

MONTHLY

AL-FAROOQ

INTERNATIONAL

NEW APPROACH TO JOURNALISM

MARCH 2024



THE ISLAMIC JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY **JAMIA FAROOQIA KARACHI, PAKISTAN**

MONTHLY

AL-FAROOQ

INTERNATIONAL

Published under the auspices of Jamia Farooqia, Karachi, Pakistan

CONTENTS

Volume No.37 | Issue No.01

The Thoughts	<i>A Blessed Month</i>	3
Final Revelation	<i>Soorah Al-Baqarah</i>	4
Way to Salvation	<i>All Previous Sins are Forgiven.....</i>	10
Islamic	<i>Preparing for Ramadhaan</i>	14
Islamic	<i>Ramadhaan Blessings After Blessings</i>	17
Islamic	<i>Charity Islamic Perspective</i>	22
History Pages	<i>Colonial strategy</i>	25
Islam My Choice	<i>Spiritual Fulfilment</i>	28
Health & Science	<i>Healthy Ramadhaan</i>	31

IN MEMORY OF

Muhaddith e Kabeer

Shaikhul Hadeeth Maulana Salimullah Khan

Founder, Jamia Farooqia, Karachi

&

Shaheed Maulana Dr. Muhammad Adil Khan

Ex-Rector, Jamia Farooqia, Karachi

PATRON

Maulana Obaidullah Khalid

Rector, Jamia Farooqia, Karachi

ADVISORY BOARD

Maulana Muhammad Anwar

Maulana Muhammad Yousuf Afshani

Mufti Muhammad Anas Adil

Mufti Muaaz Khalid

Maulana Ammar Khalid

ART & DESIGN

Muhammad Yousuf Rana

MCB BANK

A/C Title:

Idarah Al-Farooq

Account No: 0005001010014593

Shah Faisal Colony No.1, Karachi

Easy Paisa:

0313 1070007

Jazz Cash:

0301 2446346

Idarah Al-Farooq Karachi

P.O.Box. No.: 11009

Shah Faisal Town Block No.4, Karachi

Postal Code- 75230, Pakistan.

Tel : +92 21 34573865

WhatsApp : +92 313 1070007

www.idaraalfarooq.com

idara_alfarooq@farooqia.com

SACRED AAYAAT AND AHADEETH

NO COPYRIGHT

The sacred Aayaat from the Holy Quraan and Ahaadeeth have been printed for tableegh and to increase your knowledge. It is your duty to ensure their sanctity. Therefore, the pages on which these are printed should be disposed of in proper Islamic Manner.

Articles published in Al-Farooq and/or extracts there from may be reproduced, translated, copied or made use of otherwise, with our best compliments. Mention of the source and copies of reprints will be greatly appreciated.

URL: www.farooqia.com

E-mail: info@farooqia.com

URL: www.idaraalfarooq.com E-mail: idara_alfarooq@farooqia.com

CIRCULATION OFFICE: Jamia Farooqia, Shah Faisal Town Block No.4, Karachi , Pakistan, Postal Code.75230

A BLESSED MONTH

Sha'baan is one of the blessed months of Islamic calendar. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) used to observe Sawm (Fasting) during most of this month.

Sayyedatina Ayesah, the Mother of Believers, says:

"I never saw that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) observed Sawm for a whole month except Ramadhaan, and I did not see that he observed Sawm in any month more than Sha'baan." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Similarly, Sayyedatina Umme Salamah, Mother of Believers, says:

"I never saw Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) observing Sawm for two consecutive months except Sha'baan and Ramadhaan." (Tirmizi)

Sayyedina Anas bin Maalik reports that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) was asked which is the best Sawm to observe beside Ramadhaan?

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

"Observing Sawm in Sha'baan to honor Ramadhaan." (Tirmizi)

Importance of observing Sawm in Sha'baan is explained as:

These Siyaam (plural of Sawm) of Sha'baan are related to the Sawm of Ramadhaan in the same way as the Nafl Salaah (Optional Prayers) are offered before the Fardh Salaah (Obligatory Prayers). (Al-Lataaif al-Ma'arif and Ma'arif al-Hadeeth)

Sayyedina Osama bin Zaid reports that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"The month of Sha'baan is the month between Rajab and Ramadhaan. People are oblivious of its excellence. However, in this month, the deeds of the servants are raised towards the Lord of the Worlds. I, therefore, like that my deeds are presented in court of Allah while I am in the state of Sawm." (Bayhaqi and Fath al-Baari)

Sayyedina Ayesah reports that she asked Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam):

"Why do you observe Sawm so often in the month of Sha'baan?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

"In this month, the name of every person whose souls will be seized in this year is handed over to the Angel of Death. So, I prefer that my name be given while I am in the state of Sawm."

(Musnad Abu Ya'ala and Fath al-Baari)

It is important to note that in one of the Ahaadeeth, Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reports that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"If there is half of Sha'baan left, then do not observe Sawm." (Tirmizi)

The Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), himself, used to fast most of the month of Sha'baan, because he had no fear of developing weakness or weariness before the commencement of Ramadhaan. As for others, he ordered them not to fast after the 15th of Sha'baan for the fear that they would lose their strength and freshness before Ramadhaan starts, and would not be able to welcome the month of Ramadhaan with enthusiasm.

May Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) give us توفيق "Taufeeq" (Capability) to strive for the His blessings in this month of Sha'baan. Aameen!

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ



Soorah Al-Baqarah

(THE COW)

MADINITE 286 VERSES

Part-III

Ma'aarif ul Quraan: Grand Mufti of Pakistan
Mufti Muhammad Shafi'R.A.

The lust for reading sacred books has virtually grown into a mania, especially among the modern young people with their deep sense of being uprooted and disinherited, and all considerations of aptitude have been contemptuously set aside. In these circumstances, Muslims with a Western orientation are naturally impelled to ask themselves as to what they can or should make of such books which sometimes seem to offer similarities and parallels to the Holy Quraan itself, and more often to the Sufi doctrines. The problem has already attained noticeable

proportions, for in 1974 the government of Turkey found it necessary to ban the entry of certain Hindu sacred books like the Bhagavadgita and Upanishads. The correct doctrinal position in this respect is that it is obligatory for every Muslim, as an essential part of the Islamic creed, to believe in all the prophets and messengers of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and in the Divine Books (not in their distorted forms, but as they were originally revealed) that have specifically been mentioned by their names in the Holy Quraan, and also to believe that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa

Ta'aalaa) has sent His messengers and His books for the guidance of all the peoples and all the ages, and that Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is the last prophet and the Holy Quraan the final Book of Allah (Subhaanahu



Wa Ta'aalaa) which has come down to replace the earlier Books and Shari'ahs. As to the question of the authenticity and divine origin of a particular book held in reverence by an earlier religion or metaphysical tradition, a Muslim is not allowed to affirm such a claim unequivocally, nor should he unnecessarily reject such a possibility. In so far as contents of the book concerned agree with what the Holy Quraan has to say on the subject, we may accept the statement as true, otherwise spiritual etiquette requires an average Muslim to keep quiet and not meddle with things which he is not likely to understand. As for reading the sacred books of other traditions, it should be clearly borne in mind that a comparative study of this nature requires a very special aptitude which is extremely rare, and hence demands great caution. A cursory reading of sacred books, motivated by an idle curiosity or by a craze for mere information, may very well lead to an intellectual disintegration or to something still worse, instead of helping in the "discovery of the truth" and the acquisition of "peace" which a comparative study is widely supposed to promise. Even when the aptitude and the knowledge necessary for the task is present, such a study can be carried out only under the supervision of an authentic spiritual master. In any case, we cannot insist too much on the perils of the enterprise.-- Translator)

AN ARGUMENT TO THE FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

The mode of expression helps us to infer from this Aayah the fundamental principle that the Holy Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is the last of all the prophets, and the Book revealed to him is the final revelation and the last Book of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). For, had Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) intended to reveal another Book or to

continue. The mode of revelation even after the Holy Quraan, this Aayah, while prescribing belief in the earlier Books as necessary for Muslims, must also have referred to belief in the Book or Books to be revealed in the future. In fact, such a statement was all the more needed, for people were already familiar with the necessity of believing in the Torah, the Evangel and the earlier Books, and such a belief was in regular practice too, but if prophethood and revelation were to continue even after the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), it was essential that the coming of another prophet and another book should be clearly indicated so that people were not left in doubt about this possibility. So, in defining Iman, the Holy Quraan mentions the earlier prophets and the earlier Books, but does not make the slightest reference to a prophet or Book to come after the last Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). The matter does not end with this Aayah.

The Holy Qur'an touches upon the subject again and again in no less than forty or fifty Aayaat, and in all such places it mentions the prophets, the Books and the revelation preceding the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) but nowhere is there even so much as a hint with regard to the coming of a prophet or of a revelation in the future, belief in whom or which should be necessary. We cite some Aayaat to demonstrate the point:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ (٤٣)

"We did not send (messengers) before you other than men whom We inspired with revelation."

(An-Nahl 16:43)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ (٧٨)

"And We have certainly sent messengers before you".

(Ghaafir 40:78)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ (٤٧)

"We had indeed sent before you messengers to their people."

(Ar-Room 30:47)

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ (٦٥)

"And it has certainly been revealed to you and to those who have gone before you...."

(Az-Zumar 39:65)

كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ (٣)

"Thus, He reveals to you and He revealed to those who have gone before you.

(Ash-Shooraa 42:3)

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُنِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُنِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ ﴿١٨٣﴾

“O you who believe! Siyaam (plural of Sawm i.e. Fast) have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you...”

(Al-Baqarah 2:183)

سُنَّةَ مَن قَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِن رُّسُلِنَا وَلَا يَجِدُ لِسُنَّتِنَا
تَحْوِيلًا ﴿٧٧﴾

“Such was Our way with the messengers whom We sent before you.

(Al-Israa 17:77)

In these and similar Aayaat, whenever the Holy Quraan speaks of the sending down of a Book or a revelation or a prophet or a messenger, it always attaches the conditional phrase, *من قبل* “Min qabl” (before) or *من قبلك* “Min qablik” (before you), and nowhere does it employ or suggest an expression like *من بعد* “Min ba’d” (after you). Even if other Aayaat of the Holy Quraan had not been explicit about the finality of the prophethood of Sayyidina Muhammad (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) and about the cessation of revelation, the mode of expression adopted by the Holy Quraan in the present Aayah would in itself have been sufficient to prove these points.

THE ALLAH-FEARING HAVE FAITH IN THE AAKHIRAH

The other essential quality of the Allah-fearing mentioned in this Aayah is that they have faith in Al-Aakhirah (the Hereafter). Lexically the Aakhirah signifies ‘that which comes after something’; in the present context, it indicates a relationship of contrast with the physical world, and thus signifies the other world, which is beyond physical reality as we know it and also beyond the sensuous or rational perception of man. The Holy Quraan gives to the Aakhirah other names too - for example, Daar al-Qaraar (the Everlasting Abode), Daar al-Hayawaan (the Abode of Eternal Life) and Al-Uqbaa (the Consequent). The Holy Quraan is full of vivid descriptions of the Aakhirah, of the joys of Jannah (Heaven) and of the horrors of Jahannum (Hell). Although faith in the Aakhirah is included in the faith of unseen which has already been mentioned, yet the Holy Quraan refers to it specifically

because it may, in a sense, be regarded as the most important among the constitutive elements of faith in so far, as it inspires man to translate faith into practice; and motivates him to act in accordance with the requirements of his faith. Along with the two doctrines of the Oneness

of God and of prophethood this is the third doctrine which is common to all the prophets and upon which all the Shari’ahs are agreed.

(There is a deplorable misconception with regard to the Aakhirah (Hereafter), quite wide-spread among those who are not, or do not want to be, familiar with the Holy Quraan and who have at the same time been touched by the rationalism; materialism and libertarianism of the Western society, which makes them cherish certain mental and emotional reservations at least about the horrors of Jahannum (Hell), if not about the joys of Jannah (Heaven). Some of them have gone to the preposterous length of supposing that these are the inventions of the “Ulamaa” whom they describe as “obscurantists” - of course, in the jargon of the Western Reformation and of the so-called Enlightenment. They ignore the obvious fact that faith in the Holy Quraan necessitates faith in every word of the Holy Quraan and that it is not possible to affirm one part of the Book while denying another and yet remain a Muslim:

أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ﴿٨٥﴾

“Do you, then, believe in some parts of the Book, and disbelieve in others?”

(Al-Baqarah 2:85)

Moreover, these enlightened Muslims have never made a serious attempt to take into account the complex historical factors that led to the rise of the Enlightenment in Europe, nor the meaning of the subsequent development in ethical ideas. We may, therefore, give a few and very brief indications. There has been no dearth, even in the hey-day of the Enlightenment, of thinkers who have had no scruples in dispensing with ethics altogether which they look upon as superstition or tyranny and hence a blight for the human personality.

But even those thinkers who have recognized the indispensable need for regulations and rules, if not principles, for human conduct in order to preserve social order or to make social life possible, have in general had no qualms about discarding the very idea of divine sanction - despite the intimation of Voltaire, the arch-priest of Relationalism, that man would have to invent God, even if He did not exist. As to the nature and origin of the ethical regulations and the sanction behind them, Western thinkers have from time to time tried to promote various agencies - the sovereign state, social will or convention or custom, the supposedly pure and innocent nature of man himself with its capacity

for self-regulation, and finally biological laws. The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the withering away of all these ethical authorities which has left the modern man without even a dim prospect of constructing a new illusion. It is only in this Perspective that one can properly consider the significance of the belief in the Aakhirah for human society. – Translator)

FAITH IN THE AAKHIRAH: A REVOLUTIONARY BELIEF

The belief in the Aakhirah, among Islamic doctrines, is the one whose role in history has been what is nowadays described as revolutionary, for it began with transmuting the morals and manners of the followers of the Holy Quraan, and gradually gave them a place of distinction and eminence even in the political history of mankind. The reason is obvious. Consider the case of those who believe that life in the physical world is the only life, its joys the only joys and its pains the only pains, whose only goal is to seek the pleasures of the senses and the fulfilment of physical or emotional needs, and who stubbornly refuse to believe in the life of the Aakhirah, in the Day of Judgment and the assessment of everyone's deeds, and in the requital of the deeds in the other world. When such people find the distinction between truth and falsehood, between the permissible and the forbidden, interfering with the hunt for the gratification of their desires, such differentiations naturally become intolerable to them.

Now, who or what can effectively prevent them from committing crimes? The penal laws made by the state or by any other human authority can never serve either as real deterrents to crime or as agents of moral reform. Habitual criminals soon grow used to the penalties. A man, milder or gentler of temperament or just timid, may agree to forego the satisfaction of his desires for fear of punishment, but he would do so only to the extent that he is in danger of being caught. But in his privacy where the laws of the state cannot encroach upon his freedom of action, who can force him to renounce his pleasures and accept the yoke of restraints? It is the belief in the Aakhirah and the fear of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and that alone, which can bring man's private behavior in line with his public behavior, and establish a harmony between the inner state and the outer or the Allah-fearing man knows for certain that event in the secrecy of a well-guarded and sealed room and in the darkness of night somebody is

watching him, and somebody is writing down the smallest thing he does. Herein lies the secret of the clean and pure society which arose in the early days of Islam when the mere sight of a Muslim, of his manners and morals, was enough to make non-believers literally fall in love with Islam. For true Faith in the Aakhirah, certitude must follow Oral Affirmation.

Before we proceed, we may point out that in speaking of faith in the Aakhirah as one of the qualities of the Allah-fearing, the Holy Quraan does not use the word *يؤمنون* "Yuminoona" (believe) but the word *يوقنون* Yuqinoona (have complete certitude), for the opposite of belief is denial, and that of certitude is doubt and hesitation. Thus, we find a subtle suggestion here that in order to attain the perfection of Iman it is not enough to affirm the Aakhirah orally, but one must have a complete certitude which leaves no room for doubt - the kind of certitude which comes when one has seen a thing with one's own eyes. It is an essential quality of the Allah-fearing that they always have present before their eyes the whole picture of how people will have to present themselves for judgment before Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in the Aakhirah, how their deeds will be assessed and how they will receive reward or punishment according to what they have been doing in this world. A man who amasses wealth by usurping what rightfully belongs to others, or who gains petty material ends by adopting unlawful means forbidden by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), may declare his faith in the Aakhirah a thousand times and the Shari'ah may accept him as a Muslim in the context of worldly concerns, but he does not possess the certitude which the Holy Quraan demands of him. And it is this certitude alone which transforms human life, and which brings in its wake as a reward the guidance and triumph promised in Aayah 5 of this Soorah:

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

"It is these who are on guidance given by their Lord; and it is just these who are successful."

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

Surely for those who have disbelieved, it is all the same whether you warn them or you warn them not: they would not believe. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and on their eyes there is a covering; and for them there lies a mighty punishment. (Al-Baqarah 6-7)

After affirming the Holy Quraan as

the Book of Guidance and as being beyond all doubt, the first five Aayaat of the present Soorah refer to those who derive full benefit from this Book and whom the Holy Quraan has named as مومنون "Mu'minoon" (True Muslims) or متقون "Muttaqoon" (the Allah-fearing), and also delineate their characteristic qualities which distinguish them from others. The next fifteen Aayaat speak of those who refuse to accept this guidance, and even oppose it out of sheer spite and blind malice. In the time of the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), there were two distinct groups of such people. On the one hand were those who came out in open hostility and rejection, and whom the Holy Quraan has termed as كافرون "Kaafiroon" (Disbelievers); on the other hand were those who did not, on account of their moral depravity and greed, had even the courage to speak out their minds and to express their disbelief clearly, but adopted the way of deceit and duplicity. They tried to convince the Muslims that they had faith in the Holy Quraan and its teachings, that they were as good a Muslim as any and would support the Muslims against the disbelievers. But they nursed denial and rejection in their hearts, and would, in the company of disbelievers, assure them that they had nothing to do with Islam, but mixed with Muslims in order to deceive them and to spy on them. The Holy Quraan has given them the title of منافقون "Munaafiqoon" (Hypocrites). Thus, these fifteen Aayaat deal with those who refuse to believe in the Holy Quraan -- the first two are concerned with open disbelievers, and the other thirteen with hypocrites; their signs and characteristics and their ultimate end.

Taking the first twenty Aayaat of this Soorah together in all their detail, one can see that the Holy Quraan has, on the one hand, pointed out to us the source of guidance which is the Book itself, and, on the other, divided mankind into two distinct groups on the basis of their acceptance or rejection of this guidance -- on the one side are those who have chosen to follow and to receive guidance, and are hence called مومنون "Mu'minoon" (True Muslims) or متقون "Muttaqoon" (the Allah-fearing); on the other side are those who reject the guidance or deviate from it, and are hence called كافرون "Kaafiroon" (Disbelievers) or منافقون "Munaafiqoon" (Hypocrites). People Of the first kind are those whose path is the object of the prayer at the end of the Soorah Al-Faatihah, صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم "the path of those of whom You have bestowed Your grace", and people of the second

kind are those against whose path refuge has been sought لا الضالين غير المعصوب عليهم و "Not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray".

This teaching of the Holy Quraan provides us with a fundamental principle. A division of mankind into different groups must in order to be meaningful, be based on differences in principle, not on considerations of birth, race, color, geography or language. The Holy Quraan has given a clear verdict in this respect:

خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ ﴿٢﴾

"It was He that created you: yet some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers."

(At-Taghaabun 64:2)

As we have said, the first two Aayaat of this Soorah speak of those disbelievers who had become so stubborn and obstinate in their denial and disbelief that they were not prepared to hear the truth or to consider a clear argument. In the case of such depraved people, the usual way of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has always been, and is, that they are given a certain kind of punishment even in this world -- that is to say, their hearts are sealed and their eyes and ears stopped against the truth, and in so far as truth is concerned they become as if they have no mind to think, no eyes to see and no ears to listen. The last phrase of the second Aayah speaks of the grievous punishment that is reserved for them in the other world. It may be observed that the prediction -- that: لا يؤمنون "they shall not believe" is specifically related to those disbelievers who refused to listen to the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) and who, as Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) knew, were going to die as disbelievers. This does not apply to disbelievers in general; for there were many who later accepted Islam.

WHAT IS كُفْرٌ "KUFUR"? (INFIDELITY)

As for the definition of كُفْرٌ "Kufr" (Disbelief), we may point out that lexically the word means to hide, to conceal. Ingratitude is also called Kufr, because it involves the concealing or the covering up of the beneficence shown by someone. In the terminology of the Shari'ah, Kufr signifies the denial of those things in which it is obligatory to believe. For example, the quintessence of Iman as well as the very basis of the Islamic creed is the requirement that one should confirm with one's heart and believe with certitude everything that the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has brought down to us from Allah (Subhaanahu

Wa Ta'aalaa) and which has been established by definite and conclusive proof; therefore, a man who has the temerity to question or disregard even a single teaching of this kind will be described as a كافر "Kaafir" (Disbeliever or Infidel).

THE MEANING OF انذار "INZAAR" (WARNING) BY A PROPHET

In translating the first of these two Aayaat, we have used the English verb 'to warn' for the Arabic word انذار "Inzaar". This word actually signifies bringing news which should cause alarm or concern, while اِشَار "Ibshaar" signifies bringing good news which should make people rejoice. Moreover, Inzaar is not the ordinary kind of warning meant to frighten people, but one which is motivated by compassion and love, just as one warns one's children against fire or snakes or beasts. Hence a thief or a bandit or an aggressor who warns or threatens others cannot be called a نذير "Nazeer" (Warner). The latter is a title specially reserved for the prophets, for they warn people against the pains and punishments of the other world out of their compassion and love for their fellow men. In choosing this title for the prophets, the Holy Quraan has made the subtle suggestion that for those who go out to reform others it is not enough merely to convey a message, but that they must speak to their listeners with sympathy, understanding and a genuine regard for their good.

In order to comfort the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam,) the first of these Aayaat tells him that some of the disbelievers are so vain, arrogant and opinionated that they, in spite of recognizing the truth, stubbornly persist in their refusal and are not prepared to hear the truth or to see obvious proofs, so that all the efforts he makes for reforming and converting them will bear no fruit, and for them it is all one whether he tries or not.

The next Aayah explains the reason, that is, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has set a seal on their hearts and ears, there is a covering on their eyes, all the avenues of knowing and understanding are thus closed, and now it would be futile to expect any change in them. A thing is

sealed so that nothing may enter it from outside; the setting of the seal on their hearts and ears also means that they have altogether lost the capacity for accepting the truth.

The Holy Quraan describes the condition of these disbelievers in terms of their hearts and ears having been sealed, but in the case of the eyes it refers to a covering. The subtle distinction arises from the fact that an idea can enter the heart from all possible directions and not from one particular direction alone, and so can a sound enter the ears; an idea or a sound can be blocked only by sealing the heart and the ears. On the contrary, the eyes work only in one direction, and can see only the things which lie in front of them; if there is a covering on them, they cease to function. (See Mazhari)

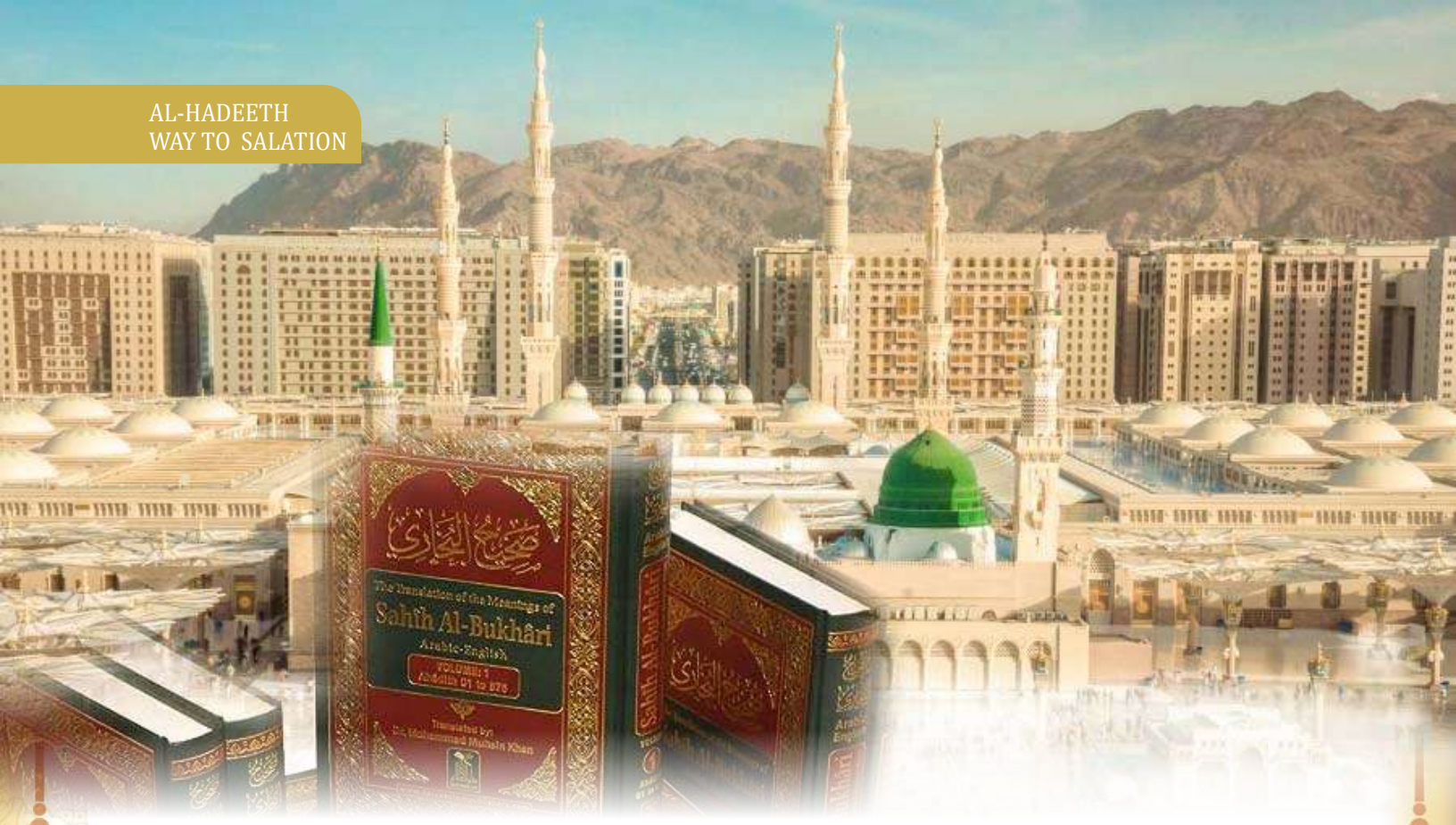
FAVOR WITHDRAWN BY ALLAH (SUBHAANAHU WA TA'AALAA) IS A PUNISHMENT

These two Aayaat tell us that the other world is the place where one would receive the real punishment for one's disbelief or for some of one's sins. One may, however, receive some punishment for certain sins even in this world.

Such a punishment sometimes takes a very grievous form -- that is, the divine favor which helps one to reform oneself is withdrawn, so that, ignoring how one's deeds are to be assessed on the Day of Judgment, one keeps growing in disobedience and sin, and finally comes to lose even the awareness of evil. In delineating such a situation certain elders have remarked that one punishment for an evil deed is another evil deed which comes after, and one

reward for a good deed is another good deed which comes after. According to a Hadeeth, when a man commits a sin, a black dot appears on his heart; this first dot disturbs him just as a smudge on a white cloth is always displeasing to us; but if, instead of asking Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s pardon for the first sin, he proceeds to commit a second, another dot shows up, thus, with every new sin the black dots go on multiplying till the whole heart turns dark, and now he can no longer see good as good nor evil as evil, and grows quite incapable of making such distinctions. ♻️





ALL PREVIOUS SINS ARE FORGIVEN ON ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM

(Part-IV)

Ma'aarif ul Hadeeth:
Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Nomani, R.A.

(۲۰/۲۰)

عَنْ عَمْرٍو بْنِ الْعَاصِ قَالَ لَمَّا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْإِسْلَامَ فِي قَلْبِي
أَتَيْتُ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقُلْتُ ابْسُطْ يَمِينَكَ فَلَا يَأْبَعُكَ فَبَسَطَ يَمِينَهُ
فَقَبَضَتْ يَدِي فَقَالَ مَالِكُ يَا عَمْرُؤُ قُلْتُ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَشْتَرِطَ قَالَ تَشْتَرِطُ
مَاذَا؟ قُلْتُ أَنْ يُغْفِرَ لِي قَالَ أَمَا عَلِمْتَ يَا عَمْرُؤُ أَنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ
قَبْلَهُ وَأَنَّ الْهَجْرَةَ تَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهَا وَأَنَّ الْحَجَّ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ
(رواه مسلم)

(20/20)

It is related by Sayyedina 'Amr ibn al'Aas that when the idea of embracing Islam was planted in his heart by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), he presented himself before the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) and said:

ابْسُطْ يَمِينَكَ فَلَا يَأْبَعُكَ
"Extend your hand so that I may offer Bay'ah".

He extended his right hand but when he withdrew his hand, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) asked:

مَالِكُ يَا عَمْرُؤُ؟

"What happened to you, 'Amr?"

He said:

أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَشْتَرِطَ

"I want to lay down a condition."

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) enquired:

تَشْتَرِطُ مَاذَا؟

"What is the condition that you want to lay down?"

He replied:

أَنْ يُغْفَرَ لِي

"It is that all my (previous) misdeeds be forgiven."

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) observed:

أَمَّا عَلِمْتَ يَا عَمْرُو أَنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ وَأَنَّ الْهِجْرَةَ تَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهَا وَأَنَّ الْحَجَّ يَهْدِمُ مَا كَانَ قَبْلَهُ
 “O ‘Amr! Do you not know that the profession of Islam does away with all previous sins, and Hijrah also does away with all previous sins, and the Hajj also does away with all previous sins?”

(Muslim)

(Bay’ah: A solemn pledge of allegiance given to a leader by his followers and binding them to absolute obedience.)

COMMENTARY

Apart from the acceptance of Islam, the holy Prophet (SallAllaahu ‘Alaihe WaSallam) also spoke of the efficacy of Hijrah and the Hajj in the remission of sins in order to emphasize that, what to speak of

Islam, some of its rites, too, possessed the property of washing away the sins. Two things, however, must be remembered. Firstly, the embracing of Islam, the doing of Hijrah and the performance of Hajj are effective only when these are carried out with a pure heart.

Secondly, it is a settled fact that, from the point of view of the Shari’ah, if a person has transgressed against the rights, specially of a monetary nature, of fellowmen, such an act (or acts) will not be forgiven on the acceptance of Islam or the carrying out of the Hijrah or performance of the Hajj. It is essential to clear up the account, in this respect, with the aggrieved and to pay back their just claims.

In the Quraan, also, the remission of previous sins has been promised to those who embrace Islam and give up for good the life of infidelity and polytheism.

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
 “O Muhammad!, Tell those who disbelieve that if they cease (to disobey Allah and His Messenger) that which is past be forgiven to them.
 (Al-Anfal 8:38)

(21/21)

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ إِذَا أَسْلَمَ الْعَبْدُ فَحَسَنَ إِسْلَامَهُ يَكْفُرُ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُلَّ سَيِّئَةٍ كَانَ زَلْفَهَا وَكَانَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْقِصَاصُ الْحَسَنَةَ بَعَشْرَ أَمْثَالِهَا إِلَى سَبْعِ مِائَةٍ ضِعْفٍ وَالسَّيِّئَةَ بِمِثْلِهَا إِلَّا أَنْ يَجَاوِزَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا
 (رواه البخاري)

(21/21)

It is related by Sayyedina Abu Sa’eed al Khudri that he heard the Messenger of Allah say:

“When a person embraces Islam and his Islam is (also) good, the sins he (previously) committed are forgiven by Allah due to the blessedness of Islam, and, after that, the requital of all his good and evil deeds is that on every good deed he is rewarded (by Allah) from ten to seven hundred times, and, on every evil deed, he is punished (by Allah) for one evil deed except that Allah may overlook that, too, and forgive him altogether.”

(Bukhari)

COMMENTARY

It shows that the remission of previous sins on the adoption of Islam as one’s faith is subject to the condition that the beauty of Islam spreads through one’s life i.e., one’s heart and soul are lit up with its radiance and the body and the outward appearance get adorned with loyalty and submission to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa). This is what and his Islam is (also) good means. Thus, if anyone’s life remains bereft of the elegance and effulgence of Islam and his entire existence – the hidden as well as the manifest – does not get dyed in its hue even after entering into its fold, the promise of the remission of past misdeeds will not hold good for him.

Further, the remunerative law of every good deed fetching the reward for ten to seven hundred times is meant only for those who have produced some of the beauty and radiance of Islam in their lives and their virtuous deeds will count tenfold to seven-hundred-fold in proportion to it.

Life and Property Become Secure With The Acceptance of Islam

(22/22)

عَنْ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ فَمَنْ قَالَهَا فَقَدْ عَصَمَ مِنِّي مَالَهُ وَنَفْسَهُ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهِ وَحِسَابِهِ عَلَى اللَّهِ
 (رواه البخاري و مسلم)

(رواه البخاري و مسلم)

(22/22)

It is related by Sayyedina ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allah said:

“I am commanded to wage war against the people until they testify that no one is worthy of worship aside of Allah. Thus, whoever, affirms لا اله الا الله “Laa Ilaaha Illallaah” obtains the security

of his life and property except for rights of Islam, and his reckoning is with Allah.”

(Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

The above Tradition was narrated during the discussion that took place between Sayyidina Abu Bakr and Sayyidina ‘Umar on the question of taking up arms against the tribes that had refused to pay Zakaah after the death of the sacred Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam).

The pronouncement of لا اله الا الله “Laa Ilaaha Illallaah” signifies again the acknowledgement of the call of Islam and just as in the foregoing Ahaadeeth (Traditions) salvation and the attainment of Jannah (Paradise) has been set forth as the ultimate sequel of affirmation of faith in Islam, in the present one the security of life and property is held out as its worldly and logical outcome.

The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam), moreover, has enunciated a most important principle concerning Jihad. He has declared that the sole object of Islamic Wars is to lead the bondsmen on the path of loyalty and submission and to deliver them from eternal chastisement. The life and property of everyone are, therefore, secure if he accepts the divine Faith, renders wholehearted obedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) and molds his life as ordained by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa).

Together with it, the phrase, “Except of the right of Islam”, makes it clear that if, after embracing Islam, he commits an act that is punishable under Divine Law, he will, of course, have to suffer for his offence and the affirmation of لا اله الا الله “Laa Ilaaha Illallaah” and the profession of Islam will not give him protection against the punishment legally prescribed.

Likewise, “His reckoning is with Allah” implies that whoever will pronounce the كلمة Kalimah before us and declare himself to be a Muslim we will end the hostilities against him and treat him as a faithful Believer. If, however, he is insincere and there is deceit and falsehood in his heart, he will have to answer for it before Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) on the Day of Final Judgement, for He is the Knower of Invisible and Well-informed of what is concealed in the hearts.

The above Tradition has been reproduced, almost in the same words, in Saheeh Muslim, on the authority of Sayyidina Jaabir, Sayyidina Taariq Ashja’ee, and some other Sahaabah and

also have narrated reports conveying the same subject-idea in greater detail which makes it easier for us to understand its significance. We will here take up a few of these reports.

(٢٣/٢٣)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ
أَمَرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَيُؤْمِنُوا بِي
وَيَمَّا جِئْتُ بِهِ فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا
وَحِسَابِهِمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

(رواه مسلم)
(23/23)

Sayyidina Abu Hurairah has related that he heard the Messenger of Allah say:

“I am commanded by Allah to wage war against people until they testify that there is no deity save Allah and profess faith in me and in the guidance that I have brought. Thus, when they do so, they obtain the security of life and property except for the rights of Islam, and their reckoning is with Allah.”

(Muslim)

COMMENTARY

In the above Hadeeth, faith in the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam)’s mission is also mentioned in addition to the testimony لا اله الا الله “Laa Ilaaha Illallaah” which goes to confirm that the acknowledgement of لا اله الا الله “Laa Ilaaha Illallaah” expounded in the previous Hadeeth implies the acceptance of the creed of Islam.

(٢٤/٢٤)

عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ أَمَرْتُ أَنْ
أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَيُقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ عَصَمُوا مِنِّي دِمَاءَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَّا
بِحَقِّ الْإِسْلَامِ وَحِسَابِهِمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ.

(رواه البخاري ومسلم)
(24/24)

It is related by Sayyidina ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar that the Messenger of Allah said:

“I am commanded to wage war against the people until they affirm that there is no god except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger and establish Salaah and pay Zakaah. If they begin to do all this they obtain from me the security of life and property except for the claim of Islam, and their reckoning is with Allah.”

(Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

The establishment of Salaah and payment



signs of Islam were that a person offered his Salaah in the manner of Muslims and turned his face toward the House of Ka'bah when at Salaah, and did not abstain from the flesh of the animals

of Zakaah are also spoken of besides the affirmation of Divine Oneness and Messengership. In truth, these two tenets have been mentioned by way of an example otherwise it signifies the acceptance of the entire creed of Islam.

(۲۵/۲۵)

عَنْ أَنَسِ بْنِ مَالِكٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَقَاتِلَ النَّاسَ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، فَإِذَا قَالُوهَا وَصَلُوهَا
صَلُوتَنَا وَأَسْتَقْبَلُوهَا قَبْلَتَنَا وَأَكْلُوا ذَبْحَتَنَا فَقَدْ حَرَمْتُ عَلَيْنَا دِمَائِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ
إِلَّا بِحَقِّهَا حَسَابُهُمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ . (رواه البخارى)

(25/25)

It is related by Sayyedina Anas ibn Maalik that the Messenger of Allah said:

"I am commanded by Allah to wage war against the people until they believe in الله لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha Illallaah". Thus, when they believe in الله لا اله الا الله "Laa Ilaaha Illallaah" and observe our Salaah turning their face towards Our قبله "Qiblah" i.e. House of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in Makkah al-Mukarramah, and partake of the meat of the animals slaughtered by us, their blood and their possessions are forbidden to us except for the claim of Islam, and their reckoning is with Allah." (Bukhari)

COMMENTARY

The offering of Salaah and the turning of the face towards the Qiblah of Islam and the eating of the flesh of the animals slaughtered by Muslims for food are also specified along with the testimony of Divine Unity. But, here, too, their significance is symbolical, and the purport of this saying, like those of the preceding Ahaadeeth, is that our war against any people is solely for the sake of Faith and for leading mankind along the path of Truth. Hence, it is forbidden to us to inflict pain or punishment on those who forsake the life of infidelity and choose for themselves the Straight Path as laid down by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Since during those days, the chief visible

slaughtered by the Muslims, the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has mentioned them here as the outward symbols of Faith.

In a version of this very Hadeeth in Abu Dawood the words: ما لهم ما للمسلمين و عليهم ما على are replaced by the words وحسابهم على الله المسلمين meaning that not only is our war over with them but that they are also entitled to the rights of Muslims and have the same responsibilities as Muslims have.

Clarification: A cursory glance through these Ahaadeeth is likely to give rise to an objection which has been mentioned by some commentators, and, then, also disproved by them in various ways. It is that in Islam the principles of Jizya² and the contracting of a treaty on suitable terms, too, are generally recognized and war comes to an end with any of these. But from the above Ahaadeeth it appears that hostilities will cease only when people have accepted Islam. (Head tax imposed by Islam on non-Muslim people of the Book under Muslim rule. Translator)

In our view, the object of these Ahaadeeth is not to formulate rules for the termination of warfare. Through them, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has only sought to make it clear that the sole aim and purpose of taking resort to arms in Islam is that people worship no one save Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and follow the Straight Path (i.e., they embrace Islam), and, further, that the life and property of all those who accept the call of Faith would be safe and they would enjoy complete equality with the other Muslims so far as rights and duties were concerned.

As for Jizya or a peace-treaty under special circumstances and on specific terms, though these are ways of putting an end to warfare, the real purpose of an Islamic war does not lie in them. Hostilities are stopped by these means because a peaceful way is, thus, opened for the realization of the fundamental objective, viz, the preaching and propagation of Faith. ❀❀

PREPARING FOR RAMADHAAN

Sent by: Brother Khalid Ali

Ramadhaan is one of the most blessed and awaited months of the Islamic calendar. This holy month is full of blessings and mercy that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'alaa), the Almighty, showers on Muslims. Sahaabah (Companions) of Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) start preparing before the arrival of this holy month. We should also try to prepare ourselves for the month of Ramadhaan in the same way. As we all know that Sawm (Fasting) is more than just abstaining from food but from indecent speech and lustful desires as well. Sawm pushes us to be conscious of our actions.

Muslim's respect and revere this Holy Month from the bottom of their hearts, however, when the month starts Muslims find it hard to adjust with its routine of observing Sawm (Fasting) and excessive Salaah (Prayers) and Quraan reading. The probable reason behind which is the fact that

rest of the year Muslims follow a different routine, and when suddenly a month full of blessings and rewards is upon, they find it hard to change their routine and adapt once at all.

There is so much importance of Ramadhaan in the life of Muslims as discussed in many Aayaat (Verses) of Holy Quraan and Ahaadeeth of Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). For general understanding, the Aayah (Verse) of Quraan, stressing the importance of Ramadhaan and declaring the Sawm obligatory, is mentioned below:

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

“O you who believe! The Siyaam (plural of Sawm) have been enjoined upon you as they were enjoined upon those before you, so that you may be Allah-fearing.”

(Al-Baqarah 2:183)

It is clear from this Aayah of Holy Quraan that Sawm is nothing new or special that was bestowed upon Muslims, rather the earlier nations of the earlier Prophets also kept fast. Sawm is of grave importance for Muslims as it helps them purify their souls and transform to a higher level of piety.

Below mentioned are some ways to get prepared for Ramadhaan before its arrival so we can take full benefit from this holy month.

- **Observe Nafil Sawm before Ramadhaan:**

Observe Nafil Sawm (Voluntary Fasting) before Ramadhaan will help you get used to the routine of Sawm during Ramadhaan. In order to gain control over your actions, stomach and desires also you can adjust and synchronize better.



- **Create Ramadhaan Countdown:**

Ramadhaan countdown will help to create hype buzz in our mind and among all others who are around us. This will lead to regular conversation and a source of excitement spread related to Ramadhaan.



- **The practice of Reciting Noble Quraan:**

If, unfortunately, you have not been a regular reader of the Holy Quraan, this is an ideal time to start, and make a habit out of it, so that you can progress faster in Ramadhaan. Start now to recite Quraan daily and reflect upon it so that you

can get closer to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), the Almighty.



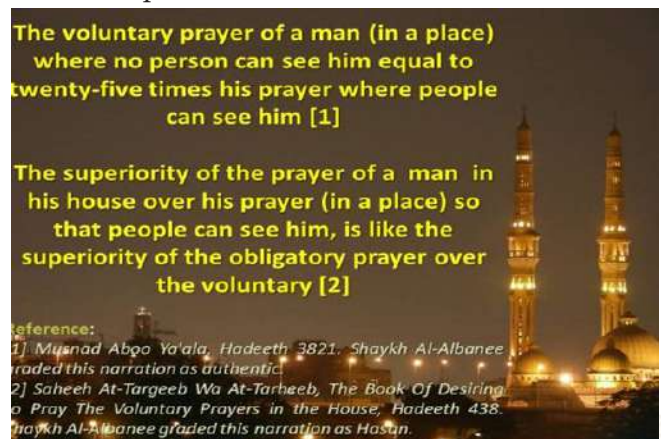
- **Make the Right Intention:**

Make an intention that this Ramadhaan will be a time of great spiritual effort and sincerity. To help turn that intention into reality, make checklists of both daily goals for Ramadhaan and goals for the overall month before its start.



- **Perform Extra Salaah:**

If you have no missed Fardh Salaah (Obligatory Prayers) to make up, start to offer Nafil (Voluntary) Salaah to prepare yourself for the extra Salaah that take place in Ramadhaan. If you do have missed Fardh Salaah, use the time you would give to the Nafil prayers to make some of them up.



○ **Get into the Habit of Zikr:**

Zikr, a verbal praise of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), is an action of Muslim remembering Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) by either reading or reciting phrases or words of praise of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). In Ramadhaan, each and every moment gets sanctified; therefore, to get the maximum reward from the days of Ramadhaan besides regular Salaah, a Muslim must do Zikr as well.



○ **Give Charity:**

This world can only be a better place if we help each other. In return, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) rewards us in both worlds. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:
 وَاللّٰهُ فِي عَوْنِ الْعَبْدِ مَا كَانَ الْعَبْدُ فِي عَوْنِ أَخِيهِ
 "Allah helps the servant as long as he helps his brother."

(Muslim)



○ **Eat Healthy and Moderately:**

With less time to eat in Ramadhaan, we really need to pay attention to what we eat. Now is the best time to research the nutritious value of the food we eat. While we fast, the food we eat before we start our Sawm or to break our Sawm needs to

provide the optimal energy so we can accomplish our daily tasks and increase our worship.



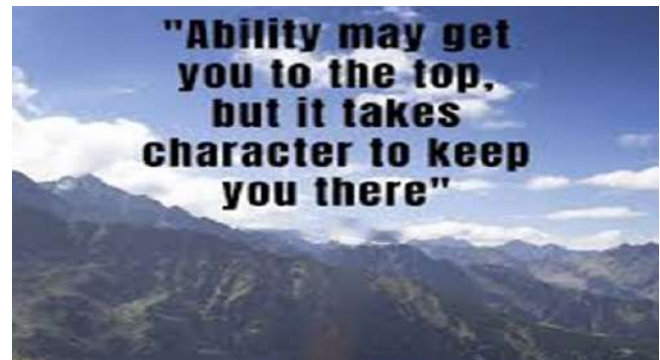
○ **Try to Improve your Character:**

Everyone can be a little bit more kind and work on different aspects of their character. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said regarding this:

إِنَّ مِنْ خَيْرِكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا

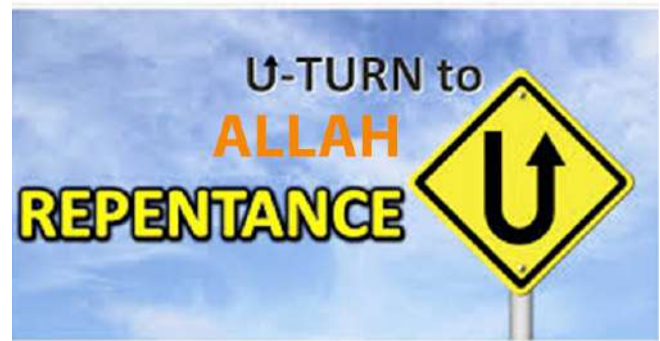
"The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character."

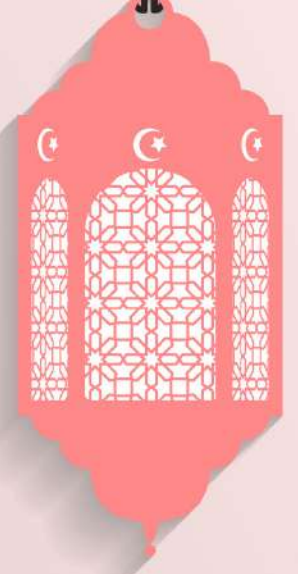
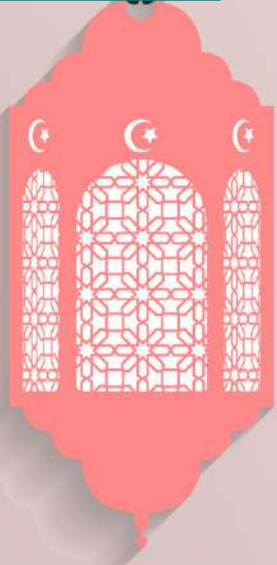
(Bukhari)



○ **Repent and seek Forgiveness:**

Start repenting and seeking forgiveness from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), the Almighty, for all wrongdoings before the start of Ramadhaan.





RAMADHAAN

BLESSINGS AFTER BLESSINGS

(Part-I)

1. 'OUTPOURINGS' OF MERCY

Sayyedina Anas bin Maalik reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

أَتَاكُمْ رَمَضَانُ شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ صِيَامَهُ
تَفْتَحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَتُعَلَّقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَحِيمِ وَتُعَلَّقُ فِيهِ مَرَدَةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ
لِلَّهِ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ مِنْ حَرَمٍ خَيْرِهَا فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ

“Do good all the time, and seek to be recipients of the ‘outpouring’ of Allah’s mercy. Indeed, Allah showers down these (special) ‘outpourings’ of His mercy to whomsoever He wills from His slaves.”

(Tabaraani)

Although Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) constantly showers His mercy, love and blessings upon us throughout the year, there are certain times of the year wherein He is even more Generous to us.

These are the special seasons, days and moments in which it is even easier to acquire His pleasure, earn His forgiveness and be saved from the Jahannum (Hell). The blessed month of

Ramadhāan is one such season when we witness the fruits of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s love and kindness.

2. GATES OF JANNAH & JAHANNUM

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

أَتَاكُمْ رَمَضَانُ شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ صِيَامَهُ
تَفْتَحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَتُعَلَّقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَحِيمِ وَتُعَلَّقُ فِيهِ مَرَدَةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ
لِلَّهِ فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ مِنْ حَرَمٍ خَيْرِهَا فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ

“The month of Ramadhāan has come to you, a blessed month in which Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has obligated (its) Siyaam (plural of Sawm i.e. Fasting) upon you. In it, the gates of Jannah (Paradise) are opened, the gates of Jahannum (Hell) are closed, and the rebellious devils are chained. In it, Allah has a night which is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of its good is truly deprived!”

(Nasa'ee)

Some of the 'Ulamaa (Scholars), like Ibn Rajab, said that this Hadeeth is the basis



for congratulating one another for the arrival of Ramadhan. Why shouldn't the believer be congratulated when the gates of Jannah have opened? Why shouldn't the sinner be congratulated when the gates of the Jahannum have closed? Why shouldn't the Muslims be congratulated for a time when the devils are chained? How can this time be compared to any other time?

3. O SEEKER OF GOOD! COME FORWARD!

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إِذَا كَانَ أَوَّلُ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ صُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ وَمَرَدَةُ الْجِنِّ وَغُلِّقَتِ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ فَلَمْ يُفْتَحْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ وَفُتِحَتِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ فَلَمْ يُغْلَقْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ وَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ يَا بَاغِيَ الْخَيْرِ أَقْبِلْ وَيَا بَاغِيَ الشَّرِّ أَقْصِرْ وَلِلَّهِ عِتْقَاءُ مِنَ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ كُلُّ لَيْلَةٍ

"When it is the first night of the month of Ramadhan, the devils and the rebellious jinn are tied up; the doors of Jahannum are closed, and none of its doors are opened. The doors of Jannah are opened, and none of its doors are closed. A caller calls out: 'O seeker of good! Come forward. O seeker of evil! Stop!' And every night, Allah frees slaves from the Jahannum."

(Tirmizi)

While swearing upon Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), Ibn al-Jawzi said that if it was

said to the people of the grave, 'make a wish!' they would wish for one day of Ramadhan.

Ramadhan is a short period, so let us not shorten it further with our negligence. Use it wisely

4. BEFORGIVENFROMRAMADHAAN TORAMADHAAN

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

الصَّلَاةُ الْخَمْسُ وَالْجُمُعَةُ إِلَى الْجُمُعَةِ وَرَمَضَانَ إِلَى رَمَضَانَ مَكْفِرَاتٌ مَا بَيْنَهُنَّ إِذَا اجْتَنَبَ الْكَبَائِرَ

"The five daily prayers, Jumu'ah to Jumu'ah, and Ramadhan to Ramadhan expiate for (the sins perpetrated) in between them, so long as one stays away from the major sins."

(Muslim)

Here Ibn al-Qayyim said that whoever's Jumu'ah is safe from evil, his week will be safe from evil. Whoever's Ramadhan is safe from evil, his year will be safe from evil. Whoever's Hajj is safe from evil, his life will be safe from evil.

5. THE MONTH OF QUR'AAN

Ramadhan is the month for reciting the Qur'an. Allah says:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ

وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

"Ramadhan is the month in which the Qur'an was revealed – a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the criterion (between right and wrong)..."

(Al-Baqarah 2:185)

Sayyedina Waathilah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

أُنزِلَتْ صُحُفُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي أَوَّلِ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، وَأُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ لِسِتِّ مَضِينَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، الْأَنْجِيلُ لثَلَاثِ عَشْرَةَ خَلَّتْ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، وَأُنزِلَ الْقُرْآنُ لِأَرْبَعِ وَعِشْرِينَ خَلَّتْ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ

"The scriptures of Ibrahim were revealed on the first night of Ramadhan. The Torah was revealed after six nights of Ramadhan had passed. The Gospel was revealed after thirteen nights of Ramadhan had passed. The Quraan was revealed after twenty-four nights of Ramadhan had passed."

(Ahmad)

6. REALIZE THE PURPOSE OF SAWM

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

“...Siyaam (Fasting) is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain Taqwaa (piety and mindfulness of Allah).”

(Al-Baqarah 2:183)

“Taqwaa” (Piety) is to protect yourself from the punishment of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) by avoiding His prohibitions and implementing His commands.

When we observe Sawm, we temporarily make حرام “Haraam” (Prohibited) on ourselves what is usually حلال “Halaal” (Allowed), like eating, drinking, etc. This teaches us to say ‘NO!’ to our نفس “Nafs” and inner desires. This helps our Taqwaa to grow, making it easier to restrain ourselves from Haraam throughout the year.

7. EASE FOR YOU

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ﴿١٨٤﴾

“(Sawm for) a limited number of days...”

(Al-Baqarah 2:184)

Observe Sawm is obligatory upon us only for a limited number of days (29/30 days). From His mercy, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) made this amount manageable and easy for us. Furthermore, He made this short period of time a source of immense blessings.

Hafsah binte Sireen quoted Abul-‘Aaliyah that the person observing Sawm is in a state of worship so long as he does not backbite anyone, even if he is sleeping in his bed. Then Hafsah would say: “How wonderful it is that I am in a state of worship whilst I am sleeping on my bed.”



8. A UNIQUE REWARD

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa)’s Messenger (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) said:

كُلَّ عَمَلِ ابْنِ آدَمَ يضاعفُ الحسنةَ عشرًا أمثالها إلى سبعمئة ضعفٍ قالَ اللهُ عزَّ وجلَّ إلا الصومَ فإنه لي وأنا أجزي به يدع شهوته وطعامه من أجلي للصائم فرحتان فرحة عند فطره وفرحة عند لقاء ربه و تحلوف فيه أطيب عند الله من ريح المسك .

“Every action of the son of Adam is multiplied: a good deed receiving a tenfold to seven hundredfold rewards. Allah the Mighty and Exalted has said: ‘Except for Sawm. It is for Me and I will (personally) reward it; he abandons his desires and food for My sake.’ The person observing Sawm will have two moments of joy: one when he opens his Sawm, and the other when he will meet his Lord. The unpleasant smell coming out of his mouth is more fragrant to Allah than musk.”

(Muslim)

Sayyedina Haarith bin Haarith al-Ash’ari reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa)’s Messenger (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) quoting Prophet Yahyaa (John) said:

وأمركم بالصيام ومثل ذلك كمثل رجل في عصابة معه صرة مسك كلهم يحب أن يجد ريحها وإن الصيام أطيب عند الله من ريح المسك

“...And I command you to observe Sawm.

Indeed, the similitude (of a person, observing Sawm) is a man carrying a pouch of musk in a crowd of people, all of them marveling at its fragrance. Indeed, the breath of the fasting person is more fragrant to Allah than the scent of musk....”

(Tirmizi)

It is explained that here, the Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) used the image

of someone carrying a pouch of musk concealed from view, hidden under his garments, as was the habit of those who carry musk. Sawm is, likewise, hidden from the eyes of men. This is one reason why it has been described in another Hadeeth

as an action which is exclusively for Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa).

9. BAAB AR-RAYYAN

Sayyedina Sahl reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa)’s Messenger (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إن في الجنة بابا يقال له الريان يدخل منه الصائمون يوم القيامة لا يدخل منه أحد غيرهم يقال إن الصائمون فيقومون لا يدخل منه أحد غيرهم فإذا دخلوا أغلق فلم يدخل منه أحد

“Indeed, there is a gate in Jannah called al-Rayyaan. Those who observed Sawm will enter

through it on the Day of Judgement. No one else will enter through it along with them. It will be said: 'Where are those who observed Sawm?' Then they will get up, and there will be none other than them to enter through it. Once they have all entered, it will be closed and no one else will enter through it."

(Bukhari)

10. SAWM IS A SHIELD

Sayyidina Jaabir reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إِنَّمَا الصَّيَّامُ جَنْةٌ يَسْتَجِنُ بِهَا الْعَبْدُ مِنَ النَّارِ
 "Verily, Siyaam (plural of Sawm) is a shield by which the servant seeks protection from the Jahannum."

(Ahmad)

11. WHOSE SAWM IS THE BEST?

Sayyidina Ma'az bin Jabal reported that a man asked Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam):

أَيُّ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا؟

"Which Mujaahideen are the best?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

أَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ذَكَرًا

"Those who remember Allah the most."

The man asked:

فَأَيُّ الصَّائِمِينَ أَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا؟

"Which of those who observe Sawm (Fasting) are the best?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

أَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ذَكَرًا

"Those who remember Allah the most."

Then the man mentioned Salaah, Zakaah and Hajj, and each time Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

أَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلَّهِ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى ذَكَرًا

"Those who remember Allah the most."

At that time, Sayyidina Abu Bakr said to Sayyidina Umar:

"Those who remember (Allah) have taken all the good."

Listening to this, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) remarked:

أَجَلْ

"Yes, indeed!"

(Ahmad)



12. DO NOT DELAY IFTAAR

Sayyidina Sahl bin Sa'ad reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

لَا يَزَالُ النَّاسُ بِخَيْرٍ مَا مَجَّلُوا الْفِطْرَ

"The people will remain well as long as they hasten the opening of the Sawm."

(Bukhari)

13. START IFTAAR WITH DATES

Sayyidina Anas bin Maalik said:

إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُفْطِرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ عَلَى رُطَبَاتٍ فَإِنْ

لَمْ تَكُنْ رُطَبَاتٍ فَتَمِيرَاتٍ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَمِيرَاتٍ حَسَا حَسَوَاتٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ

"The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) used to have Iftaar before performing Salaah with some fresh dates. If there were not any fresh dates, then with some dry dates. And if there were no dry dates, then he would drink a few sips of water."

(At-Tirmizi)

14. KNOW WHAT TO RECITE AFTER IFTAAR

Sayyidina 'Abdullah bin Umar said that when the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) would have Iftaar, he would say:

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَا ، وَابْتَلَّتْ الْعُرُوقُ ، وَثَبَّتَ الْأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

The thirst has gone, the veins have been moistened, and the reward has been secured, if Allah wills.

(Abu Daawood)

15. FEED A PERSON OBSERVING SAWM

Sayyidina Zaid bin Khaalid al-Juhani reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

مَنْ فَطَرَ صَائِمًا كَانَ لَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ لَا يَنْقُصُ مِنْ أَجْرِ الصَّائِمِ شَيْئًا

"Whoever provides Iftaar for a person observing Sawm, he will have the same reward as

him, without anything being diminished from the reward of the person observing Sawm.”

(At-Tirmizi)

16. GET YOUR DU'AA ACCEPTED

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تَرُدُّ دَعْوَتَهُمْ الصَّائِمِ حَتَّى يَفْطُرَ وَالْإِمَامَ الْعَادِلَ وَدَعْوَةَ الْمَظْلُومِ بِرَبِّهِ اللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْغَمَامِ وَيَفْتَحُ لَهَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَيَقُولُ الرَّبُّ وَعَرَّتْنِي لِأَنْصُرَنَّكَ وَلَوْ بَعْدَ حِينٍ

“There are three whose Du'aa is not rejected: the person observing Sawm until he has Iftaar, the just leader, and the supplication of the oppressed person...”

(At-Tirmizi)

17. MAKE DU'AA BEFORE IFTAR

Sayyedina 'Abdullah ibne 'Amr reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إِنَّ لِلصَّائِمِ عِنْدَ فِطْرِهِ لِدَعْوَةَ مَا تَرُدُّ

“Indeed, the Swam observing person has a supplication at the time of his Iftaar which is not rejected.”

Ibne Abi Mulaikah said that he heard Sayyedina 'Abdullah bin 'Amr say upon Iftaar:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِي
“O Allah! I beg You – through Your mercy which encompasses everything – to forgive me.”

(Ibne Maajah)

18. ENJOY THE BLESSINGS OF SUHOOR

Sayyedina Anas bin Maalik reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

تَسَحَّرُوا فَإِنَّ فِي السَّحُورِ بَرَكَاتٌ

“Eat Suhoor, for indeed there is blessing in it.”

(Bukhari)

19. EAT DATES FOR SUHUR

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

نِعْمَ سَحُورُ الْمُؤْمِنِ التَّمْرُ

“How excellent are dates as the believer's Suhoor.”

(Abu Daawood)

20. DO YOU WANT TO BE BLESSED?

Sayyedina Abu Sa'eed Khudri reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger

(SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

أَكَلَةُ بَرَكَاتٍ فَلَا تَدْعُوهُ لَوْ أَنَّ يَجْرِعَ أَحَدُكُمْ جُرْعَةً مِنْ مَاءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يَصَلُّونَ عَلَى الْمُسْحَرِينَ

“There is blessing in eating Suhoor; so, do not skip it, even if one of you has a sip of water. For indeed Allah and His Angels send blessings and mercy on those who eat Suhoor.”

(Ahmad)

21. PURIFY SAWM FROM FOUL LANGUAGE

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

إِذَا أَصْبَحَ أَحَدُكُمْ يَوْمًا صَائِمًا فَلَا يَرَفُثْ وَلَا يَجْهَلْ فَإِنَّ امْرَأَةً سَأَلَتْهُ أَوْ قَاتَلَتْهُ فَلْيَقُلْ إِنِّي صَائِمٌ إِنِّي صَائِمٌ

“When one of you wakes up in the state of Sawm, he should neither use obscene language nor act ignorantly. If anyone insults him or argues with him, he should say: ‘I am fasting, I am fasting.’”

(Muslim)

Sulaimaan bin Moosaa reported that Sayyedina Jaabir said:

إِذَا صُمْتَ فَلْيَصْمِمْ سَمْعَكَ وَبَصْرَكَ وَلِسَانَكَ عَنِ الْكِبْرِ وَالْمَأْتَمِمْ وَدِعْ أَذْيَ الْإِنْسَانِ وَلِيَكُنْ عَلَيْكَ وَقَارٌ وَسَكِينَةٌ يَوْمَ صِيَامِكَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ يَوْمَ فِطْرِكَ وَيَوْمَ صِيَامِكَ سَوَاءً

“Let there be an aura of tranquility and dignity on the day when you observe Sawm. And don't make the day when you fast the same as the day you don't fast.”

(Musannaf Ibne Abi Shaibah)

22. PROTECT YOUR SAWM

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah reported that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

مَنْ لَمْ يَدَعْ قَوْلَ الزُّورِ وَالْعَمَلَ بِهِ وَالْجَهْلَ فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ حَاجَةٌ أَنْ يَدَعَ طَعَامَهُ وَشَرَابَهُ

“Whoever does not give up lying and false conduct, Allah has no need in him giving up his food and his drink.”

(Bukhari)

Abu Na'eem Isbahaani quotes Al-Awzaa'i that he heard Yahyaa bin Katheer saying:

يَصُومُ الرَّجُلُ عَنِ الْحَلَالِ الطَّيِّبِ ، وَيَفْطُرُ عَلَى الْحَرَامِ الْخَبِيثِ ، لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ - يَعْنِي اغْتِيَابَهُ

“A man fasts from the pure and lawful, but he breaks his fast with the evil and unlawful: the flesh of his brother (i.e. ruins his fast by backbiting his brother).”

(Hilyatul Auliya)





CHARITY

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Sent by: Brother Yousuf Khairuddin, Bangladesh

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) describes two significant attributes of those who have تقوى Taqwaa (Fear of Allah), and in turn, will get Divine Guidance:

﴿الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ﴾

“who believe in the Unseen, and are steadfast in Saalah (Prayer), and spend out of what We have provided them.

(Al-Baqarah 2:3)

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) created us within a “gradient of wealth” like finances, material elements, health, appearance, intelligence to learn and the ability to master different skills. In this Quraanic Aayah (Verse), Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) asks believers to share part of the wealth He provided them with the less fortunate. In this perspective, the Arabic word زكوة “Zakaah” means to self-purify our soul. From this definition, this compulsory charity of money (Zakaat Al-Maal)

is the intention of every rich person to self-purify his / her soul by helping the poor. The amount of charity is fixed at 2.5% of a Muslim’s total savings and wealth above a minimum amount (Nisaab) is to be given to poor and needy.

﴿وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ﴾

“....And do good as Allah has been good to you....”

(Al-Qasas 28:77)

In addition to this obligation, we can have the opportunity to self-purify our soul and add good deeds by giving whatever we can. For example, this Quraanic Aayah:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

﴿بِهِ عَلَيْهِ﴾

“They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: ‘Whatever good you spend should be



for parents, kinsmen, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, Allah is all-aware of it.”

(Ak-Baqarah 2:215)

This means that the intention to please Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) and self-purify our soul is not limited to only helping those in need by giving them Zakaah (Obligatory Charity), but encompasses all kinds of charity (any sort of giving that includes even spending on parents and relatives).

Moreover, being kind and considerate towards relatives, neighbors and coworkers are also good deeds as mentioned in the Quraanic Aayah:

وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي
الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ
وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ مَن كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣١﴾

“Worship Allah, and do not associate with Him anything, and be good to parents and to kinsmen and orphans and the needy and the close neighbor and the distant neighbor and the companion at your side and the wayfarer and to those (slaves who are) owned by you. Surely, Allah does not like those who are arrogant, proud.”

(An-Nisaa 4:36)

As we try to please Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) with our Salaah (Prayers) in عبادات “Ibaadaat” in Masjids, Muslims are also supposed to please Him in workplaces by helping people there in معاملات “Mu’aamlaat”. For example, an engineer offers his expertise to properly solve

technical problems of others. A doctor treats patients adequately and provide them with the proper diagnosis and treatment and a teacher imparts knowledge and enables students to learn.

It is reported in Musnad Ahmad that Sayyedina Abu Zarr narrated that the Prophet, Sayyedina Mohammad (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) teaches us that we can help people in many ways and it will be treated as Sadaqah (Charity). He said:

ليس من نفس ابن آدم إلا عليها صدقة في كل يوم طلعت فيه الشمس

“Charity is prescribed for each descendant of Adam every day the sun rises”.

He was then asked:

يا رسول الله، ومن أين لنا صدقة تنصدق بها؟

“O Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa)’s Messenger (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam)! From what do we give charity every day?”

The Prophet (SallAllaaho ‘Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

إن أبواب الخير لكثيرة؛ التسبيح والتكبير والتحميد، والأمر بالمعروف، والنهي عن المنكر، وتطيّب الأذى عن الطريق، وتسمع الأصم، تهدي الأعمى، وتدل المستدل على حاجته، وتسعى بشدة ساقيك مع اللهفان المستغيث، وتحمل بشدة ذراعيك مع الضعيف، فهذا كله صدقة منك على نفسك

“The doors of goodness are many: Saying “Subhaan Allah” i.e. no shortcoming in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) in any respect; saying الله اكبر “Allahu Akbar” i.e. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa) is the greatest; saying الحمد لله Al-Hamdulillaah i.e. all praise is for Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’aalaa); enjoining good, forbidding evil, removing harm from the road,



listening to the deaf, leading the blind, guiding one to the object of his need, hurrying with the strength of one's legs to one in sorrow who is asking for help, and supporting the feeble with the strength of one's arms. All of these are charity prescribed for you".

He also said: *بسمك في وجه أخيك لك صدقة*
 "Even your smile for your brother is a charity".
 (At-Tirmizi)

In addition, Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) asks Muslims to also protect nature and animals. For example, regarding the reward of planting trees, he said:

عن أنس بن مالك - رضي الله عنه - قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ « ما من مسلم يغرس غرساً أو يزرع زرعاً فإكل منه طير أو إنساناً أو بهيمة إلا كان له به صدقة

"If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a Sadaqah (Charity) for him".
 (Bukhari)

To care and protect animals, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) told this story:

بينما رجل يمشي بطريق اشتد به العطش، فوجد بئراً فنزل فيها، فشرب ثم خرج، فإذا كلب يلهث، يأكل الثرى من العطش، فقال الرجل: لقد بلغ هذا الكلب من العطش مثل الذي كان بلغني، فنزل البئر فإلى خفاه، ثم أمسكها بيديه، فسقى الكلب، فشكر الله له، فغفر له

"A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, there he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud

The intention to please Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and self-purify our soul is not limited to only helping those in need by giving them Zakaah (Obligatory Charity), but encompasses all kinds of charity (any sort of giving that includes even spending on parents and relatives).

because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, 'This dog is suffering from thirst as I did.' So, he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, held it with his mouth and watered the dog. Allah appreciated him for that deed and forgave him".

The Sahaabah (Companions) asked: *يا رسول الله، وإن لنا في البهائم أجراً؟*
 "O Messenger of Allah! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?"

He replied: *في كل ذات كبد رطبة أجر*
 "There is a reward for serving any living being".
 (Bukhari)

On a last note, as mentioned in this Quraanic Aayah:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ
 "And We have not sent you but as mercy for all the worlds."
 (Al-Anbiya 21:107)

Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) was sent as a divine gift of mercy for the whole of mankind. For this mission of love and compassion, Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

اخلق كلهم عيال الله فأحب الخلق عند الله من أحسن إلى عياله
 "All creatures of Allah are His family; and he is the most beloved of Allah, who does most good to Allah's creatures."
 (Bayhaqi)



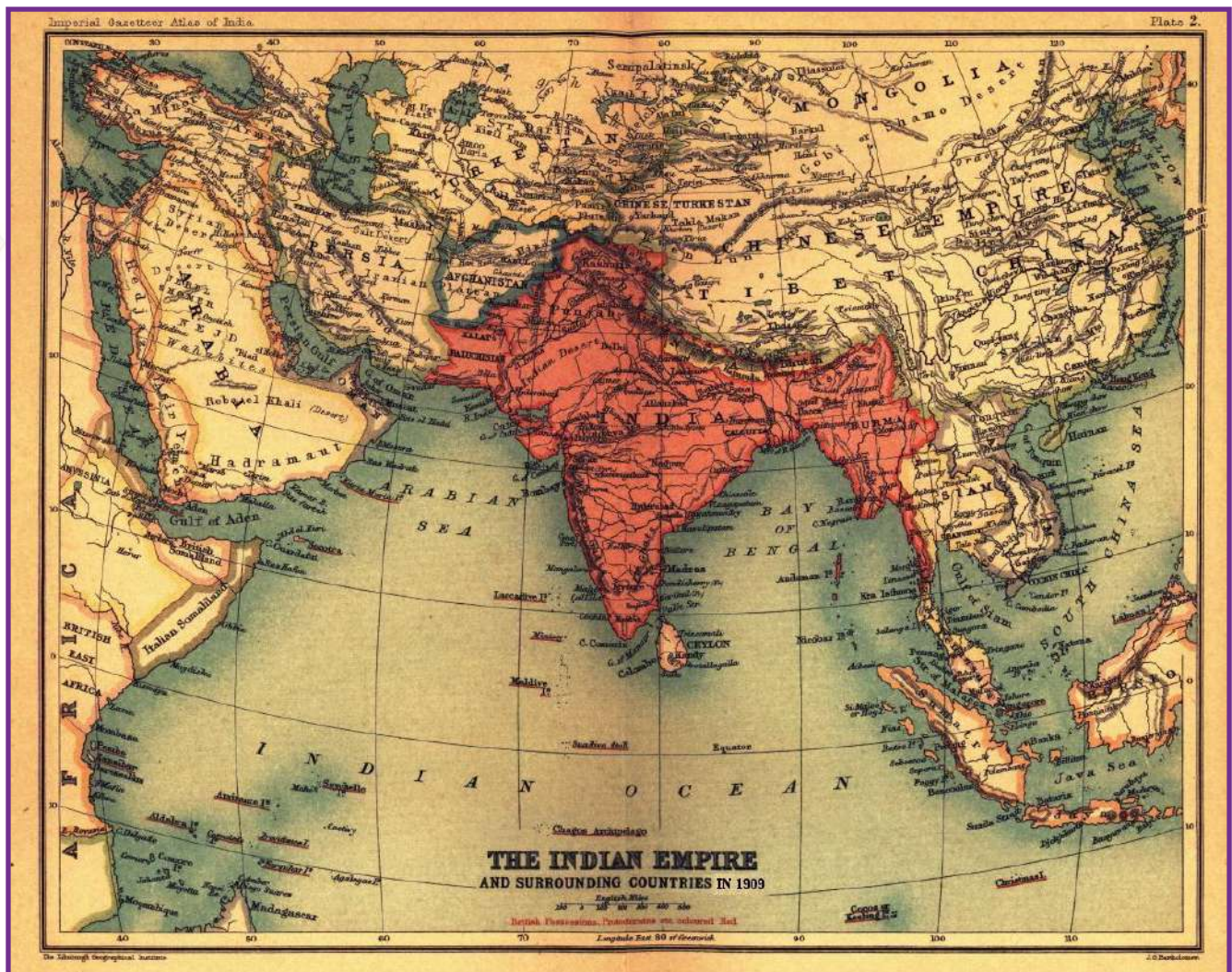
COLONIAL STRATEGY

Adapted & Sent by: Sister Syeda Zohra Kazmi, UK

When a moral or logical argument cannot be refuted, a common tactic employed by the colonizer, is diversion.

Public attention is diverted away from an immoral imperial aim towards a cause that requires a 'more immediate' response or reaction, one that conveniently justifies imperial goals, while othering the objects towards whom that

native population that vastly outnumbered them, they exaggerated the prevalence of acts such as 'sati' (widow immolation). It was portrayed as a widespread rite performed by Hindus and central to their religion. In reality it was already a declining practice, but the British gained the moral imperative required to further subjugate the native population.



response is directed.

In British controlled India, when authorities needed to justify tighter controls on a

In French occupied Algeria, Algerian women were portrayed as downtrodden and oppressed by Algerian men, religion and culture.

They were central to the 'civilizing' mission of the French in North Africa.

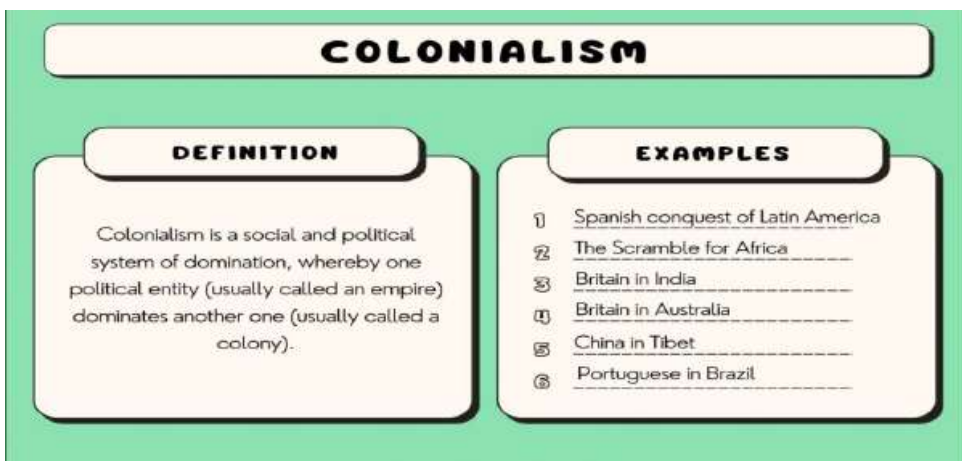
For example: "Aren't you pretty? Unveil yourself!" a French poster distributed during the Algerian revolution against colonial rule.

In North America, South America, Africa, Asia and Australasia, European colonizers depicted native populations as savages and barbarians. This dehumanization was essential to further the colonial project. It meant that any moral argument against colonialism could be diverted to focus on the subhuman nature of those being colonized. The violent offensive of the colonizers was acceptable, even necessary, while the violent resistance of the colonized merely reinforced their 'savage' nature.

In the United States and Canada, dehumanization played a sinister role in the persecution of indigenous peoples. European colonizers not only depicted the native populations as savages and barbarians but acted upon these beliefs to carry out a systematic genocide through

In North America, South America, Africa, Asia and Australasia, European colonizers depicted native populations as savages and barbarians. This dehumanization was essential to further the colonial project. It meant that any moral argument against colonialism could be diverted to focus on the subhuman nature of those being colonized.

forced removals, cultural assimilation policies such as residential schools, and the spread of diseases to which Indigenous people had no immunity. This systematic erasure of Indigenous peoples and their cultures was a stark manifestation of the settler-colonial doctrine of superiority, aiming to eradicate the very existence of the original



inhabitants to facilitate European settlement and expansion. The violent offensive of the colonizers in North America was not just acceptable in their eyes but was deemed necessary to suppress the rightful resistance of the indigenous peoples.

A 1904 cartoon by Bob Satterfield about the brutality committed by Western nations depicted the personifications of England, the United States, and Germany carrying spears topped by the severed heads of Tibet, the Philippines, and Southwest Africa respectively. The caption described the sketch as "The advance guard of civilization".

There are countless examples from all over the world, of rebellions, revolts and resistance by slaves, colonized peoples and indigenous tribes against occupying or colonial powers that has resulted in their indiscriminate slaughter and collective punishment for daring to resist. These incidents of resistance have then been used as the starting point of a narrative that frames the subaltern populace in whatever terms are most convenient in furthering the aims of the occupying force or political authority.

Should any moral or logical argument against such abuse of power be presented, the constructed narrative simply diverts attention towards the violence of the natives / enslaved.

In the first Indian War of Independence in 1857, (often referred to as the Sepoy Mutiny), native resistance against the rule of the British in India resulted in the death of thousands of civilians. In quelling the revolt, atrocities were committed by the British against those even suspected of participating. The number of deaths on the British side were approximately 6000, which included mainly soldiers. On the Indian side, the death toll was more than 100,000, and primarily civilians (though some have claimed it was much higher if subsequent reprisals are counted). Since British deaths also included some

The Spectator published a column where it alluded to animal-like qualities within the natives; he declared the native of Hindustan as "... a tractable animal when he is managed with intelligence, intractable when his European managers are negligent or indiscrete."

families of British soldiers, including women and children, it resulted in reprisals by the British, at times against entire villages, that included sexual violence, the torture of Indian soldiers, and cruel methods of execution.

A British officer whose family been killed in the uprising wrote:

"The orders went out to shoot every soul.... It was literally murder... I have seen many bloody and awful sights lately but such a one as I witnessed yesterday I pray I never see again. The women were all spared but their screams on seeing their husbands and sons butchered, were most painful... Heaven knows I feel no pity, but when some old grey bearded man is brought and shot before your very eyes, hard must be that man's heart I think who can look on with indifference..."

(Dalrymple, William (2006), *The Last Mughal*, Viking Penguin, p. 4-5)

The cost of the rebellion in terms of human suffering was immense. Two great cities, Delhi and Lucknow, were devastated by fighting and by the plundering of the victorious British. Where the countryside resisted, as in parts of Awadh, villages were burnt.

(1783–1870: An expanding empire", in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, Cambridge University Press, p. 50)

British media was an active participant in justifying the reprisals, since the narrative they pushed focused on British civilian deaths at the hands of Indian soldiers. The Spectator published a column where it alluded to animal-like qualities within the natives; he declared the native of Hindustan as "... a tractable animal when he is managed with intelligence, intractable when his European managers are negligent or indiscrete." In this edition, the paper also takes the description

a little further, in describing the mutineers as "half children in understanding.... actuated by the same spirit that animates schoolboys in the "barring out."" This conveniently disregarded the resentments of a native population subjugated under increasingly harsh colonial rule. It also ignored the disproportionate death toll. Those British voices who did object to the actions of the colonial rulers, were derided in British press.

(Punch, 24 October 1857)

Since the end of World War 2, and particularly over the last few decades, though racist and orientalist tropes are still undeniably used to describe 'subaltern' populations, a shift did take place in the public opinion of the Western countries that formerly colonized the Global South. Colonialism was no longer considered acceptable, and outright racist language increasingly unacceptable.

Today, those who hold 'unacceptable' views have to be more subtle in their language. The word 'savage' is considered offensive and outdated; 'barbarian' is a relic of the past. Though language has changed, imperial aims have not – they are merely more subtle in their application, while moral and arguments against those aims are still diverted.

Consider a recent example: the slogan 'Black lives matter'; when Black people attempt to readdress the injustices they routinely face in America and elsewhere, instead of responding with 'Black lives *don't* matter', opponents say 'All lives matter' – both demonstrating that language in mainstream discourse can no longer be outrightly racist (it needs to be more subtle), and a diversion tactic; an argument that cannot be refuted logically or morally is diverted to another

There are countless examples from all over the world, of rebellions, revolts and resistance by slaves, colonized peoples and indigenous tribes against occupying or colonial powers that has resulted in their indiscriminate slaughter and collective punishment for daring to resist.

issue (here, the imagined threat to white people).

This trend had also been seen in labelling the "practicing" Muslims as "fundamentalist" and "extremist". ❀❀

SPIRITUAL FULFILMENT

(Ms. Karima Slack Razi)

I took the Shahaadah on September 20, 1991. If you had told me 5 years prior that I would embrace Islam, I never would have believed you. In retrospect, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s guidance was so subtle yet consistent, that now I see my whole life as leading up to that moment. It is difficult to encapsulate the exact factors that brought me to Islam because it was a journey, a process, that lasted three years. Those three years were both exhilarating and exhausting. My perceptions of myself and the world changed dramatically. Some beliefs were validated; others, shattered. At times, I feared I would lose myself; at other times, I knew that this path was my destiny and embraced it. Throughout those years, a series of aspects of Islam intrigued me. Slowly and gradually, my studies led me towards the day when I took the declaration of faith, the shahaadah.

Prior to my introduction to Islam, I knew that I yearned for more spiritual fulfilment in my life. But, as yet, nothing had seemed acceptable or accessible to me. I had been brought up essentially a secular humanist. Morals were emphasized, but never attributed to any spiritual or divine being. The predominant religion of our country, Christianity, seemed to burden a person with too much guilt. I was not really familiar with any other religions. I wish I could say that, sensing my spiritual void, I embarked on a spiritual quest and studied various religions in depth. However, I was too comfortable with my life for that. I come from a loving and supportive family. I had many

interesting and supportive friends. I thoroughly enjoyed my university studies and I was successful at the university. Instead, it was the "chance" meeting of various Muslims that instigated my study of Islam.

Sharif was one of the first Muslims who intrigued me. He was an elderly man who worked in a tutorial program for affirmative action that I had just entered. He explained that while his job brought little monetary reward, the pleasure he gained from teaching students brought him all the reward he needed. He spoke softly and genuinely.

His demeanor more than his words caught me, and I thought, "I hope I have his peace of spirit when I reach his age". That was in 1987.

As I met more Muslims, I was struck not only by their inner peace, but by the strength of their faith. These gentle souls contrasted with the violent, sexist image I had of Islam. Then I met Imran, a Muslim friend of my brother, who I soon realized was the type of man I would like to marry. He was intelligent, sincere, independent, and at peace with himself. When we both agreed that there was potential for marriage, I began my serious studies of Islam. Initially, I had no intention of becoming Muslim; I only desired to understand his religion because he had made it clear that he would want to raise his children as Muslims. My response was: "If they will turn out as sincere, peaceful and kind as he is, then I have no problem with it. But I do feel obligated to understand Islam better first".



In retrospect, I realize that I was attracted to these peaceful souls because I sensed my own lack of inner peace and conviction. There was an inner void that was not completely satisfied with academic success or human relationships. However, at that point I would never have stated that I was attracted to Islam for myself. Rather, I viewed it as an intellectual pursuit. This perception was compatible with my controlled, academic lifestyle. Since I called myself a feminist, my early reading centered around women in Islam. I thought Islam oppressed women. In my Women's Studies courses I came across thoughts, discussions and biased stories about Muslim women who were not allowed to leave their homes and were forced to cover their heads. Of course, I saw Hijab as an oppressive tool imposed by men rather than as an expression of self-respect and dignity. What I discovered in my readings surprised me. Islam not only does not oppress women, but actually liberates them, having given them rights in the 6th century that we have only gained in this century in this country: the right to own property and wealth and to maintain that in her name after marriage; the right to vote; and the right to divorce.

This realization was not easy in coming...I resisted it every step of the way. But there were always answers to my questions. Why is there polygamy? It is only allowed if the man can treat all four equally. However, it was and is a need for the times when there are more women than men, especially in times of war, so that some women are not deprived of having a relationship and children. Furthermore, it is far superior to the mistress relationship so prevalent here since the woman has a legal right to support should she have a child. This was only one of many questions, the answers to which eventually proved to me that women in Islam are given full rights as individuals in society.

However, these discoveries did not allay all my fears. The following year was one of intense emotional turmoil. Having finished up my courses for my masters in Latin American Studies in the spring of 1989, I decided to take a year to substitute teach. This enabled me to spend a lot of time studying Islam. Many things I was reading about Islam made sense. However, they didn't fit into my perception of the world. I had always perceived of religion as a crutch. But could it be that it was the truth? Didn't religions cause much of the oppression and wars in the world? How

then could I be considering marrying a man who followed one of the world's major religions? Every week, I was hit with a fresh story on the news, the radio or the newspaper about the oppression of Muslim women. Could I, a feminist, really be considering marrying into that society? Eyebrows were raised. People talked about me in worried tones behind my back. In a matter of months, my secure world of 24 years was turned upside down. I no longer felt that I knew what was right or wrong. What was black and white was now all grey.

But something kept me going. And it was more than my desire to marry Imran. At any moment I could have walked away from my studies of Islam and been accepted back into a circle of feminist, socialist friends and into the loving arms of my family. While these people never deserted me, they haunted me with their influence. I worried about what they would say or think, particularly since I had always judged myself through the eyes of others. So, I secluded myself. I talked only with my family and friends that I knew wouldn't judge me. And I read.

It was no longer an interested, disinterested study of Islam. It was a struggle for my own identity. Up to that time I had produced many successful term papers. I knew how to research and to support a thesis. But my character had never been at stake. For the first time, I realized that I had always written to please others. Now, I was studying for my own spirit. It was scary. Although I knew my friends and family loved me, they couldn't give me the answers. I no longer wanted to lean on their support. Imran was always there to answer my questions. While I admired his patience and his faith that all would turn out for the best, I didn't want to lean too heavily on him out of my own fear that I might just be doing this for a man and not for myself. I felt I had nothing and no one to lean on. Alone, frightened and filled with self-doubt, I continued to read.

After I had satisfied my curiosity about women in Islam and been surprised by the results, I began to read about the life of the Prophet of Islam, Sayyidina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) and to read the Quraan itself. As I read about the Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), I began to question my initial belief that he was merely an exceptional leader. His honesty prior to any revelations, his kindness, his sagacity, his insights into his present as well as the future -- all made me question my initial

premise. His persistence in adversity and, later, his humility in the face of astounding success seemed to belie human nature. Even at the height of his success when he could have enjoyed tremendous wealth, he refused to have more than his poorest companions in Islam.

Slowly I was getting deeper and deeper into the Quraan. I asked, "Could a human being be capable of such a subtle, far-reaching book?" Furthermore, there are parts that are meant to guide the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) himself, as well as reprimand him. I wondered if the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) would have reprimanded himself. As I slowly made my way through the Quraan, it became less and less an intellectual activity, and more and more a personal struggle. There were days when I would reject every word -- find a way to condemn it, not allow it to be true. But then I would suddenly happen upon a phrase that spoke directly to me. This first happened when I was beginning to experience a lot of inner turmoil and doubt and I read some Aayaat (Verses) towards the end of the second chapter:

"Allah does not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear."

(2:286)

Although I would not have stated that I believed in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) at that time, when I read these words it was as if a burden was lifted from my heart.

I continued to have many fears as I studied Islam. Would I still be close to my family if I became a Muslim? Would I end up in an oppressive marriage? Would I still be "open-minded"? I believed secular humanism to be the most open-minded approach to life. Slowly I began to realize that secular humanism is as much an ideology, a dogma, as Islam. I realized that everyone had their ideology and I must consciously choose mine. I realized that I had to have trust in my own intellect and make my own decisions -- that I should not be swayed by the negative reactions of my "open-minded", "progressive" friends. During this time, as I started keeping more to myself, I was becoming intellectually freer than any time in my life.

Two and a half years later, I had finished the Quraan, been delighted by its descriptions of nature and often reassured by its wisdom. I had learned about the extraordinary life of the person, Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), Muslims believe him as their Prophet; I had been

satisfied by the realization that Islam understands that men and women are different but equal; and I discovered that Islam gave true equality not only to men and women, but to all races and social classes, judging only by one's level of piety.

And I had gained confidence in myself and my own decisions. It was then that I came to the final, critical question: "Do I believe in one God?" This is the basis of being a Muslim. Having satisfied my curiosity about the rules and historical emergence of Islam, I finally came to this critical question, the essence of being Muslim. It was as if I had gone backwards: starting with the details before I finally reached the spiritual question. I had to wade through the technicalities and satisfy my academic side before I could finally address the spiritual question. Did I... Could I place my trust in a greater being? Could I relinquish my secular humanist approach to life?

Twice I decided to take the Shahaadah and then changed my mind the next day. One afternoon, I even knelt down and touched my forehead to the floor, as I had often seen Muslims do, and asked for guidance. I felt such peace in that position. Perhaps in that moment I was a Muslim in heart, but when I stood up, my mind was not ready to officially take the Shahaadah.

After that moment a few more weeks passed. I began my new job: teaching high school. The days began to pass very quickly, a flurry of teaching, discipline and papers to correct. As my days began to pass so fast, it struck me that I did not want to pass from this world without having declared my faith in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Intellectually, I understood that the evidence present in the Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam)'s life and in the Quraan was too compelling to deny. And, at that moment, I was also ready in my heart for Islam. I had spent my life longing for a truth in which heart would be compatible with mind, action with thought, intellect with emotion. I found that reality in Islam. With that reality came true self-confidence and intellectual freedom. A few days after I took the Shahaadah, I wrote in my journal that finally I have found in Islam the validation of my inner thoughts and intuition. By acknowledging and accepting Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), I have found the door to spiritual and intellectual freedom.





HEALTHY RAMADHAAN

We are among the world's millions of fortunate Muslims, observing Ramadhaan this year again, observing Sawm (fasting from dawn to sunset) each day.

Sawm is an important pillar of Islam, an obligatory religious practice, that can usually be accomplished safely. However, if anyone has any health conditions — including pregnancy, breast-feeding, or diabetes or another illness — it's best to consult with both, an 'Aalim (Islamic Scholar) and your "practicing Muslim" doctor to determine if he is able to observe Sawm without harm. And if he is taking any medications, he should ask his doctor to reschedule his medicines.

Although we may differ in how we prepare our minds and bodies, here are some tips that can help Muslims adjust to the daily Sawm:

1. Stay hydrated. Try drinking fluid several times throughout the night, even if you aren't feeling too thirsty — thirst is a signal that your body is **ALREADY** dehydrated. Choose fluids that don't contain caffeine, because caffeinated drinks can be dehydrating. Remember, taking water is not only traditional at Iftaar, it ensures that you get the best source of hydration into your body before becoming distracted with food.

But, be careful and don't go overboard with drinking too much at one time. Trying to drink a few gallons all at once can dilute your body's electrolytes, inducing a potentially fatal condition called water intoxication.

2. Variety is the spice of life. Eat a variety

of foods during the evening. Now, more than ever, your body needs good nourishment to compensate the absence of food during Sawm. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits, lean protein, healthy fat (fat from plants, like olive oil and nuts) — all of these are important to give your body all the nutrients it needs.

3. Portion size is important. It takes the body about 20 minutes to register that it's had enough to eat. So don't go overboard with eating during Iftaar. Eating mindfully and listening for when your hunger is actually satisfied puts less stress on your body and gives you more energy than eating huge amounts at one time.

4. Keep moving. Though observing Sawm can be physically exhausting, try not to be completely sedentary. If you typically work out during the morning, see how your body feels if you switch exercise to the evening after Iftaar. Strenuous exercise is not a good idea during the day because you can quickly become dehydrated. Think small — short easy walks or a few stretches can go a long way in keeping your energy up during the day.

5. A few secrets to a successful Suhoor. Together, the components of a balanced meal help your blood sugar remain most stable, which gives you good energy. Some of the elements to include in your Suhoor:

- Whole grains — sources include whole grain cereal, whole grain bread, brown rice, and oatmeal.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

During Ramadhan, to meet the amount of energy and nutrients your body needs during the day, you should eat foods rich in protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, and you should make sure to drink enough water.

At the same time, this does not mean that you should eat everything you need at once during Suhoor. If you do that, your body cannot utilize the energy intake all at once, which may result in weight gain. This is because your metabolism adapts to eating patterns during Ramadhan.

Adults need to drink 3 to 4 liters of water a day. Even though you get 40 percent of this amount from foods, fruit juice, mineral water, tea, and other beverages, you should still drink 1.5 and 2.5 liters of water a day. This means you should drink two or three glasses of water every hour from Iftaar to Suhoor.

What to Eat and What to Avoid

One of the most common mistakes is to eat snacks in or after Iftaar in order to suppress your appetite and then go to sleep, skipping Suhoor and staying hungry until the next Iftaar. You should always eat during Suhoor, preferably right before Sawm starts. Eating before bedtime or avoiding eating during Suhoor may cause serious low blood sugar problems and dehydration the next day. As a result, you could feel dizzy and distracted during the day.

So, what should you eat during Suhoor to feel more energetic throughout the day? A light, healthy and filling breakfast is a great option. You can eat dairy products and fresh vegetables such as cheeses, eggs, tomatoes, and cucumbers. Additionally, you can always enjoy a soup, vegetables cooked in olive oil and fruits.

This combination meets your body's daily energy, vitamin and protein needs. In addition to fruit, you should eat whole wheat bread and pasta, couscous or bulgur wheat rich in carbs and fibers, which are good for your digestive system.

Dried fruits like dates, walnuts and almonds are also great food supplements. They can make you feel full for long hours throughout the day. It's not just the variety of food you eat, but also the portions that play a decisive role in your nutrition. You should choose smaller portions and eat wisely.

Staying Healthy and Hydrated During Ramadan

During Ramadan, you should avoid daily activities that can dehydrate your body, especially during hot summer days. If you work in hot weather conditions or are a professional athlete who wants to fast, use food supplements for a balanced and healthy diet that will support your daily activities.

If you regularly exercise you should continue to meet your daily energy, protein, and water needs during the times you are not fasting. Additionally, lower your exercise duration by 30 percent during Ramadhan.

At Iftaar, easily digestible food is a good, healthy option. During Ramadhan, people tend to eat a lot of food very quickly after many long hours of fasting. But try breaking your fast with soup, then water, fresh-squeezed fruit juice, so you can hydrate your body after a long day of dehydration, and then eat the main course 10 or 15 minutes later. This will prevent excessive food intake by giving you a sense of fullness, which in turn will help your digestive system.

For the main course, grilled, boiled or steamed meat, chicken or vegetable dishes are good options. By chewing your food thoroughly and taking a walk an hour or two hours after iftar, you can aid your digestive and cardiovascular systems.

Ramadhan is indeed a sacred time of year and Sawm is the important part of this holy month, but as you can see, there are plenty of options available to observe Sawm and stay healthy and nourished.

- Fresh fruits and vegetables — check out the produce section for dozens of ideas!
 - Protein — sources include milk, yogurt, eggs, nuts.
 - Healthy fat — sources are nuts and olives.
Try these easy combinations in addition to drinking water during Suhoor:
 - Oatmeal made with low-fat milk and topped with fruit and nuts.
 - A bowl of whole-grain cereal and low-fat milk, topped with fruit and nuts.
 - A piece of whole-grain toast, a boiled egg, and a piece of fruit.
 - A peanut butter sandwich on whole grain bread and a glass of low-fat milk.
 - A banana or apple with peanut butter and a glass of low-fat milk.
 - A bowl of vegetable soup, a piece of whole grain toast, and a glass of low-fat milk.
 - Whole-wheat couscous salad with mixed vegetables, olive oil, and canned tuna.
6. Find what works for you. Depending on your sleeping schedule, you may want to experiment with how often and when you eat to keep your energy up.
7. Trust how your body feels. Every person is individual and may feel best with different ways of eating. If you're having trouble with fasting during Sawm, these tips don't work for you, talk with doctor or a dietitian to get more specific advice based on your situation.
And last, but not least...
8. Celebrate! This is the most joyous month of the year, as Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has provided this opportunity to us, once again! Enjoy Sawm, Quraan, Qiyaam, as well as Suhoor and Iftaar, exercise goodwill, and be patient with your body and with others. ♻️