the Internet. Different computers function together but they can also function completely separate. The heart gets signals from other computers — your brain, other hormones that are secreted by your brain — but it also has its own operating system inside the heart itself. We are just learning more about how that independent operating system works."*

The scientists have also found that both the heart and the brain have intuition. They both receive and respond to certain events before they happen. What's more surprising, according to the scientists, is that the heart seemed to receive this information first even before the brain does.

*"And know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart,"* (Al Anfaal : 24).

Dr. David S. Goldstein, founder and director of the clinical neuro-cardiology section of the National Institutes of Health, USA, found remarkable relationships between the heart and the brain in his study of Parkinson's disease, a progressive disorder of the nervous system that affects movement and that, as yet, has been thought of as a brain/memory related disease only. Surprisingly, he says, *"Parkinson's patients lose nerves in the heart. If I knew what caused the loss of nerves, I would know what I would need to know about the entire disease."*

Doesn't it sound like a lost connection; A disrupted line? Parkinson's patients may have their own causes but they are not the only sufferers of this condition, right? Our world today is teeming with Parkinson's of sorts; a 'lost' Mankind. If Allah ﷻ,

the guider of the hearts, decides to stop intervening between a man and his heart, the person would surely lose the connection (the nerves) with and within his own heart; his own life. The result: sheer purposelessness and directionlessness!

*"Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"* (Ar Raad:28).

Similarly, for the case of depression and anxiety, one of the reasons for clinical depression is believed to be some chemical/hormonal imbalances in the brain.

Dr. Goldstein further states in his research that, *"The heart's nervous system is so elaborate that sometimes it can override the brain. For example, some people are able to control performance anxiety by taking beta blockers, drugs that block the harmful effects of stress hormones. Even though the drug doesn't get into the brain, it blocks the heart's response to adrenaline."*

*In this case, the brain anticipates becoming anxious. But after realizing that the heartbeat has remained stable and that there are no physical signs of anxiety, the brain accepts the commands from the heart, overruling its need to be anxious; the heart is saying no, so I guess I won't be anxious then."*

*So some heart deficiencies may also affect a person's mood. If your heart isn't working well, you are much more likely to have depression and anxiety too."*

The founder of The Institute of HeartMath, California, US, Dr Childre says that, *"Harnessing the intelligence of the heart can lead people away from the destructive cycles of stress and strife."*

Scientists at the Institute of Heart Math gave an example saying that, *"When the heart feels positive emotions like happiness, love, or appreciation, the heart beats a certain message."*

*This explains why some people still find inner peace and happiness within themselves despite the troubles and problems they face."*

So yes, it makes one wish that the world knew that it is the heart that is depressed and the cure of depression lies with The Creator of this depression, and The Creator of the holder of that depression, that is the heart. Only He can calm and soothe that heart.

*"(It is) your love for something that makes you blind and deaf"* (Abu Daw'ud).

Dr. Goldstein goes on to say, *"While it may come as no surprise to anyone whose heart has gone aflutter at the sight of a special someone, the heart produces myriad hormones, including oxytocin, the so-called love hormone. Through the autonomic nervous system, the heart constantly communicates with areas in the brain associated with emotions, such as the thalamus, the hypothalamus and amygdala, which all respond to emotional input from the heart."*

*I'm totally convinced that the brain depends on input outside the brain, such as cardiovascular system, to influence psychological factors, such as the energy or intensity of an emotional state. So while the practical wisdom has warned against it, following the heart and its inclinations becomes inevitable when it comes to the matters of love."*



*SubhanAllah!* This really goes to show just why Allah ﷻ has put in place a code of conduct for us when it comes to 'love'. Our hearts, if allowed to incline towards something or someone, can influence and guide all of our thoughts and actions towards achievement of that special love-goal. How powerful is that! Therefore, how utterly necessary it is to accommodate only the *Halaal* love in our hearts. The injunctions of lowering the gaze, modesty, avoiding over-indulgence in the worldly pleasures and then the need of developing the love of Allah ﷻ and loving only for His sake, everything makes perfect sense because only the right kind of love in a heart can then lead to the right kind of life for the possessor of that heart. The brain and its logic are only subservient to the commands of the heart.

#### From Heart to Heart

Another interesting aspect of the neurocardiological research at the Institute of HeartMath reveals that, "The heart generates the body's most powerful and most extensive rhythmic electromagnetic field. Compared to the electromagnetic field produced by the brain, the electrical component of the heart's field is about 60 times greater in amplitude, and permeates every cell in the body. This leads to significantly powerful heart-Field interactions between individuals."

Most people think of social communication solely in terms of overt signals expressed through language, voice qualities, gestures, facial expressions, and body movements. However, there is now evidence that a subtle yet influential electromagnetic or "energetic" communication system

operates just below our conscious awareness. Energetic interactions likely contribute to the "magnetic" attractions or repulsions that occur between individuals, and also affect social exchanges and relationships.

Experiments conducted at the Institute of HeartMath have found remarkable evidence that the heart's electromagnetic field can transmit information between people. We have been able to measure an exchange of heart energy between individuals up to 5 feet apart."

*AllahuAkbar!* This means that just being in the proximity of good hearts or bad hearts can have an effect upon a heart.

Such forcefully does it endorse { وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ } - "And be with the truthful ones" (At Tawbah:119) – the need of good company.

#### A leader in life and death, and in the Life Eternal

It is interesting that when a baby starts developing in a mother's womb, the first recognizable traces of the heart are present by, as soon as the eighteenth day of its gestational age. Also, the first functioning organ in a developing embryo is the heart.

In death too, the clinical definition that is used for death is 'when the heart stops beating'.

So yes, indeed, we are because of our hearts, in life and in death, and for sure, in the life eternal.

# Patience!

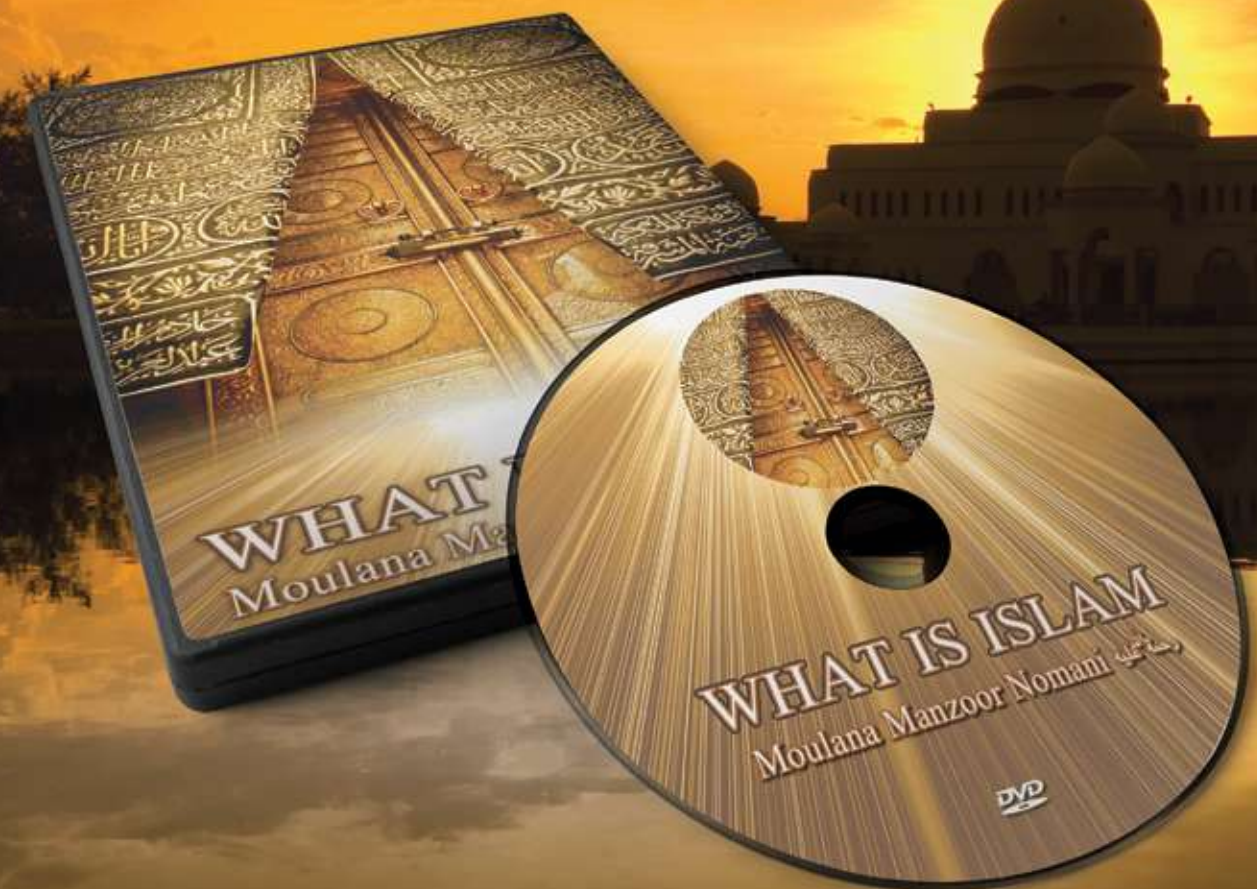
In the intricate paths of life,  
when difficulties and hardships confront a man,  
and the darkness of difficulty and suffering becomes long,  
it is patience only that acts like a light for a Muslim,  
that keeps him safe from wandering here and there,  
and saves him from the muddy marsh of disappointment,  
desperation and frustration.

– Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali رحمته الله



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## Relight the Spark

By Bint Akram

*‘The project of life is vast, indeed, academics are only a part of it,’ Ayesha recalled the words of one of her mentors when she had complained to them of ‘having lost the spark’. She had been an ace at her academics during her school, college and university years. She had dreamt of achieving big things when it came to the discipline she had opted for during her university education. She wanted to complete her higher studies and was also always helped by the circumstances of her life. Immediately after completing her postgraduate studies, she was offered a job at her university; an offer she gladly accepted, for it would have paved way for the realisation of her dreams. All was smooth and everything seemed to be going her way, but then, as they say, ‘life happened’. Ayesha got married and moved to another city, about which she did not know anything. No friends, no colleagues, no mentors, there was no one there she could look up to, except for her loving husband. Life had taken a new start. No, Ayesha was not unhappy. The positive person that she was, she embraced life as it came to her. Chirping around the house, getting to know her new family members, doing little house chores, and having quality discussions with her husband had made her thankful for what had come her way. Yet, amidst all this positivity, there were episodes of feeling inner sadness. Something, she thought, remained amiss. She would often retire at night thinking of the things she had left behind in order to embrace this new life. Her dreams remained unrealised. Life had interrupted the course she had been walking in order to fulfill her dreams...*

Sounds familiar? So many women I personally know seem to share Ayesha’s inner struggle. There are women who choose to prioritise their careers over their family life, and believe me they are not evil. This piece of writing does not intend to start a debate between the working and the stay-at-home women.

There could be many reasons – some of them very justifiable too – for a woman, having brought up in an urban setup, to choose to work after getting married. This article, though, will remain focussed on those sisters who choose to stay at home, and their inner struggles.

Many women, when they choose to stay at home, and get involved with the mundanities of life, just like Ayesha, often feel that they have ‘lost the spark’. Their days and nights revolve around a handful of people – husband, children, in-laws, etc. – and many a time they secretly long for the hustle bustle of their past lives – jobs, academics, whatever they used to do before settling down into the monotony of life.

The problem, I believe, is deep seated in the culture of the modern – or postmodern, if we wish to intensify its state – world. Before the Industrial Revolution happened, women in the West also used to be home birds. Staying at home and taking care of the family was their sole responsibility. Education did not mean working outside the house in order to bring money back home. It was only when the roles of the women were defined as per the standards and requirements of the ‘modern age’ of machines, that the concept of women empowerment, feminism and gender equality came to fore. The thought processes were conditioned and controlled in a manner that the women eventually stepped out of their homes in order to ‘work’ as if what she did at home was no work at all – after all, it did not generate any capital. Imagine the struggles those women had to go through!

Now keeping the historic aspect aside, we must realise that we are still following the pattern given to us by modernity. We are a result of having lived this pattern. Our urban lives in the global village contribute to who we become. An ‘uneducated’ (referring to the institutionalised forms of learning – the fixed

pattern of going to school, college and then the university) woman, for example, who is born and brought up in a remote village of Pakistan, will not be able to associate with the struggle Ayesha goes through in her life. Her dreams and ambitions were directed and conditioned by the life she lived and the education she acquired in institutions that again are a construct of modernity. Hers is the crises of the modern life.

When a stay-at-home woman thinks that she has ‘lost the spark’, and has been unable to achieve what she wanted to, it is not necessary that she is longing for financial independence. Money might not be the motivation for many. It is probably the lack of a certain environment or routine that many women tend to miss – consciously or unconsciously – after getting married. Every morning getting dressed for studies or work, socialising at the workplace, etcetera. Further, family life has its own demands and requirements. At times it hardly leaves room for indulging in one’s hobbies or something that one loves to do. This, I believe, becomes a frustrating factor for many. How should one resolve their inner conflicts once they have chosen to stay at home?

First, we need to start thinking out of the box. We have to realise that choosing to stay at home despite being an ‘educated’ woman is nothing demeaning. It is just a matter of priorities. Second, we need to change our concept of ‘education’ too. The concept of education should not be narrowed down to going through a process of institutionalised learning and ending up with a lucrative job. I remember how one of our teachers would say that whether we chose to teach at some institute or not in order to be labelled as a ‘teacher’, we would eventually become one when we have children. How true is this! Every mother is a teacher of sorts.

Secondly, something that is very inspirational is the idea of a never-ending education. Learning till you die. Being a student

till your last breath. We are followers of a faith that lays heavy emphasis on learning and wisdom. Committing oneself to long-term learning can be far more rewarding than simply getting over with your tertiary studies and getting a job. The desire to keep on learning is what makes one productive. It can add a lot of value to our lives. It can help us relight that ‘spark’ that we feel extinguishes when we get too much involved with our routine lives.

Third, we need to stop feeling frustrated. This is extremely important. If we are unable to do certain things at one point in time, it does not mean we would not be able to do them ever. Children grow up. Circumstances change. Who knows what you wished for comes back in a far more rewarding and a meaningful way at some later stage in life.

*Let us go back in time. There was an ‘Aisha about fourteen centuries ago too. A young woman who got widowed at an early age, and lived in this world for about forty-six years after her husband passed away. She departed from this world only after she had gained exemplary wisdom and knowledge; only after she had transmitted most of the sound narrations of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to his ummah. The truthful woman who lived a beautiful life, and was elevated to the status of having become the mother of the faithful till the end of times. ‘Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her.*

*Ayesha, in one of her moments of inner conflict thought about ‘Aisha ﷺ. Thinking about her uplifted Ayesha’s spirits. Why should not she get a pattern for herself from who Allah chose to be her spiritual mother? Why should not she look up to the life of ‘Aisha ﷺ who was an epitome of knowledge and wisdom? Why should she let the skewed ideas of modernity, about education and work, make her fall into despair? Why should not she view the idea of ‘achievement’ in the life of ‘Aisha ﷺ...*

# Gratitude

“Gratitude is built upon five pillars:

Submissiveness to Allah from the one expressing gratitude;

loving Him for it;

acknowledging His favour;

praising Him for it;

and not utilizing it in a way that displeases Him”

- Ibn al-Qayyim رحمته



## When he Rejected...

by Bint Akram

A certain Qari once recited a verse from the Holy Qur'an

"If the water of your fountain should disappear deep into the ground who has the power to bring it up?"

Allah ﷻ informs us that He alone has the power to bring back that water after it has sunk to the underground.

"I cause water to become hidden in the depths of the earth. And cause fountains to dry up, causing water scarcity. Who else, except Me, can bring back water to the fountains?"

Hearing this verse being recited, a philosopher, who was also a logician, said: "I am able to bring the water back!"

That night he saw in his dream a strong man give him a heavy blow in his eyes, as a result of which both eyes were struck with blindness.

In the dream, the man said to him: "O wretched one, bring back the light into the fountains of your eyes if you are truthful in your claim."

When he woke up from his dream, he found that he was really blind; he had lost his eyesight.

If this man sought Allah's pardon and cried before Him, And the taste of repentance is not food for every drunken one!

- Adapted from Mawlana Yunus Patel's <sup>ترجمہ</sup> translation of Mawlana Hakeem Akhtar's <sup>ترجمہ</sup> 'Ma'arif-e Mathnavi'

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روایتی بنا سبٹی جڑی بانڈر وکھنٹس کے طریقے سے تیار کیا جاتا ہے جو ٹرانس فیٹ ہائے کاربائیڈ کی مقدار میں زیادہ ہے۔ نومبر 2013ء میں ایفٹس فوڈ اینڈ ڈرگ اینڈ سٹریٹجی (FDA) کی تبدیلی جانچ کے مطابق جڑی بانڈر وکھنٹس آئٹمز کو بے نسانی قرار دیا گیا ہے جڑی بانڈر وکھنٹس اور سیف (GRAS) یعنی عام طور پر محفوظ سمجھے جاتے ہیں کیا جاتا ہے۔ آئٹمز کو بے نسانی قرار دیا گیا ہے، جہاں میں ہونے والی ایک تحقیق کے مطابق انہیں مارکیٹ میں لایا جاتا ہے۔ 2 گھنٹہ زیادتی سے امراتھ تک کا ٹرانس فیٹ یا 25 گھنٹہ تک بڑھ جاتا ہے۔





## Prayer of a Man Lost in the Desert

By Zawjah Farid

On his knees, hands ruffling through the dune  
The sand passing through his five fingers  
Will he find water, later or soon?  
Or was he looking for fading footsteps? Hope  
flickered.

"O Lord! O my Loving Lord! Find me a way"  
Had he ever prayed this way?  
Had he ever cried before, just for Him?  
With such passion, had he ever beseeched Him?

Never! Never! Never before!  
"I will pray, I will fast, I'll stay the course!  
Please Lord, my Lord, find me a way.  
I won't sin, I promise, not a single day!  
I will do what I should have, keep temptations at  
bay.  
My Lord, please, just find me a way"

His head falls into the sand, lips parched,  
knuckles cracked  
"O Lord, my Lord", his last breaths  
Should hope leave at last, in these final  
moments?

Satan whispers: "did anyone even hear your  
incessant cries, your words in torment?"

Broken, beat, in tatters, his heart murmured "it's  
finished"  
Or? "O my Loving Lord, is that the sound of a  
caravan?" Clink clink!



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# Where are my Friends?

By Zawjah Farid

One step out of the car, Zerish fumbled to retrieve the umbrella from the backseat as the rain became fiercer. The fat drops drenched her belongings before she had a chance to open her savior against the elements; its bright appearance added color to the dreary, dull surroundings. "They are right when they say too much rain amidst so much greenery can eventually become boring, and depressing! I need more Sun", she thought to herself as she almost ran the long driveway into her house. She wanted to protect the book she had just borrowed, the one that couldn't find place in her overflowing bag from want of even a little space!

At last, wet shoes off, overcoat hung, she settled down near the fire with a hot cup of tea. Now for the prize: she carefully extracted the book from the wet, brown paper bag: *Where are my Friends?*, the title announced bluntly.

Zerish thought about her own long-lost friends.... indeed, where are they?

For the next one hour, she was completely engrossed in the book. It was engaging, and Zerish could relate to it very well. The protagonist had changed her life for the better but in the process had lost a number of 'close' friends. Like many a DIY and self-help books these days, the author then went on to classify friends into three distinct categories: 1) those who are uncomfortable in keeping up with you once you change your ways, 2) those who are neutral towards your 'upheaval' but couldn't care less (or more) if they kept meeting you or not in your new reality, 3) those rare diamonds who not only encourage you (whether they can relate to your decision or not) and stay by your side in the thick and thin of things. The writer went on to explain that this lengthy, 'filtering' process is in fact good for you in the long run, as it lets you know whom you can count on in the storms of life, even though the number of such people may dwindle down to just a couple or so from the large group you used to hang out with in your college days.

How true! Zerish thought. Though she had been a fun-loving person, bubbling with energy and enthusiasm, she had never been one to pour out her inner feelings to many people. Yet, she had a large group of friends and that number had surely fallen down to just three or four people in the years that followed. Was it that she had been unable to discern mere acquaintances and fun-pals from true friends in her youth?

It was time for *Asr* prayers. Zerish prayed peacefully; the kids had not returned from their grandparent's place with their father. She went to the kitchen to wash the dishes left over by the maid but her train of thought took her to her childhood years...

She missed Maryam. But she was sure Maryam didn't miss her!

In school lingo, Maryam was her "best" friend. They were always hanging out together and giggling over silly things. She remembered an evening at Maryam's place when they were laughing and almost choked over *pakor*s when Zerish mentioned the new girl in class. "She is really sweet and she's quite friendly towards you at least". "True", said Maryam, "She's nice. But there are some constants in one's life. You will always remain my closest friend."

Years later, Maryam's words painfully echoed in Zerish's thoughts when the former visited her after marriage. She could feel the utter disbelief and discomfort in Maryam's eyes when she had been told that the husbands would sit separately. *Whatever happened to my friend*, must've been the thought in Maryam's mind, Zerish tried to defend her subconsciously. But was this thought even worth defending?

Zerish's mind also painfully went back to the time when she had gone to Maryam's place to condole a death in her family. Disapproval danced in Maryam's eyes as soon as she set them upon Zerish's dark *abaya* and black *niqab*. She quickly excused herself to catch an urgent doctor's appointment and directed Zerish to her mother, who met her quite nicely nevertheless. Maybe her seasoned age and grace stood in stark contrast to her daughter's qualms in accepting a change in another person. Whatever. The meeting had felt like a stab in Zerish's back.

Then there was also Sabina. They had spoken on the phone after many years as Sabina had bumped into Zerish's cousin in a boutique and had taken her phone number.

After reminiscing over the 'good old times', Sabina jumped to the present and suggested coffee at Gloria Jean's. Zerish reluctantly explained her inability to eat out at a place that may not offer a private corner for a *pardah*-observing person, (leave alone turning down the volume of the music at her request) but Sabina responded with a blunt "oh! Come on!" and her wailing child in the background left no room for further argumentation on the topic. Maybe her response was better than Maryam's; at least she worded her dismay. But could one not meet at home? If she so cherished her friendship, then maybe even for old-time's sake she could've offered to come over to her place or invited her over to hers.

And finally, could Zerish ever forget meeting Nosheen at a wedding. The encounter almost made her laugh! There they stood, Zerish and Nosheen, face to face (well, face to *niqab* to be honest) and Nosheen simply refused to recognize (of whatever she could see of) her! When reminded verbally of the common friends they had in college (after all college wasn't so long ago), she tried to slide back and hold on to the chair near her. *Yes, oh of course, she did remember now, but could she be blamed for not recognizing someone whose eyes were visible only?* Of course not.

Zerish could not contain a smile behind her veil at this reluctant and lukewarm reunion. But in her heart, there welled up a pain she was quite familiar with by now.

Engrossed in her thoughts, hands mechanically scrubbing and rinsing the dishes, the car horn brought Zerish back to the present. Her husband and kids were back and a feeling of warmth and happiness rushed through her.

After *Maghrib* and dinner, Zerish found a little time to return to her book. The chapter's title, "*And those rare ones...*" made her think of Fatima. She had not known her that well in her college and university years but she had been like an anchor to her in later times. Meeting with a smile, trying to keep in touch even from afar, sharing her ups and downs...even though, in outlook, Zerish and Fatima could not have been further apart from each other, yet, there was a stellar quality in Fatima: she accepted what she could not bring herself to do, yet; she tried to understand what she was unable to absorb in her current environment; she exuded genuine warmth towards Zerish even when they seemed to have been plucked out of two totally different planets! Fatima was indeed one of those rare diamonds.

Zerish's new acquaintances, who shared her outlook and world-view, were indeed assets for her, but they had not been time-tested yet. And since they shared common values, they had not undergone that fire of disagreement and dissimilarity - that test which can burn down life-long friendships and allow only pure gold to remain in its ashes.

Fatima had undergone that test; that is why Zerish truly cherished her friendship.

It was bedtime and as per routine, Zerish extracted the book mark from *Islahi Khutbat*, the corrective readings from her spiritual mentor, and turned to the page she had half-read. It talked about backbiting and pre-forming bad opinions about others and how it is better to remain quiet than to indulge and waste time in vain talk. It also explained how a moral compass gets entrenched in the hearts of those who are conscious of self-reform, in that it stops them from saying one extra, unneeded word and it makes them leave a gathering of even 'friends' if they are involved in backbiting. "Alas! This is why it is difficult to make new friends", thought Zerish. She could literally count hers on her fingers, but at the same time she basked in the glowing thought of 'making friends for your Lord's sake; loving for your Lord's sake and distancing yourself from some for your Lord's sake'. What an enriching concept.

Morning came but the rain hadn't stopped. Zerish's dried umbrella stood balanced on its handle in the foyer - bright, welcoming, protective against both sun and rain. "This is how true friends would feel towards each other in Jannah I guess" and the mere thought made Zerish forget all her yesterday's negativity towards old and new friends alike; the idea of an eternity in happiness enveloped her and it also jerked her into introspection: what kind of a friend was she, herself? Did she put out a caring plea to Maryam and try to make her understand? Did she pass on a single reformative text to Sabina? Why did she not feel empathy towards Nosheen; after all, she herself might have behaved similarly had she been in her place? Had she responded to Fatima's priceless friendship in kind? Had she even gathered a bit of courage to guide her new acquaintances from her 'reformed' environment away from backbiting and spitefulness with wisdom and sincerity? Since the answer to all these questions came out a resounding No, she had no choice but to promise herself to do better.

With renewed resolve Zerish ventured out into their private backyard. The ferocity of the downpour drenched her head cover, while the purity of the rain cleansed her heart of all ill-feelings. She had found back all her friends.



# Save Our Children!

By Binte Tassadaq

"Mama, you and Papa have to sit in the third one." Ayesha's ten year old girl guided her through the neatly arranged rows of chairs. Fatima's eyes shone with excitement. Her cheeks were a bright red.

Two weeks. She had been waiting for two whole weeks for this moment. Finally. She glanced at the huge banner which hung above stage. Annual Day, 2017, it read. A large number of spotlights lit the stage. Flowers had been placed in each corner in correspondence with the theme, 'Mystic Garden'. They were absolutely beautiful. Pink, yellow, red, any color imaginable, their exquisite beauty intensified by the brilliant light that shone from above. The steps leading to the stage were intricately laced with lush green vines. It was, without doubt, an amazing piece of art work.

Fatima had to admit she was proud. Proud of all the hard work, proud of all the long hours she and her classmates had put in to decorate the hall, to prepare the plays and refreshments for the guests. Now was her time. She could hardly wait for her turn to perform before the

audience. Especially her mother who had asked her several times about what she would be performing. Fatima, not wanting to ruin the surprise, shrugged off any such questions with a simple answer: "Sorry, can't tell. But I promise you'll love it!"

Ayesha pretended to like the event even though the music really bothered her. She tried to simply shut it out but it didn't work. Just too loud.

*'Oh Allah,*

*forgive me,'* she prayed silently. She didn't know what the program would be like.

"And now, the performance we have all been waiting for. The highlight of the day. Please put your hands together for class 5-C." A roar of applause followed the announcement as the children filed onto the stage. Ayesha shifted in her seat and strained to get a better look, and then froze in horror. Every sign of life left her body as she stared at Fatima, the apple of her eye.

*Oh my God!*

Fatima was no longer wearing the clothes she had come in from home. Her present appearance was nowhere near to how her mother had seen her dressed before leaving. A short, pink dress that hardly reached her knees. No sleeves.

Where did she get this from? What is going on? Ayesha tried to come out of the brain freeze. She knew at once that such a dress was unacceptable, even for a ten-year-old.

"Is that your daughter? In pink? She looks lovely; like a little angel." A woman next to her commented.

Ayesha remained silent.



Aik Chammach  Se Milay  
Aik Chammach Cheeni Ki Mithas

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All eyes were on her 'angel' as the music blared and Fatima stepped forward to lead the rest of her class into a synchronised dance. Every second was a torture. Unfortunately, Ayesha had to keep sitting and not storm out of that hall in rage. At that moment, just when she thought that nothing could get worse, a young boy joined Fatima, who had the crowd spellbound.

There is something wrong with my eyes, was Ayesha's first reaction to the sight of her daughter dancing with that boy. As she tried to regain her composure, the women next to her added, "MashaAllah, she is so confident."

Now I can't even trust my ears, Ayesha's thought process paralysed by the woman's comment.

She thanked God when the 'beautiful' performance came to an end, got up and marched towards the stage. Grabbing Fatima's hand and without even one glance at her back, she walked out of the hall along with her husband.

During the drive home, all Ayesha could think of was that dress and that dance. Do I need my daughter to have this confidence? This confidence to stand up to Allah's ﷻ commands? To stand up to the Sunnah of his Prophet ﷺ? No. Never. Islam first, always; this is what she wanted her daughter to learn, not music and dances...

My innocent little girl. What are they teaching her? Ayesha thought as her eyes filled with tears...

"We read Cinderella in class, today," Momina announced during lunch.

"Hmm," her father acknowledged while chewing. "Did you like it?"

"I loved it. It was amazing." She smiled broadly.

Aleena looked at her daughter adoringly; glad to see she was so happy. She had just recently started school. Skipping playgroup, she had been directly admitted into first grade. The school had a good reputation and was known for providing a friendly and cooperative environment. Most of the parents they had met assured them that they had never had any complaints.

"Mama,"

"Yes, dear,"

"When, do you think, will I meet my prince?"

Both Aleena and Hassan choked on their food.

"I hope he is really handsome and takes me to a land far away."

Aleena was still coughing, desperately trying to clear her throat. Hassan gasped for breath.

"Won't that be amazing,"

"Shhh, Momina, be quiet," Hassan ordered sternly.

After lunch, as they sat in the lounge, Aleena said "What are schools teaching children nowadays? I don't think this environment is suitable for our daughter..."

"I agree," Hassan sighed. "This is too much. She's only six!"

Unfortunately, these days, not many parents are like those of Fatima or Momina. Not many of them realise that the modern educational system poses a great threat to the religious and moral values that should be inculcated in children. Instead of grooming and nurturing the young minds so that they may reap the benefits of both worlds, these institutions have set their prime focus on career building and materialistic goals of this world, while completely ignoring the goals of the hereafter - an approach more suited to the non-believers of the Western world rather than proud Muslims. Surely education is important for employment and halal income but not at the expense of one's religious duties.

A young mind retains all that is taught to it. Thus, what a person learns in childhood remains with him forever. This is the period when the seedling should be given adequate air and water so that it may bloom into a flower most fragrant and beautiful. This is the period to teach a child Qur'an and Hadith, not Cinderella or Snow White. This is the period to teach him seerat and akhlaq rather than teaching them how to dance in order to entertain an audience in the name of 'confidence'.

In a system that does not groom the youth according to Islamic values, it becomes very hard for someone to refrain from different vices as one eventually succumbs to peer-pressure. An example of this is the increased use of drugs among students of some of the most prestigious institutions across the country. There is simply no respect for teachers who are merely seen as a means to pass and get good grades. They are frequent targets of back biting, mimicry and even abuse. Against all Islamic values, interaction with the opposite gender is highly encouraged in these schools. All those opposed to this notion are referred to as 'backward' and 'narrow minded'. In some institutions, even the wearing of veil is prohibited. Yes, prohibited. In Pakistan. A Muslim state with an Islamic constitution.

To ease our conscience, Islamiat is taught up to college, even university level while none of it is implemented in real life. It is a subject to be memorised in order to pass exams, get good grades, a good job and good money. Goals limited to the success of this life and this life alone...

What have we come to? Why are we willing to put the life of the hereafter at stake for the short, deceptive joys of this world, when the Qur'an itself says:

خير وابقى والآخرة

Why are our children not setting their sight on the hereafter?

Is a palace in Jannah not worth much, much more than straight As and countless rupees? Is being in the company of Prophets not infinitely better than a few pay raises?

It is high time for a combined effort to be made by the parents and children for the improvement of the curricula, rather the whole educational system of the country, with greater emphasis on Islamic duties. These children are, after all, the future of this Ummah. So, please, make better Muslims out of them first and only then better engineers, doctors and scientists.

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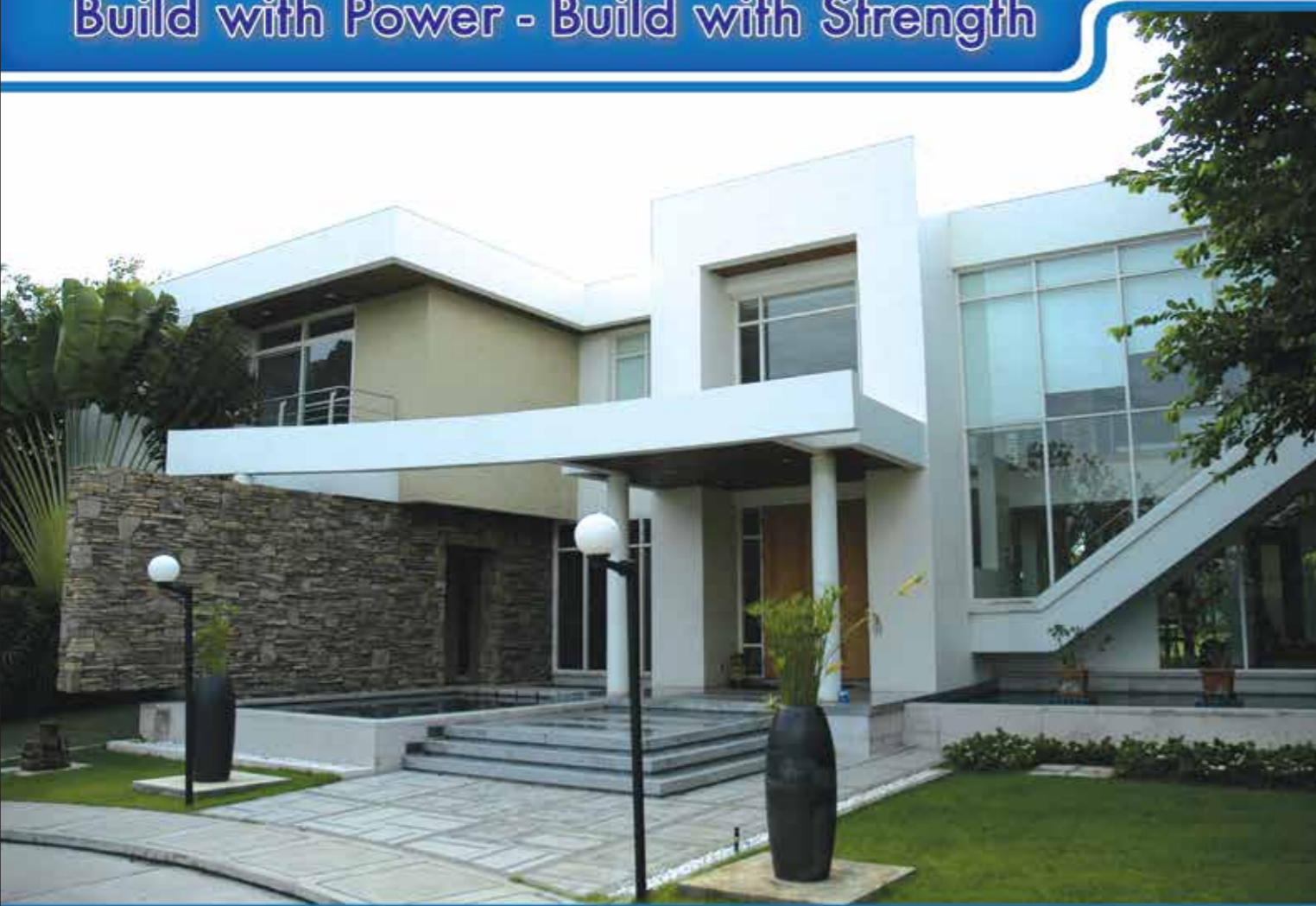
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# ZAKAT

By Khalid Baig

Money. These days it is hardly of secondary importance for those who don't have it. And even for many who do! What does Islam say about it? Islam recognizes the value of wealth. It refers to it as:

أَمْوَالِكُمْ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا

"Your property which Allah has made for you a means of support" [Al-Nisa, 4:5].

But it also warns about its dual nature: it could be a blessing or a curse. It is a blessing if used to do good. Prophet Muhammad, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, declared that person to be in an enviable position who has lot of wealth and he spends it day and night in the cause of righteousness. Otherwise it is a curse. No one who reads the following verse can think of it in any other way:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَظُهُورُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كَنَزْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

"And there are those who hoard gold and silver, and spend it not in the way of Allah. Announce unto them a most grievous chastisement. On the day when it will be heated in the fire of Hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs. "This is the treasure that you hoarded for yourselves. Taste then the treasure you hoarded!" [Al-Tauba 9:34-35]

The two characters are brought together in a beautiful juxtaposition in a hadith. "The case of a miser and a giver of charity is similar to that of two persons clad in armor from their breasts to their collar-bones. Every time the generous person

gives charity, his armor expands, till it covers his finger tips and toes. Every time the miser intends to spend something, his armor contracts, every ring of it sinking into his flesh. He tries to loosen it but cannot." [Bukhari and Muslim]. It should be remembered that here a generous person is one who spends generously in the path of Allah. A miser is one whose love of money keeps him from such spending even though he may be spending lavishly in other areas.

Such love of money is a disease of the heart and the first purpose of charity in Islam is to work as an antidote against that. That is why the Qur'an asked the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam,

خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ

"Of their wealth take alms to purify and sanctify them" [Tauba 9:103].

Hence the name Zakat (purification) for the main form of that obligation. And it is for this reason that Zakat remains obligatory even if there are no needy persons in a community.

Of course, the system of Zakat is designed to help the poor and the needy and it is a highly desirable characteristic of the believers that in addition to prayers and other acts of worship they are always conscious of this duty.

وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

"And in their wealth there is due share for the beggar and the deprived" [Al-Zariyat, 51:19].

They do it for no other motive but to please their Lord.



﴿۸﴾ وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿۸﴾

﴿۹﴾ إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لِرُوحِهِ اللَّهِ لَنُرِيدَ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا ﴿۹﴾

"And they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive, saying: 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone. No reward do we desire from you, nor thanks!'" [Al-Insan, 76:8-9]

Charity itself has been a cherished institution in all human societies. It remains so even in the capitalistic society. But without a strong belief in Allah and the Hereafter, a charitable act can only be motivated by a desire for fame or some other worldly reward. Human beings are driven by rewards. The only truly selfless act is one in which the reward is sought from Allah instead of other human beings. And that is the change in orientation that Islam provides and that remains its most distinguishing feature. Once a goat was slaughtered in the Prophet's household and its meat was distributed. Later on the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam, asked Aisha, Radi-Allahu unha, what was saved from the goat? "Nothing but a shank," she said. "Everything but the shank," said the Prophet, Sall-Allahu alayhi wa sallam. For what was given away in charity was truly saved for the hereafter.

There are other distinct features of Islam's system of Zakat. The Qur'an mentions where it can be used.

﴿۱۰﴾ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا

وَالْمَوْلَىٰ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْعُرْمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ

اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿۱۰﴾

"The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and for those employed in connection therewith, and for those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for the freeing of slaves, and for those in debt, and for the cause of Allah, and for the wayfarer" [Al-Tauba 9:60].

These are very precise and specific categories, the seemingly general category of "cause of Allah" referring to Jihad by consensus of scholars.

We can better appreciate the immense wisdom in this arrangement if we compare it with Tithes. Under that system, adopted by the Christian Church, lay people were forced to pay a tenth of their income to the church to "support the clergy, maintain churches and assist the poor"-- mostly in that order. The system led to widespread abuses. It was for this reason that tithes were abolished in France in 1789 during the Revolution and in other countries after that. England finally ended it in 1936. It was never accepted in the U.S.

Zakat, on the other hand, cannot be used to maintain mosques or support the scholars. Neither can it be used to support the normal functioning of the government. No one can change its rate, sources, or application, which are all pre-determined by the Qur'an and Sunnah. All these distinguish Zakat as an act of worship rather than a tax and have been responsible for keeping the system mostly free of corruption, even at a time when some Muslim countries have generally fallen victim to the corruption epidemic. Yet the problem is that a very large number of those who should be paying Zakat are careless about their responsibility.

To be sure, a Muslim has financial obligations other than Zakat (to support mosques, schools, and other community projects on an as needed basis), but Zakat itself remains the most potent system for addressing the economic problems of the Ummah. With 2.5% of the savings of the rich people throughout the Ummah going to its poor people every year, the basic needs of everyone could be satisfied. In fact if used properly, it could put IMF, the World Bank, and other shylocks who have been enriching themselves at the expense of the poor out of business in the Muslim countries.

Even for our economic problems, Islam is the solution. If only we would give it a chance.

## The Divine Decree

The divine decree related to the believer is always a bounty, even if it is in the form of withholding (something that is desired), and it is a blessing, even if it appears to be a trial, and an affliction that has befallen him is in reality a cure, even though it appears to be a disease!

Unfortunately, due to the ignorance of the worshipper, and his transgressions, he does not consider anything to be a gift or a blessing or a cure unless he can enjoy it immediately, and it is in accordance with his nature. If he were only given a little bit of understanding, then he would have counted being withheld from as a blessing, and the sickness as a mercy, and he would relish the trouble that befalls him more than he relishes his ease, and he would enjoy poverty more than he enjoys richness, and he would be more thankful when he is blessed with little than when he is blessed with a lot.

-Imam ibn al Qayyim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ

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## THE AUSPICIOUS BIRTH OF MUHAMMAD SALLALLAHU ALAYHI WA SALLAM

By Umm e Tahir

Propitious events in History do not take place without tidings preceding it, and the birth of the greatest reformer in the history of mankind (sallAllahu alayhi wassalam) co-relates with some remarkably inexplicable events that have been recorded by historians.

The date of his birth has not been recorded but it is common consensus that he (sallAllahu alayhi wassalam) came into the world in the year the Abyssinians attacked the city of Makkah (an

assault by King Abraha with an army using elephants), corresponding to 579 CE and 53 BH, born to Amna Bint-e-Wahab of the Banu Zuhrah in Makkah.

His mother relates that when the time of birth drew near a light emanated from her that was so brilliant that she saw that it lit up the castle of Busra in Syria. She also heard a voice saying, "When he is born give him in the protection of the One who will protect him from every evil of the envier! And name him Muhammed."

The midwife attending to Amna declared, "The stars were so bright and fiercely close in the sky that night, I felt that they will fall down on me!"

Harith ibn Thabit (who was seven years old at the time of the Prophet's (sallAllahu alayhi wassalam) birth) relates "I heard a Jewish monk shouting to the people from the top of a fortress in Yathrib, "O people, O Jewish clans! Tonight the red star has arisen that prophesies the birth of Ahmad, the Prophet whose name is foretold in the Torah! Truly the star never appears but at the passing away of the soul of a Prophet or heralding the birth of a new one."

He inquired who had given birth to a son in Makkah and he was told that a grandson had been born to 'Abd al-Muttalib, so he hurried to Amna bint Wahab and asked to see the infant.

When he discovered the Seal of Prophethood on his blessed nape, he almost swooned and declared "Rejoice, O Bani Ismael, for now the mantle of Prophethood has passed from the Israelites to you! This child indeed is Ahmad whose birth has been forecast in the Torah."

According to authentic sources it has been related that fourteen balconies of Khosrow's palace (the Persian Monarch, Khosru Nushervan, who reigned from 531 – 57) collapsed and fell to ruins; the great temple fire in the Magi temple of the Zoroastrians, which had been alight for thousands of years, went out miraculously; the churches around Sawah (a country between Rai i.e. Tehran and Hamazan, which had a very large lake nearly six miles in length, surrounded by a large number of churches, synagogues and gardens), all went to ruin at the sudden drying up of the lake at the time of the birth of Prophet Muhammad (sallAllahu alayhi wassalam); and the idols inside the Ka'abah fell down, including the biggest idol, 'Hubbal'.

'Abd al-Muttalib was sent for and he was overjoyed, as his beloved son Abdullah had passed away. He took the child gratefully to the Ka'abah and prayed for his protection. As was the custom in those days he arranged for a feast and invited all his clansmen to it. 'Abd al-Muttalib was the respected head of the clan of Hashim and the tribe of Quraysh, to which his clan belonged. Since Quraysh was the biggest and most influential tribe in Makkah, 'Abd al-Muttalib was seen as the leader of Makkah. The Quraysh had a special status in Makkah because they used to be in charge of the sacred Ka'abah.

When 'Abd al-Muttalib's clansmen inquired as to what he had named the child, he replied, "I have named him Muhammed ﷺ," praised in the heavens and praised in the world. "They were surprised as they had never heard this name earlier.

When the rejoicing was over, they began to look for a wet nurse for the infant, as was the custom in the Arab society. Many wet nurses had arrived in Makkah for this purpose from Banu Saad. Haleemah bint Abi Dhu'ayb was one of them. Due to famine-like conditions in Banu Bakr she was impoverished; she had an infant

of her own, her donkey lagged behind all others, and her camel was not yielding any milk.

When she arrived in Makkah she found most of the babies had already been taken by the others. She had heard about Muhammad sallAllahu alayhi wassalam, but knowing that he was an orphan, had backed off; 'what will the grandfather and mother do? All rewards were found with the father of the child.' However, not finding any other baby for suckling she decided to go to his mother and take him. No sooner had she taken him that the doors of barakah opened up on her. Her barren she-camel began to yield milk more than enough for them and on the way back to Banu Bakr her donkey, slow and emaciated, now trotted so fast that the other women did not believe that it was the same one she had ridden on her way to Makkah on. "It seems, O Halima, that the orphan boy has brought us good luck!" her husband cried.

Al-Busiri (RH) pays tribute to his (sallAllahu alayhi wassalam) lofty birth in the following couplets:

*His birth revealed the purity of his ancestry.*

*How fine his origin, How pure his final end!*

*That day the Persians sensed that they had been warned*

*of the descent of defeats and retribution.*

*By the night the Arch of Kisra split asunder.*

*Likewise his horde, never to be restored.*

*The sacred fire breathed its last from sorrow.*

*Out of anxiety, the Euphrates lost its way.*

*Sawa endured the drying of its lake.*

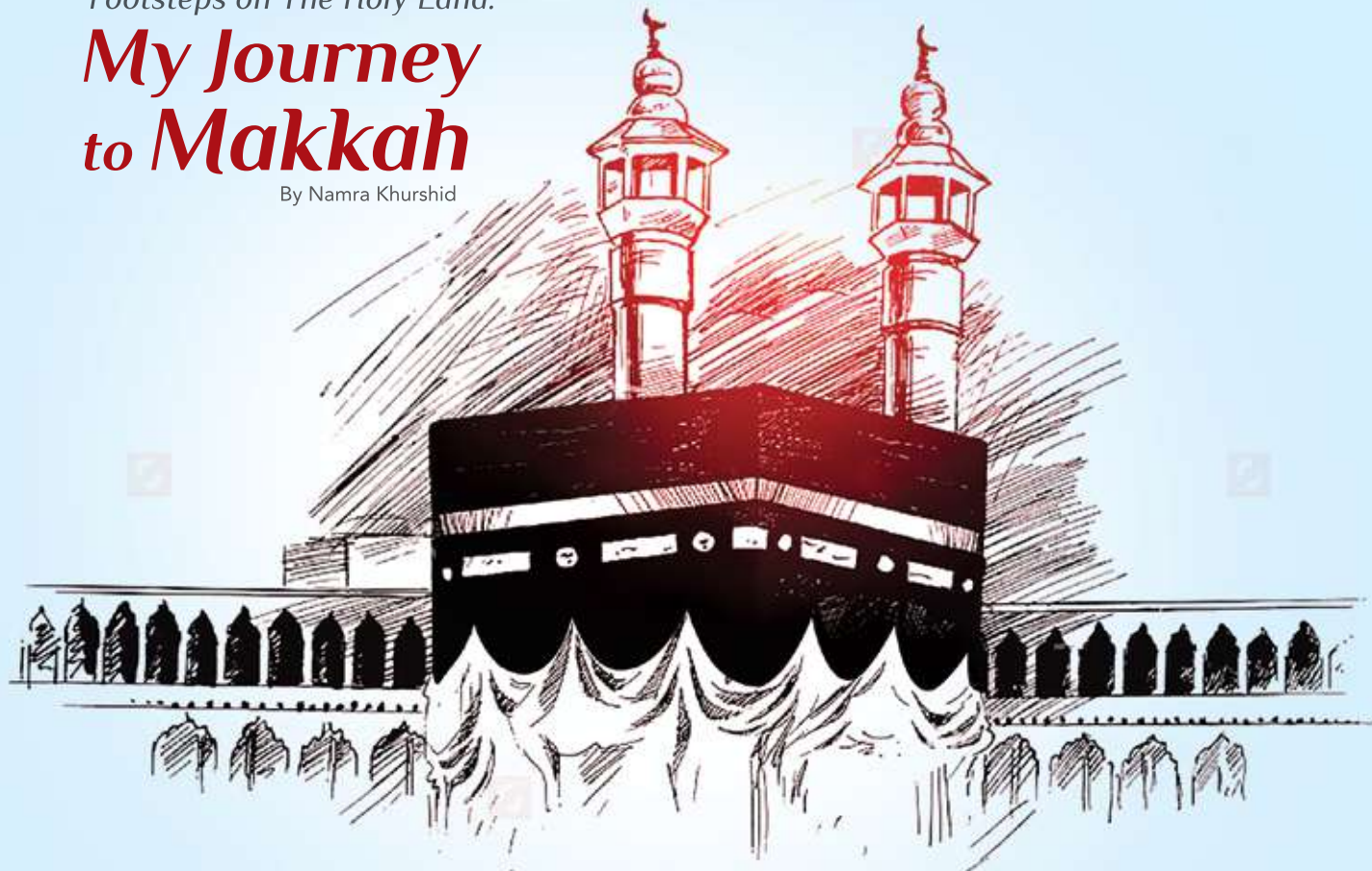
*The thirsty who sought water there returned in rage.*

(Translation: Shaykh Abdal Hakim Murad)



## Footsteps on The Holy Land: My Journey to Makkah

By Namra Khurshid



"Papa is it time to leave?"

Tip-toeing her feet on the marbled floor of Haram Sharif the girl asked anxiously...

Blue was the sky, cold was the air and merciful was the environment we were witnessing. The post fajr time in Haram Sharif looked divine. It was September 2001. We were in Makkah to perform 'Umrah. It was my first ever 'Umrah.

It was a marked moment.

I used to hold Papa's hands and my grandmother's wheel chair while going to offer our prayers. We were there for two weeks. Such a short period of time.

I still remember my last short visit to masjid Al-Haram with Papa and dadi. It was Fajr and there were, if I am not wrong, three janazas that morning. Lucky souls to have died on the sacred land! The weather was so pretty that morning.

"Papa is it time to leave?"

I asked again looking at him keenly.

Papa kept looking at the Ka'bah praising the magnanimity and divinity of the place. Once over he drifted his attention to the birds circumambulating the Ka'bah.

I kept asking Papa, "Papa is it time to leave?" and he never wanted to leave the place.

The serenity was overwhelming.

We finally had our breakfast and left for the bus to our abode in Madinah.

Thirteen years later, when I became a young conscious adult, I found the little girl who wanted anxiously to hold Papa's hand and one kept asking "Papa is it time to leave?" now having another emotion brewing inside her: to visit Him in His house, the Baytullah.

I would come close to tears for, I so wanted to go for Hajj or 'Umrah with Papa and Ammi. I would make plans with Papa and would look at his face so that someday he might say, "We are going to Makkah Sharif this time, dear!"

It was only after another year and a half, the decision was made for me!

Yes, I was going to visit His house, the Baytullah, the house of Allah. And this time it was for good. I had never even thought of it? As unbelievable as it sounded, I began to count Allah's blessings; sure they were endless!

Was I going to meet Him in His house?

Was the little girl who would look up to Papa's face was really called this time?

Has Allah really heard her wishes when she had asked from the depths of her heart?

Indeed, He did.

The decision was made for me. Alhamdulillah.

Muhammad (my husband) and I were to visit Him now. This time around though was without Papa, Ammi and Dadi (May Allah rest her in peace with His ultimate Rahmah and open doors of heaven in her grave, ameen).

I was anxious, overwhelmed but content altogether.

How would it feel?

Would I be able to see the Majestic Ka'bah?

The black four cornered entity that stands as an evidence of a divine sanctuary ever since mankind has been descended to this earth? The same Ka'aba, which has been touched by the hands of Ibrahim and Prophet Muhammad.

What will that moment hold for me? Am I truly going to witness the glory of noorun 'ala noor...

### 9:00 pm: At the Crossroads

The wind of Makkah Al-Mukarramah kissed my face and being a sinful creature I embraced it. I gazed for a long time at the Makkah sky ... stark black without the Qamr (moon) this time around. I stared at the wide metallic boards, the smooth roads, GMCs, land cruisers, Fords, etcetera, and finally, my husband and I entered the hudud-e-haram after a long journey in ihram – the holy attire one has to don when one goes out to perform 'Umrah and Hajj. I knew it as we crossed the monumental mushaf before us. Subhanallah. This was just the beginning of the sacred journey we were going to make.

Tears rolled down my cheeks as we crossed this point of entry into the Haram. Was I finally in Makkah?

I looked down at my black garb and tried to grab hold of the trembling feet with my cold hands. Was the AC in the Tucson too high? I heaved in silence and the sighs were mixed with tranquility and amazement. I thanked Allah under my lips. Muhammad thought I was sleeping.

Yes, I was here.

This is the land where the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and his companions lived. Home to tawheed – Unity of Allah and the unimaginable trials my beloved Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and his companions went through. It's the land that reminded me of all the seerah lessons that I had listened to as a student of Islam. Lessons that I finally related to.

Prayers emerged from within unknowingly ... O Lord! Now that You have called me here make us a true 'abd of yours. O our Wali! Accept from us and bestow upon us your forgiveness. Amen!

### To the Haram ...

As we continued on our journey to the Haram Sharif surrounded by gigantic and majestic mountains one thought stayed long with me; these mountains had seen the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam and the Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alayhi wa sallam had seen them. And now 1400 years later we are seeing them. The blessings were still there.

O Allah bless us with Your mercy, ameen.

The crowd streamed towards haram sharif and amongst it we were two individuals making our way to His home. I was excited with what lay ahead. I was humbled as to where I was. I was spellbound by His glory. I was fearful of Him. Muhammad held my hand and kept briefing me about the duas we had to make for ourselves and others. He also told me about the geography

of the land we were walking on (may Allah bless him immensely, ameen).

I recited the tashreeq while looking down. Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik...

The crowd flooded amongst the huge hotel buildings. The needles of the Clock Tower ticked and I experienced a sense of déjà vu. The image of that little girl having her breakfast of layered parathas and chai in the courtyard loomed in my mind. This is the same place! Papa, ammi, dadi, look, I am here again! I wanted to scream. Oh, how much I missed them! Words clogged in my throat, my vision was continuously hindering and blurred.

Men, women and kids amassed the courtyard of the haram sharif. A continuous hustle bustle was in the air with the soul-piercing fragrance of haram sharif's cleaning surf. I misunderstood it for the divine place's characteristic fragrance and my husband corrected me.

The floor was as brightly lit as the moon's light. The crowd was as if they had forgotten to sleep and praying was the only important thing right then. And why not it be?

### Towards the Mataf...

Escalating our way barefoot towards the mataf, Muhammad asked me to lower my gaze so that when I rest my eyes on the Ka'bah I could make dua in that first glance. I was an amateur. I did as I was told. And then all of a sudden the ka'abah loomed in front of us with hundreds of people belonging to varied ethnicities circumambulating it. The holy sanctuary stood there for millions and millions of Muslims visiting it every part of the day from around the globe.

From among those millions I was a fraction of His chosen ones. I was here.

Labbaik Allah humma labbaik  
Labbaik la sharika laka labbaik  
In-nal hamda  
Wan-ni'mata  
Laka walmulk  
Laa sharika lak.

O my Lord, here I am at Your service, here I am.

There is no partner with You,  
here I am.

Truly the praise

and the provisions are Yours,  
and so is the dominion and sovereignty.

There is no partner with You.

A sudden gush of hot tears followed and a hard lump rose in my throat like a date seed. I prayed... together we prayed for what felt like an eternity... not noticing who was standing beside us. We sobbed hard with hiccups that did not cease, and tears that never ran out. All prayers for His mercy and barakah... O Allah! O our Wali!

Just then at some distance in the mataf, tip-toeing on the marbled floor of the haram sharif, the little girl smiled back at me her eyes flooding with tears.

Right then with the time lapse of roughly fifteen years, the picture finally fell into its place on the canvas.

Baytullah – Allah's home. My home too, for home is where the heart is.



# The Door that Never Closes

By Sumayyah Aisha Ghazi

Being a Muslim is just so amazing, Alhamdulillah. Born in a Muslim, rather religious family I never paid attention to how big the blessing of being a Muslim was. The mere feeling that Someone's by your side in the hardest of times, Someone's there, Someone Who wants your best, Who's there to help you whenever you're stuck in any of the apparent dead-ends of this maze-like life; this feeling gives one immense strength. I don't know why I never realized the unimaginable strength the Almighty's being there blesses us with.

I think I just took being born a Muslim for granted until that day....

It was a Ramadan night; we were attending a bayan at a Masjid after Taraweeh prayers. I was with my mom and my younger sister who was already snoozing in my mom's laps after the long fast she had managed to keep that day. As the bayan got over, I whispered to my mom if we could have some ice cream on our way back; to my surprise she agreed (generally she finds ice-creams too sweet). We came down from the ladies portion and as we headed towards our car, my younger brother informed us that the one elder to him, Ibrahim, couldn't be found anywhere. God, I can't explain the jolt I felt as my brother said this. Despite being the eldest, I've got the weakest of nerves to face any such situation. I hushed my fearful emotions and told myself that he must be there only and that the little one was just making up things. We stood there, waiting for my father who was still not there and I saw him coming with a super worried face. I could literally see tiny drops of sweat twinkling on his forehead and that's when I felt another jolt, harder this time. Something was wrong. Really wrong.

I think it was about 12:30 a.m. and we were still there, looking for him. I just can't describe how I was feeling at that moment, the closing shops just added to our dread. Late night, six days to Eid, crime activities at their peak and my brother nowhere around! Baba kept looking for him in every shop, the neighboring streets and mom was calling my grandma and all to pray for him. We got scared; like really, really scared. While my uncle and Baba looked for him, my sister and I were in the car praying for him, reciting all the du'as we had ever memorized. She was crying loudly, her hands cupped for

praying and tears trickling down her face. I didn't know how to comfort her and so I just told her that he'll be back and there's nothing to worry about. Facing the qibla, sitting in the car, I started supplicating like I had never supplicated before.

I sat there on the seat, cross-legged, praying for him. Tears rolling down under my niqab and my hands cupped in front of the One Who was there understanding what our problem was, the only One. I just don't get where the words came from, but they just came onto my lips:

"O Allah! You're the only One Who can help us right now. I know I am one fully submerged in sins, but I'm still Your slave. You love me because you made me. You love my brother, and all of us more than seventy mothers can, please help us. Please keep him safe, please bring him back to us. Ya Allah! You're Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem, the most Merciful, O Allah please have mercy on us...we don't deserve it but we're still Yours, we belong to You. We don't have any other door to knock on and You are the only One Who has the power to bring him back to us. O Lord, You are Al-Qadir. You are capable of everything. You can do anything. Anything. You can make us find him wherever he is. Just bring him to us, to my parents, right now."

I kept on crying and making supplications and it was like I felt Allah Ta'ala listening to me, watching my tears. The many tears that got absorbed in my veil, losing their very existence as soon as they welled out of my eyes, no one saw them, they dried up; no one saw them except Allah, the most High.

It's hard to believe but suddenly I felt as if Allah ﷻ had told me that He's with me and that I'm supposed to trust Him and not worry as Ibrahim WILL inshAllah be found in a while!

This rush of feelings stopped my tears, and amazingly, I felt relieved. My mother came into the car and I told her that I had prayed and that Ibrahim will be found inshAllah and I somehow felt sure of it. I silently recited Surah Yaseen and some other verses of the Quran while Baba went back into the Masjid, to look for him in the now-deserted second floor.

And believe me, within five minutes of my prayer he was there! Baba found him sleeping in the Masjid. SubhanAllah! When Allah ﷻ promises, He indeed fulfills it in ways best known to

Him. He did listen to me, I supplicated to Him, down here, on this earth, in a car, with windows closed, but He heard me from the highest of the skies. Wow. He listened to a sinner like me. He listened to me while I hadn't listened to Him. SubhanAllah. He's so Merciful that He disregarded my sins, and He just replied to our cries for Ibrahim.

## The Mightiest of all Swords: Your Du'a.

These kind of incidents do happen in our lives, causing distress, but they usually renew our connection with Allah ﷻ. We turn to Him for help, we talk to Him, we cry before Him, we think of our sins and then with the help of Allah ﷻ, we repent.

Faith in Allah ﷻ is something so powerful for Muslims that it has no parallels. The stronger the faith, the stronger the connection with our Creator ﷻ, and the stronger the person feels. Praying to Allah can do wonders. Real wonders. Du'a can change fate, it can make the seemingly impossible possible.

Allah's ﷻ door never closes. They're open even to the apparently worst of us.

## Du'a is the Heart of all Ibada'h

The heart pumps and regulates blood in our body, and our supplications invigorate our worship.

Imagine hopeless situations like being lost in a jungle, or having a child unwell with an 'incurable' disease, or expecting something that may ruin your prestige or receiving a life-threat and the list goes on; these are situations, where hopeless from all asbab, we truly turn to Allah ﷻ, He being our only hope. That's when most of us bow to Allah ﷻ with sincere repentance. Allah ﷻ loves it when we ask Him for something. A friend of mine once said that don't worry over the hurdles of life, as they connect us to Allah ﷻ. Believe me friends, once we start making du'a for the smallest of things in life, we'll find great satisfaction in all forms of worship. I have tried it myself: take out a few minutes every day to talk to Allah ﷻ, pour your heart unto Him. Tell Him how you're stuck and how badly you need His help.

## Have Hope

Once you've made your du'as for what you want, then have hope. Have trust in Allah ﷻ, that He surely did hear you and He will accept your supplications in one form or another. Allah treat us the way we expect from Him. So, always be positive.

Allah ﷻ says, "O man! What has deceived you about your gracious Lord, Who created you, then perfected you, then brought you in due proportion?" (Al-Infitar: 6,7)

## Looks like it wasn't Accepted? No, wait!

There are times when we see that Allah ﷻ didn't give us what we asked for. For instance, if I prayed to Allah ﷻ for admission into such and such school but it didn't materialize. Then remember, that our vision is limited and we cannot encompass Allah's ﷻ perfect planning for us. At times, we ask Allah ﷻ for things that appear fruitful to us, but in reality they're not good for us. This is the time to believe that Allah ﷻ will bless me with something far better for me.

".....surely Allah knows everything well." (Al-Ankabut: 62)

So all du'as are accepted, some in the same way as we want, and some in ways we don't know yet; some are answered in our worldly life, while some are reserved for rewards in the Hereafter inshAllah.

Allah ﷻ says, "...and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty

to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (of every difficulty)." (At-Talaq: 2)

## Got What You Wanted? The Test Starts Now!

Here comes the juncture where I guess most of us slip. When we are utterly helpless we beseech Allah ﷻ like beggars but when He responds to our prayers by curing our sick, blessing our childless with children, getting our daughters married, removing our financial difficulties, then what? Do we fulfill our promise, our duty and obligation of obeying Him?

"When man is afflicted by a hardship, he prays to Us (at all times), when reclining or sitting or standing. But when we remove his hardship, he just takes his way as though he had never prayed to Us in any hardship that afflicted him. This is how their deeds appear beautified to the transgressors." (Yunus: 12)

We were to remember Him with greater sincerity and effort now, but do we?

## Remembering Him... How do I do that?

Allah, the most High says, "Remember me and I'll remember you."

SubhanAllah! How fortunate are the ones whom Allah ﷻ remembers. So how to go about it? One way is regularity and ikhlaas in all obligatory forms of worship; then being in the company of the pious. And of course, also, making lots and lots of Du'as and indulging in zikrAllah, be it with the tongue or with the heart.

## The Challenge!

The test is to try to adopt piety in all spheres of our lives; putting a full stop to everything that my Creator doesn't like, because shunning sins empowers our du'as.

There's a new song, a new movie released, a friend request from a person of the opposite gender on Facebook, a great bank job which isn't permissible, there are a hundred things that you would like to do, but you don't just because Allah ﷻ, doesn't want you to do that. Just promise yourself you won't do even a single teeny weeny thing that would displease your Creator ﷻ and then see the power of your supplications inshAllah.

## Ask Allah ﷻ for Allah ﷻ!

The Prophet ﷺ taught us the du'a: "O Allah! I ask You for your love." (Tirmidhi)

Hadhrat Haji Imdadullah ﷺ used to cry to Allah ﷻ:

KOI TUJH SE KUCH, KOI KUCH MAANGTA HE,

ILAAHI MAIN TUJH SE TALABGAAR TERA!

People ask You for one thing or another,

O Allah! I ask You of You alone!

O Allah! Grant us the ability to obey You. Grant us Your perfect love so that we don't displease You even for a second, grant us the ability to turn to You in repentance, for we have nowhere to go except Your door, the door that never closes.



# The West's Wisdom

By Dr. Asad Zaman

In continuation of the previous part, Part 7 of the article, "Is Development Accumulation of Wealth?" dispels further conventional 'myths' in explaining the reasons behind real development and advancement, by replacing these with alternative, eye-opening "truths"...

## Myth 11: Wisdom of the West

In Europe, a tremendous battle took place between science and Christianity, with famous highlights being the recantation of Galileo, and the burning of Bruno at the stake. Science won the battle, and sought for itself the sacred status earlier accorded to religious knowledge. The philosophy of logical positivism was invented to show that scientific knowledge was the only knowledge worthy of the name, and all other kinds of knowledge – including religious knowledge – was merely an illusion. This philosophy became widely popular in the early twentieth century, and continues to be extremely influential, even though it was proven wrong around the middle of the twentieth century. The misunderstandings created by this philosophy led the majority of western intellectuals to exclude the most precious and valuable kinds of knowledge from the domain of knowledge itself. The most important type of knowledge is to know what it means to be a human being, to learn the meaning and purpose of life, and to know how to achieve excellence in conduct. Because science could not address them, all of these questions came to be regarded as meaningless questions without any answers. Thus, over the past century, instead of progress, there has been a significant and serious decline of knowledge in the west.

*God is near unto those who have faith, taking them out of deep darkness into the light - whereas near unto those who are bent on denying the truth are the powers of evil that take them out of the light into darkness deep (The Qur'an 2:257)*

Under the influence of logical positivism, western intellectuals came to a nearly unanimous conclusion that "good" and "evil" are meaningless metaphysical concepts. For example, a leading philosopher Ayer (1936) expressed what came to be the consensus view as follows:

"We can now see why it is impossible to find a criterion for determining the validity of ethical judgments ... because they have no objective validity whatsoever... They are pure expressions of feeling and as such do not come under the category of truth and falsehood. They are unverifiable for the same reason as a cry of pain or a word of command is unverifiable".

Ethics was taken out of the realm of knowledge, and given the reduced status of a feeling, like a cry of pain. The arguments of Nietzsche for going "beyond good and evil" and subsequently Skinner for going "beyond freedom and dignity" came to be widely accepted. As a result, the concept of morality was dropped from Western education in a gradual process spanning the twentieth century; see Reuben (1996) for details. The idea that an education is a means of development in all dimensions: spiritual, social, and human, was gradually forgotten. It was replaced by the idea that education is a means to earn money or acquire job skills. As many critics have come to realize, the educational goal of turning humans into productive cogs in a machine displaces essential knowledge about what it means to be a human being. For instance, Gatto (1998) writes:

"...level, anxious, spiritless families, godless and conforming; people who believe that the difference between Coke and Pepsi is matter worth arguing about. The American economy depends on schooling us that status is purchased and others run our lives. We learn there that sources of joy and accomplishment are external, that the contentment comes with the possessions, seldom from within."

Higher education in the west, just like mass education at lower levels, is no longer designed to produce character development. It was not illiterate savages, but graduates of the finest educational systems of the West who designed the gas chambers used to burn millions of innocent men, women and children in Germany. Julie Reuben (1996) has documented how the efforts to build character were gradually abandoned in western universities in the twentieth century. This has led to a situation where brilliant scientists design weapons which can cause deaths of millions, or fry innocents in heat. Ph.D. physicists who developed the nuclear bomb denied any responsibility for Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Displaying the moral blindness created by this educational system, Oppenheimer's testimony about the effects of the atom bomb before Congress first describes the spectacular light, fire and smoke show that would result, and then turned to the deadly slaughter of all within effective radius (see Valiunas, 2006). David Halberstam (1993) has documented how graduates of Yale and Harvard ran the Vietnam War on the pattern of an efficient business, with callous disregard for human suffering: more than one million civilians died as "collateral damage" in the mass bombings and napalming, and atrocities and massacres were common. Leading biologists work for salaries to develop non-fertile varieties of genetically engineered high yield grains so that multinationals can profit from the hunger of humanity. Profits and wealth trump ethics and morality, as explicitly stated by Milton Friedman, who encouraged businesses to pursue profits and ignore social concerns. Pursuit of these principles in leading business schools has led to a "terrible failure," as the following quote from Harvard Professor Zuboff (2009) indicates:

"I spent a quarter-century as a professor at the Harvard Business School, including 15 years teaching in the MBA program. I have come to believe that much of what my colleagues and I taught has caused real suffering, suppressed wealth creation, destabilized the world economy, and accelerated the demise of the 20th century capitalism in which the U.S. played the leading role.

We weren't stupid and we weren't evil. Nevertheless we managed to produce a generation of managers and business professionals that is deeply mistrusted and despised by a majority of people in our society and around the world. This is a terrible failure."

## Truth 11: Ignorance Masquerading as Knowledge

Given that we have only one chance to live, what is the most important kind of knowledge? Obviously, we need to know: what is the best way to live our lives? The Quran informs us that demonstration of excellence in conduct is the purpose of the creation of life and death:

*Who hath created life and death that He may try you, which of you is best in conduct (67:2)*

Because science replaced religion as sacred knowledge in the west, science was called upon to give answers to deep and difficult questions like what it means to be human, what is the purpose of life, what is excellence in conduct, and suitable rules for social and political organization. The attempt to find scientific answers to these questions was labeled the "Enlightenment Project." Contrary to the hopes of the Enlightenment philosophers, science did not prove to be capable of answering them. Scientists learned how to do heart transplants, but could not learn how to purify the heart of deadly emotions like envy, lust, greed, pride and others. This process, the purification of the heart, is among the central teachings of Islam.

The mistaken idea that scientific knowledge is the only kind of knowledge, and that social science must be patterned on

physical science, led to a huge number of misunderstandings, which continue to dominate intellectual discourse in the west. It is impossible to list them all and document these errors, which are built into the foundations of a modern western university education. We can only sketch a few major ones, and indicate why they are wrong.

**1. Misunderstanding Human Beings.** Since science deals with inanimate particles subject to physical laws, the school of behavioral psychology proposed to treat human beings as robots which can be programmed via conditioning. Skinner (1972), the founder of this school, wrote "Beyond Freedom and Dignity," which denied both reason and volition to human beings. This became the dominant school of thought in psychology for most of the twentieth century. Many problems, including the collapse of logical positivism, have led to serious reconsideration and emergence of alternatives, but behavioral psychology continues to command intellectual respect and dominate orthodoxy. In contrast to behavioral psychology, Islam offers deep insights into the nature of human beings, and the sources of satisfaction and well-being. Thousands of US soldiers have converted to Islam after having close encounters with Muslims; see Phillips (1998). Many cite their amazement at the ability of Muslims to cope with extremely difficult and stressful situations on the basis of Islam; see for example, Campbell (2013). Similarly, psychological teams in post-Earthquake Pakistan found Muslims much better able to cope with deep trauma created by massive personal and social catastrophes.

## 2. The Search for Quantifiable, Observable, and Universal Laws:

Since science is based on universal laws, which do not vary by country, culture, or time, social science also attempted to do the same. However, this is impossible. Human behavior is conditioned by particular historical circumstances, and cannot be studied by means of universal laws applicable to all societies at all times. To understand human beings, we must understand the society in which they live, and the particular historical circumstances they face, including their political economic and social environment. Gray (2007, p. 2) writes that "political philosophy ... cannot even begin to grapple with the political dilemmas of an age in which political life is dominated by renescent particularisms, militant religions and resurgent ethnicities." Similarly, the stark failure of economists to foresee the massive global financial crisis of 2007-2008 was blamed on unrealistic mathematical models (imitating the laws of Physics) by many Nobel caliber economists. For example, Krugman (2009) said that the profession of economists as a whole went astray because they mistook the beauty of mathematics for truth. In Zaman (2013) and related writings, I have shown that Islamic teachings offer a far deeper understanding of economic problems of man, and also provide excellent solutions, not within the ambit of contemporary modern economic teachings.

**3. Justice:** When abstractions like ethics and morality were taken out of the realm of knowledge, western intellectuals decided that these were just social conventions. That is, anything that a society agrees to is valid as a conception of justice. In ancient Roman times, opposing parties would be represented by Gladiators, and legal cases would be decided in favor of the party whose champion won the fight. Today, the identical concept of justice prevails, except that gladiators have been replaced by lawyers. As explicitly stated by a panel of lawyers (Stanford Magazine, 1983), the judicial system is adversarial in nature. Both lawyers on opposing sides have the duty to do their best to win the case for their client, regardless of whether or not the outcome will be just. Islam has a radically different concept of justice. The judge and both parties seek to arrive at a solution which is just to all. There is an effort to achieve



consensus: all should agree that the solution is just. Thus the system is not necessarily adversarial in nature, though conflicting interpretations of justice may arise.

Historical developments in the west have led to an extremely distorted understanding of the nature of human knowledge. The ability to build an atom bomb is classified as scientific knowledge. The idea that it is wrong to kill innocent men, women and children by bombing entire cities, is not classified as knowledge. This is just a feeling, and normative propositions are not worthy of the name of knowledge. With this disastrously mistaken epistemology, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Gulag, and burning alive of millions of innocent Jews and genocides without end become possible.

#### Myth 12: The Progress of the West

Perhaps the most fundamental myth is that of progress. Over the past few centuries, western civilization has scaled heights hitherto unknown to mankind and reached peaks of excellence. Is this really true? There is no doubt that there has been fantastic progress in science and technology. However, all this progress has been purchased at a huge cost. Does it really count as progress that we have learnt how to fry thousands of innocents (men, women, and children) on burning streets by fire-bombing Dresden and Tokyo? That millions died in senseless world wars in the twentieth century? That the resulting shortage of young men led to a rapid decline in moral standards, which has had the outcome of destroying family life in the west?

The Enlightenment dream was that reason, embodied in achievements of science and technology, would solve all human problems. In particular, they hoped that reason would lead to stronger basis for a better morality than one provided by Christianity. This dream turned into a nightmare in the twentieth century. Nietzsche (cited in Glover, 2001) had far greater insight into the consequences of abandonment of religion:

“As the will to truth thus gains self-consciousness - there can be no doubt of that - morality will gradually perish now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries in Europe - the most terrible, most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles.”

Nietzsche was contemptuous of the ideas of compassion, love, sympathy, humility as being signs of weaknesses. He admired the virtues of the barbarians who triumph over civilizations which become weak through degeneration and luxury. The popular philosophy of Social Darwinism suggested that the human race would improve by extermination of the weak. In line with this philosophy, Nietzsche despised the majority, including most Europeans of his own time. He even says, 'the great majority of men have no right to existence, but are a misfortune to higher men. There are also peoples that are failures.' He celebrated the "Supermen," a small and select group of ruthless leaders, who would "accept with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men who... have to be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments."

Does it matter what Nietzsche said or thought more than a century ago? Philosopher and Ethicist Jonathan Glover (2001) thinks so. He devotes to Nietzsche the first chapter of his book "Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century" which documents many of the extreme atrocities which took place in the twentieth century. Glover writes that "Poor answers to [ethical] questions have contributed to a climate in which some of the disasters were made possible." Many have attributed Nazi excesses to the influence of Nietzsche. Recent human disasters, like presidential authorization of torture, and imprisonment of innocent children in western Gulag of Guantanamo Bay, and countless other massacres, are due to people like Nietzsche who

think that "To see others suffer does one good, to make others suffer even more. ... Without cruelty there is no festival ..." As we have stressed earlier, it is ideas which move history. It is certainly true, to paraphrase Macaulay (1958), that the entire Arabic literature can produce no match for the writings of Machiavelli, Marquis De Sade, Nietzsche, and the Kubark Manual of CIA. [Alfred McCoy (2007) has documented the evolution of the European tradition of torture of heretics (including Muslims and Jews), which started with the Spanish Inquisition. He describes the CIA manual for torture (The Kubark Manual) as "the first real revolution in the cruel science of pain in more than three centuries." This manual describes techniques developed by 'scientific' research on mental patients funded by the CIA. These methods, used in Al-Gharab and Guantanamo Bay, are in stark contrast with Islamic rules for Jihad].

Many inhuman ideas have become embedded into the foundations of western thought, and are responsible for a huge amount of human misery that we see around us.

The wonders of science and technology are often cited as proof positive of the progress of the west. There is mounting evidence that these advances may actually destroy the possibility of life on our planet. Diamond (2005) finds that today's global, technologically advanced civilization is very far from solving the problems that plagued primitive, isolated communities in the remote past. Diamond comes close to despair when contemplating the environmental havoc engulfing our rapidly industrializing planet. Technology has created more problems than it has the capability to solve. To take just one example from a long list, Monsanto genetic engineering has caused the emergence of superweeds, wreaking havoc on grain harvests in the USA.

Has all the scientific and technological progress, plus the accumulation of wealth, led to better lives in the West? All evidence points to the opposite: human lives have become progressively impoverished, in many dimensions. Among the most important dimensions of human existence is social contact. Solitary confinement is a form of torture. Today there is an epidemic of loneliness in the west. In recent survey, The Lonely Society? by Griffin (2010) of the Mental Health Foundation, about 80% of those surveyed admitted to feeling lonely, and 40% admitted to being depressed due to loneliness. Families have broken down because people marry less, marry late, and marriages don't last very long. Because of this, there has been a tremendous increase in people living alone, and also in people feeling alone while engaged in nominal relationships with others. Survey data from Wilson & Moulton (2010), details loneliness in America. Edmondson (2010) sums up the striking statistics as follows: "Over 44 million people are lonely and longing to connect with another living, breathing soul. Even sadder is the fact that they are ashamed of their loneliness, and that shame hinders their efforts to meet and bond with another person."

The reasons for this striking rise in loneliness and breakdown of families is simple. Freedom from political, economic and social oppression was made into an over-riding virtue in the western civilization. Later, the meaning of freedom was expanded in directions never intended by the original seekers of freedom. Freedom came to mean freedom from social obligations, from commitments to family and community, and freedom to pursue selfish goals without concern for others. Unfortunately, what people value most is love, friendship, and social relationships. Paradoxically, in a society where everyone pursues pleasure selfishly, no one can get the unselfish love from others which gives the maximum amount of satisfaction and happiness.

(Continued.....InshAllah)

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*How else can we hope to please Allah ﷻ or help His people, if we do not make the effort to learn about what He wants us to achieve in this Duniya and the Akhirah?*

The website also has a forum where participants can chat with each other (and the teacher) while listening to the lesson in real-time. Furthermore, keeping in mind that people from all locations around the globe are coming together, the timing has been kept so that nobody is put at a great inconvenience and everyone can easily access it without having to sacrifice whatever else they are doing. Each lesson is about an hour long, which is enough to grasp the basic concepts of the subject matter taught; followed by homework. This assignment is then discussed in the following class.

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Last  
Part

# Important Discourses on Tasawwuf

By Mawlana Ismaeel Nakhuda

## The Khanqah of Thanabhawan

The same is the case with Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (may Allah have mercy on him) who asked permission from Mawlana Gangohi to become bay'ah while still a student at which he advised him to instead give the oath of allegiance to Haji Imdadullah (may Allah have mercy on him) saying that: Haji Imdadullah's fruits are ripe. Mawlana Thanawi was from a wealthy family and he could afford to visit the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. As Haji Imdadullah was at that time resident in Makkah, Mawlana Gangohi advised Mawlana Thanawi to become bay'ah to Haji Imdadullah, something that he did. It is said regarding Mawlana Thanawi (may Allah have mercy on them all) that he was teaching in Kanpur for many years when he felt the need to inhabit and revitalise the khanqah of his shaykh Haji Imdadullah in Thanabhawan. Haji Imdadullah had, several years before, left India for Makkah and his khanqah was now lying empty. This entire story is mentioned in Ashraf al-Sawanih where it is said that Mawlana Thanawi felt the urge to revive the khanqah and so wrote to his shaykh who advised him to think it through and then decide. The issue kept nudging at Mawlana Thanawi who then, without asking his shaykh, left his teaching position in Kanpur, went to Thanabhawan and started the khanqah. He then wrote an extremely humble letter to his shaykh explaining what he had done, seeking forgiveness for acting without his permission and explaining that he was overwhelmed with passion that he felt the need to go to Thanabhawan and start the khanqah. He also mentioned the structure of programmes during the day at the khanqah and profusely apologised for not informing him from beforehand. Haji Imdadullah wrote back expressing his extreme pleasure and happiness and that this is exactly what he wished for him to do, but had held back from ordering him to do so at the beginning because, judging from his initial letter, felt that

Mawlana Thanawi was still not firm in his desire. This was the condition of our akabir, they did everything in consultation with their shaykh, everything. Examples like this are profusely found in the writings of our elders, something that exemplifies the diligence that they exercised for matters of Tasawwuf.

## The Khanqah of Raipur

In Raipur, Mawlana 'Abdur-Rahim Raipuri, the khalifah of Mawlana Ganoghi, established a khanqah which was then inhabited by his khalifah, Mawlana 'Abdul Qadir Raipuri (may Allah have mercy on them). I myself visited the khanqah of Raipur and saw it first hand in the late 1950s or early 1960s. I visited this khanqah in my teenage years in the company of Shah Nafis Sahib (may Allah have mercy on him). Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya (may Allah enlighten his resting place) sent me to Raipur with Shah Nafis Sahib. I know that Shah Nafis Sahib would wake up very early in the night every day and complete all of his ma'mulat (litanies, recitations and dhikr prescribed by a shaykh of Tasawwuf) well before the time of fajr. I recall that during my visit to Raipur, being young and able to sleep well, Shah Nafis Sahib would wake me up a short while before fajr saying: "Wake up, wake up, everyone is awake except you. You're sleeping alone." I would feel embarrassed hearing this and so when this happened for a few days, I asked Shah Nafis Sahib to wake me up when the rest of the people in the khanqah would wake up. The next day, he woke me up at 1am. When I got up, I found that the vast majority of people in the khanqah were already awake with many people involved in dhikr, Qur'an, du'a and Tahajjud.

Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Thanawi would say regarding the khanqah of Raipur, which was situated in a garden, that putteh, putteh seh dhikr ki awaz atee heh – that the sound of dhikr

reverberates from each and every leaf. It was a blessed place, full of spirituality.

## The final mission of Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Zakariyya

My shaykh, Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya (may Allah have mercy on him) saw all of these three khanqahs during their prime: Thanabhawan, Gangoh and Raipur. Mawlana Ilyas (may Allah have mercy on him) was bay'ah to Mawlana Gangohi and remained with him for eleven years. He did not receive khilafah from him, but received it from Mawlana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri. Mawlana Ilyas would say that if someone were to say that in knowledge, fiqh, tafsir and fatwas such and such scholars are greater than our 'ulama then I would not dispute them. However, in terms of connection to Allah (ta'alluq ma'a Allah) and selflessness there is none greater than our 'ulama. Tasawwuf and tazkiyah was their special focus, something that they took very seriously.

In 1968, Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya (may Allah have mercy on him) stopped teaching and in that era the three khanqahs that he had seen – the khanqahs of Thanabhawan, Gangoh and Raipur – were sitting idle and he became concerned by this. He then began drawing the attention of all of our elders to this and also performed i'tikaf in numerous places, including here in South Africa in Stanger, to revitalise the system of khanqahs. He was very concerned about this. Though he found it uncomfortable to travel, he still travelled from one country to another with this concern and the desire to see this crucial line of work revitalised.

## Struggling against the nafs and fulfilling ma'mulat

There is a verse of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah Most High mentions: "As for those who strive in Our way, We will certainly take them onto Our paths, and indeed Allah is with those who are good in deeds." (Al-Ankabut: 69) The main point in Tasawwuf is about exerting effort. The word mujahadah that has been translated here as 'striving' means "to exert as much effort as possible within us" (hatta al-imkan koshish kurna hamare under). There is a need to strive hard in working against the carnal desires (nafs) and reforming one's self spiritually.

The Sufis say that al-ahwal thamarat al-'amal – in that the spiritual states (hal and ahwal) are the fruits or outcomes of actions ('amal). This means that in this path it is necessary to act and take action. When a person takes action, fulfils his ma'mulat and strives against the nafs then he will achieve his goal, which is the nearness to Allah Most High.

## Two types of actions in Tasawwuf

In suluk and tazkiyah there are two types of actions: adhkar or litanies and ashghal. According to the Sufis, the adhkar comprise the Sunnah dhikr, voluntary (nafil) acts of worship and the recitation of the Qur'an (tilawah). The ashghal, on the other hand, include those actions (mashghalah) that are a part of the Sufi's prescribed practices (ma'mulat) and these are prescribed when the purification or cleansing of the inner self cannot be achieved through the adhkar. Examples of this include the audible forms of dhikr (dhikr bi al-jahr), the pas-anfas and the various forms of meditation (muraqabah).

## Popular ashghal in the Chishti Tariqah

Within the Chishti tariqah, the popular form of ashghal is the audible dhikr known as the Bara Tasbih. This entails the movement of the head with a focus on the heart and consists of

two hundred la-ilaha illallah, four hundred illallah, six hundred Allahu-Allah and then a hundred Allah. Shah 'Abdul-Quddus (may Allah have mercy on him), one of the scions of the Chishti Tariqah, would daily perform the dhikr of Allah, Allah (the ism-i-dhat) a hundred thousand times a day. It is said regarding Mawlana In'amul-Hasan (May Allah have mercy on him) that he would perform the dhikr of Allah, Allah forty thousand times a day as has been mentioned in his biography. So this is something that many of our elders were involved in.

## Mawlana Thanawi has answered objections against ashghal

People who do not have any familiarity with Tasawwuf object to the ashghal. However, Hakim al-Ummah Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi (may Allah have mercy on him) has answered all of these objections in his writings. Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalvi (may Allah enlighten his grave) has also answered these objections in his book Shari'at wa Tariqat ka Talazum. The fundamental issue is that these litanies are not actual dhikr, but rather tazkiyah or purification though they may seem in form to be dhikr.

## An important principle

So, why is it that the shaykhs developed them? Following the demise of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), several fitnahs came to the fore and Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) countered them. In the Battle of Yamamah some twelve hundred to thirteen hundred Companions were martyred with many of them being hafiz of the Qur'an. During the lifetime of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) some four to five hundred Companions were martyred. Once the fitnahs came to an end, Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered that the Companions busy themselves in the conquest of Al-Sham (the Levant) and that the senior Companions should remain in Madinah al-Munawwarah. It was during this time that Sayyiduna 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) asked that with several hundred Companions who were hafiz of the Qur'an martyred, what would happen to the Qur'an. He suggested that the Qur'an be preserved in written form. Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) objected asking how he could do that which the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not do? The two Companions continued their discussion and it is said that Sayyiduna 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) spent three nights explaining the matter to Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) until he became convinced of Sayyiduna 'Umar's point of view. A committee of Companions was formed and the written copy (mushaf) of the Qur'an was prepared. This was the first consensus (ijma') of the Companions. This written Qur'an was prepared and, later on, there was a difference of view over its forms of recitation (qira'ah). Thereafter, Sayyiduna 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) created six copies of the written copy that had been prepared in the time of Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) and it is because of this that it is often referred to as Mushaf 'Uthmani.



From the above, a principle (usul) of religion can be derived: in relation to that which has been commanded (hukm) in the religion and is in itself the purpose (maqsd bi al-dhat), it is fundamentally permissible to adopt a means to achieve that, even though the Companions did not adopt that means. In other words, it is permissible (ja'iz) to adopt whichever means there is in achieving that which is in itself the purpose; there is, however, a condition and that is that the way adopted in achieving this should not be impermissible according to Sacred Law. This is a principle that all of the 'ulama have adopted. Its example is like learning Arabic, which is a precondition (shart) to study the Qur'an and the hadith. This principle (usul) came into existence during the time of the Followers (tabi'i) and the Followers of the Followers (atba' al-tabi'in) because this was the era in which many conquests occurred into lands that were not Arabic speaking and people who were not of Arab stock came to accept Islam, such as the conquests into Al-Sham (the Levant) and the Maghreb (North Africa) led to people there entering Islam. Another example is the usage of modern weapons in war. In the time of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), people used swords, spears and bows and arrows.

### Applying the principle on purifying the heart

Likewise, the purification of the soul (tazkiyat al-nafs) is incumbent (wajib) and so is the purification of the heart. If this can be achieved by way of the Sunnah adhkār then this is laudable (nur 'ala nur). However, this is in the main not the case. The example of this is like when someone has an upset stomach and is asked to eat chicken tikka or kebabs; such a person would not be inclined to indulge in such delicacies and even if he were to eat them then he would not find them enjoyable. However, if he were to cure his stomach by taking appropriate medicine and then, once he is feeling better, were to be presented with these dishes then he would fully enjoy them. This is like drinking beverage from a glass. If you were to bring a filthy glass, fill it with stones, grass and other matter, and then pour sweet milk into it, then the person drinking would not get the full pleasure of the drink. What he would need to do is to thoroughly wash and clean the glass using a detergent. Then, if he were to drink the milk from the glass he would get the maximum flavour and taste. This is the condition of the heart – first the heart needs to be purified from the impurities that is inside it and then one would be in a position to get the full pleasure of the various forms of worship that is prescribed in our religion.

### Historic precedents of breaking the nafs

Examples of the system of reformation that the Sufis adopt in breaking the nafs of the murids can be found in the first three generations. It is well known that during his khilafah Sayyiduna 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) often adopted different measures to reform and correct the people he appointed to different government posts. Someone once complained about one of his governors at which Sayyiduna 'Umar summoned him to Madinah, investigated the matter and finding them true, made him wear clothes made from coarse cloth and appointed him to herd, feed and water livestock. This was a governor who had been demoted as a way of correcting the condition of his heart. These were measures that Sayyiduna 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) adopted to spiritually reform those under his command.

### Tasawwuf has a basis

Mawlana Gangohi (may Allah have mercy on him) said that the Bara-Tasbih is necessary (wajib) for purification (tazkiyah) and likewise the rest of the actions (ashghal) of Tasawwuf. It is a

shame that innovations (bid'ah) and tribulations (fitnah) are today being spread in the name of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. There are rules pertaining to the knowledge of Qira'ah and these existed in the time of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). However, they were not written or codified. It was the scholars of the latter times that codified them and defined what they were, and the reason why they did this was to protect the Qur'an. Whatever new way is created, it shall be considered to be permissible (mubah), not impermissible (haram). The Bara-Tasbih is wajib for those who have not yet reached the level of purification, those who are purified then this form of dhikr becomes permissible for them. Also, if a person was not diligent in performing his duties, then his condition will change. He will progress forward and then move back. Nowadays, objections are raised relating to everything that has been mentioned. And so it was that for three days, Sayyiduna 'Umar explained the matter to Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them). It is the case that issues are not understood immediately. It takes time. Likewise, Sayyiduna 'Umar explained the matter of writing the Qur'an down for three days and then Sayyiduna Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them) understood.

### A final word – the fitnah of this era

There is a fitnah in each era. The fitnah of today is that people involved in the various efforts of religion assume that their field of work is the complete faith in its entirety. However, this is not the case. It should be remembered that the faith will only be complete when all of its different fields are revived. The different efforts in Islam are like limbs of a person. Only when all of the limbs are operating will the person's body be complete. For one group to say that another is useless is extremism (ghulu) and due to a lack of understanding. So, it is a form of extremism and moving beyond the boundary for anyone associated with the madrasahs, for example, to consider all other efforts of religion to be useless and only their line of work to be correct, or for those involved in Tabligh to say the same. What we are saying is that individuals involved in any effort of religion should continue in that effort. However, for one effort of the religion to compete with another is in fact trying to compete with Allah and His Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). I mention at all gatherings that all of the efforts of religion are one and part of our religion. Their fadha'il (virtues) are mentioned. To denigrate any one of them is to look down on Allah Most High and His Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).

May Allah protect us from extremism (ghulu) and from exceeding the limits. The Companions are our exemplars and they had a part to play in every effort of religion. Individually, they excelled in a particular effort of Islam, but they had a part to play in them all. Have respect and reverence for all the efforts of religion and pray for them all. Every line of work has shortcomings and there will be something in each of them. However, pray for them all and participate in each of them as much as you can. Disputing among yourselves (ikhtilaf) is extremely bad. That house in which there is love and agreement will see divine mercy descend on it. Likewise, if the various efforts of the religion were to be in agreement and in love then there would be divine mercy and blessings. May Allah Most High accept them all and allow Islam to prosper.

Shaykh would then conclude the i'tikaf with the common message to all to embrace each field and to show interest in its development and progress. The progress of any field of religion is the progress of the entire religion.

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