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EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

The prime objective of a Muslim in this world is to please the Lord Almighty, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Being a human, he faces with various situations during his life, broadly speaking -- either comfortable (joyous, pleasant, calm) or sad (grieved, turbulent, restless).

In situations of happiness, one should be grateful and in situations of worries, one should be patient. The teachings (in words and action), the Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has conveyed to mankind, include صبر "Sabr" (Patience) and شكر "Shukr" (Gratitude). And not only this, but the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has shown the ways to practice "Patience" and "Gratitude" which has been preserved until the Day of Judgment in Quraan and Sunnah. Now at least, Muslims do not need to look here and there, to respond the situations they face.

When faced with any difficulty, the example of the Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is that one should be patient, and the method of patience was also explained by Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) i.e., not to be panic; trust in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa); hope should be placed in Him that the difficult situation will end and good situations will arise. It has been repeatedly stated and explained in Quraan and the Sunnah that one should immediately turn towards Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) through Salaah. Why Salaah? Because through Salaah, a person gains closeness to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Through Salaah, a person confesses that he is aware and believes that this situation of difficulty is not caused by anyone else, but it is from the Lord Almighty. With practicing patience, he turns towards Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), saying: "O Allah! I am pleased with You in all circumstances, but in view of my weakness, I pray to You to remove this trial from me."

There are many examples of grief and happiness in the blessed life of Sayyedina Muhammad (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). Recall the occasion of happiness. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) spent the occasion of happiness every year, that is, the day of 'Eid. The inspired lesson is that, when there are normal circumstances in the life of a Muslim, he performs the Fardh (Obligatory) Salaah five times a day. But in the occasion of happiness, the number of Salaah increases, beside five daily Salaah another sixth Salaah, 'Eid Salaah. As to be grateful, he increases the worship of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa); turns to Allah Almighty; and get closer to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) also instructed his Ummah (Nation) to express the greatness of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) even more:

الله أكْبَرُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَاللهُ أَكْبَرُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ

(Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar Laa ilaaha illAllahu Wa Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar Wa Lillaahil Hamd)

"Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest. There is no Deity (no god) besides Allah and Allah is the greatest. Allah is the greatest and to Allah all praises belong."

Since Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) has given him this opportunity of happiness, by thanking Him, he admits that he is achieving this happiness with His Will and with His Help. A Muslim acknowledges that this happiness does not come from anywhere else, nor it is result of his own efforts; this happiness is a gift from none but Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

On the joyous day of 'Eid, celebrating the gratitude for completing the obligation of observing Sawm during the month of Ramadhaan, the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) gave this message verbally and practically that all activities should revolve around the pleasure of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

Finally, it is vital to keep this in mind at this time that increasing worship brings him closer to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), but taking any action against the Commandments or Will of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), causes displeasure of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and creates distance from Him. Therefore, even if Muslims cannot perform many acts of worship on this happy occasion, at least they should not commit any act that would make Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) angry and deprive them of His closeness. Just think! By controlling their emotions for a whole month, just to please Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), when they have the opportunity to receive its reward, what could be more foolish than to make Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) angry with their actions???

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ



Soorah Al-Baqarah

(THE COW)

AAYAAT Cont. 62-67

Part-xv

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

Aayah 62

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى وَالصَّابِرِينَ مَنْ
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَبْيُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
حُوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

٦٢

"Surely, those who believed in Allah, and those who became Jewish, and Christians, and the Sabeans whosoever believes in Allah and in the Last Day, and does good deeds for them, with their Lord, is their reward, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.

(Al-Baqarah 62)

The previous Aayah spoke of how the Israelites drew upon themselves the wrath of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) through their habitual insolence and disobedience. Now, this account may lead the listeners, or the Jews themselves, to suppose that, in view of such transgression, their Taubah (Repentance), if they agree to offer it, would not be acceptable to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). In order to dispel such a misgiving, the present Aayah lays down a general principle: no matter how a man has been behaving earlier, so long as he submits himself



fully to the commandments of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in his beliefs and in his deeds both, he is acceptable to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and will get his reward. It is obvious enough that after the revelation of the Holy Quraan, which is the last message of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), perfect obedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) can only mean accepting Islam and following the Last Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

(Contrary to the flaccid fancies of some "modernizers" who are very happy with themselves over their "liberalism" and "tolerance", the present Ayah does not open the way to salvation for each and every "man of good will" irrespective of the creed he follows. If one reads the Ayah in its proper context and along with other relevant Aayaat of the Holy Quraan, one will easily see that the Ayah, in fact, promises salvation in the other world only to those who accept Islam. It is an invitation to Islam extended to the Jews, the Christians, the Sabeans and, as a matter of fact, to the followers of all possible religions, and even to non-believers, specific names only serve as examples.)

The Ayah, in effect, assures everyone that

on Saturday they would tie one end of a cord to the tail of a fish and the other end to something on the shore, and leave the fish in the water; on Sunday, they would take it out and eat it. Such a ruse not only negates an injunction of the Shari'ah, but is actually a mockery. That is why those who practiced such "stratagems" were considered to be disobedient and rebellious, and subjected to dire punishment.

once a man has accepted Islam, all his former transgressions, whether in the matter of beliefs or in that of deeds, will be forgiven, and he will become worthy of receiving the rewards of the other world.

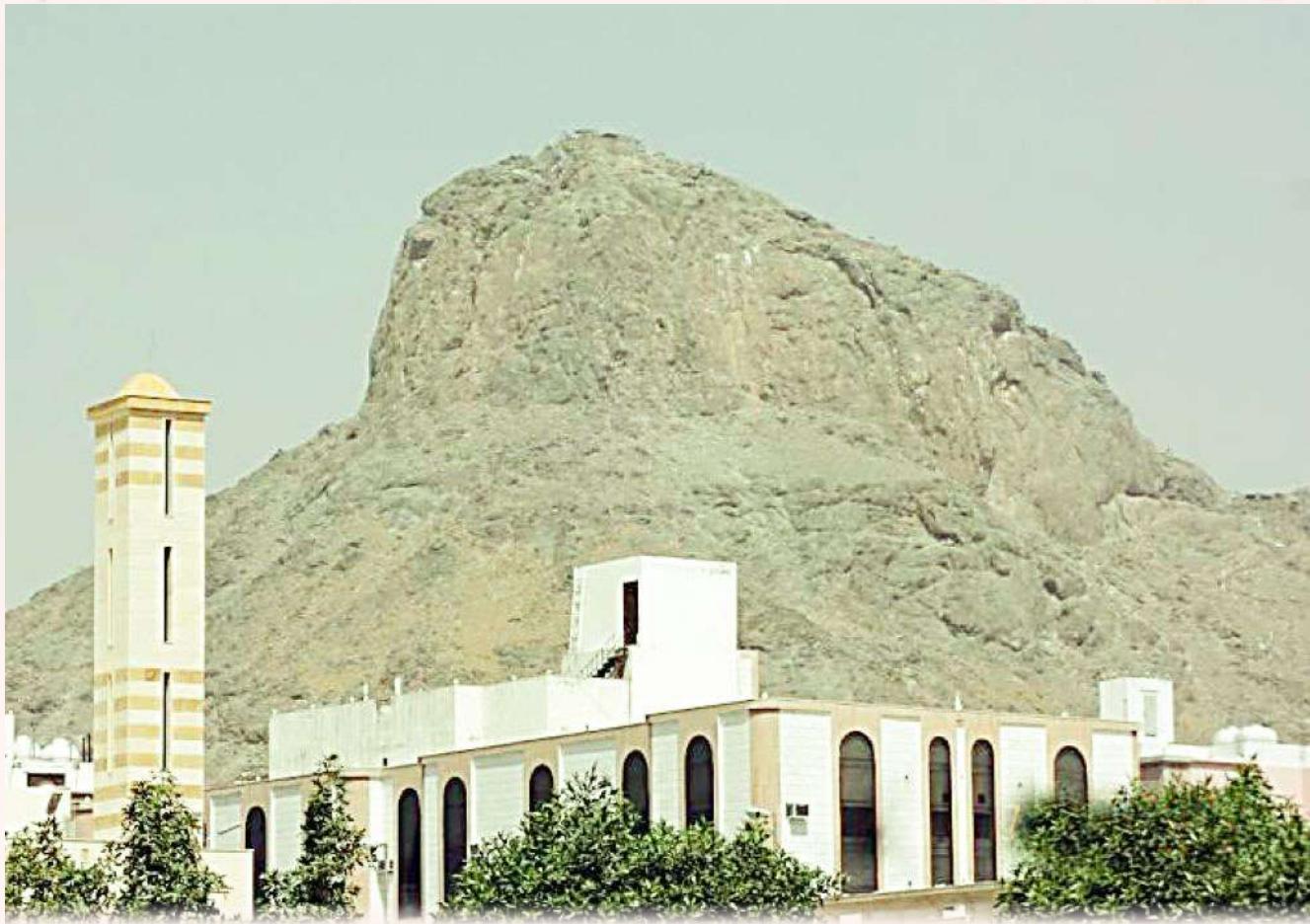
Let us note, in passing, that nothing is definitely known as to the beliefs and the practices of the Sabeans, and different opinions have been expressed on the subject. (Most probably they used to worship the stars).

One might also ask why the Ayah mentions the Muslims, for if it is an invitation to Islam, there is no need to extend the invitation to those who have already accepted Islam. But if we keep in mind the richly concentrated style of the Holy Quraan, and try to look beyond the literal sense of the words into the implications and suggestions contained in the Ayah, we would find that the inclusion of the Muslim factor has added a new dimension

to the meaning. It is as if a king should, in a similar situation, say that his laws are impartially applicable to all his subjects, and that whosoever obeys them shall receive his reward for obedience irrespective of whether he has earlier been a friend or a foe. Obviously, the friend has always been loyal and obedient, and the warning and the promise have really been addressed to the foe. But the suggestion contained in such a formulation is that the favors of the king do not proceed from any personal attachment to

the friends, but depend on the quality of obedience and loyalty, and hence the foes too will become worthy of his favors if they acquire the necessary quality. This is the raison d'être of mentioning the Muslims along with the non-Muslims in this Ayah, which should never be taken to imply that salvation can be attained without accepting Islam.

We had better dispel another misunderstanding which is likely to arise from the wordings of the present Ayah and, which is actually being promoted by certain "modernizers".



The Ayah mentions only two articles of faith of the Islamic creed, faith in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and faith in the Day of Judgment. This should not be taken to mean that in order to attain salvation it is enough to have faith only in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and in the Day of Judgment. For, the Holy Quraan repeatedly declares that he who does not believe in the prophets, in angels and in the Books of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) is not a Muslim. Faith in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) is the first article in the Islamic creed, while faith in the Day of Judgment is the last. By mentioning only these two, the Ayah intends to say in a succinct manner that it is necessary to have faith in all the articles of the creed, from the first to the last. Moreover, it is through the prophets and the Books of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) alone that man can acquire any knowledge of the

Our 'modernists' are, in fact, all too ready to swallow without batting an eye-lid the most preposterous and unfounded notions, only if they come from the West. So, they have complete certitude with regard to Darwin's speculation, that the apes evolved into man, although no verifiable data has yet been gathered to support the contention; but when it comes to the statement in the Holy Quraan that men were changed into apes, they look askance at it

essence and the attributes of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and of what is to happen on the Day of Judgment, while the Books of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) are revealed to the prophets through an angel. So, it is not possible to have faith in Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and the Day of Judgment until and unless one has faith in the angels, in the Books of Allah and in the prophets.

Aayah 63

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَعَنَا
فَوَقَكُمُ الظُّرُورَ خُذُوا مَا أَتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ
وَإِذْ كُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعْنَكُمْ تَنْقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

"And when We took pledge from you, and raised high above you the (Mount of) Toor: 'Hold fast to what We have given to you, and remember what is there in it, so that you may become Allah-fearing'."

(Al-Baqarah 63)



Having received the Torah from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), Sayyedina Moosaa (Moses) عليه السلام returned from Mount Toor (Sinai) and recited it to the Israelites. The injunctions contained in the Book were rather rigorous, but their conduct and habits of mind really called for such strict discipline. To begin with, they replied that they would not obey the injunctions until and unless Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) Himself told them that it was His book. Seventy men, as we have related above, were selected to go to Mount Toor and to hear Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) attest the authenticity of the Torah. On their return, they bore witness to the Torah being a Book of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), but added something on their own to what Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had actually said. For, they told the Israelites that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had allowed them to act upon the injunctions only as much as they could, and had promised to forgive them for what they could not accomplish. They had always and instinctively been prone to rebellion against Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), then, the injunctions were, no doubt, stern, and now they got a new pretext for being negligent. So, the Israelites flatly refused to obey the injunctions, insisting that it was beyond their endurance to act upon such harsh regulations. In reply to this insolence, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded the angels to raise Mount Toor and let it hang in the air above their heads as a threat that if they did not fulfil their covenant with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa

Ta'aalaa), it would fall on them and crush them. The Israelites, then, had no choice but to submit.

A doubt is quite likely to arise here. The Holy Quraan says in another place that force should not be used to make a man change his religion, while in the present instance it appears that force is being used. But, in fact, force is not being used to make the Israelites change their religion, for they had already accepted Sayyedina Moosaa as a prophet of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and willingly made a covenant with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) that they would act upon the Book of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), if one was given to them. So, they now stand as rebels, and are being threatened with dire punishment for persisting in their rebellion. This is exactly how even a secular state deals with rebels, and how it adopts towards them an attitude quite different from that towards aliens or enemies, for it

Growing curious, they went there and found that all the transgressors had been changed into apes.....the young ones had become apes, and the old ones swine. The apes could recognize their relatives and friends, and would approach them weeping out of remorse, and seeking their sympathy and help. Then all of them died after three days.

refused to obey.

Aayah 64

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّتُمْ تَمَّ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ٦٤

"Then even after that, you did turn away. So, had it not been for the grace of Allah upon you, and His mercy, you surely would have been among the losers.

(Al-Baqarah 64)

The Israelites went against the Covenant they had made with Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The sin was so grave that one could have expected utter destruction and ruin to descend on them as a punishment. But Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), in His mercy, spared them in so far as physical life is concerned, although they will have to pay for their treason in the other world. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Mercy is of two kinds. One is general and extends to believers and



Aayaat 65-66

وَلَقَدْ عِلِّمْتُ الَّذِينَ أَعْتَدْنَا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ
كُونُوا قِرْدَةً خَمْسِينَ ٦٥٠ فَعَلَنَّهَا نَكَلًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدِيهَا وَمَا خَفَفَهَا
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ٦٦٠

“And certainly you have known those among you who transgressed in (the matter of) the Sabbath. So, We said to them: ‘Become apes, living in disgrace’. Thus, We made it a deterrent for those around and after them -- and a lesson for the Allah-fearing.

(Al-Baqarah 65-66)

This episode belongs to the time of the Prophet Sayyidna Daawood (David). Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had appointed Saturday as the Sabbath, or the sacred day, for the Israelites; it was specially set apart for prayers and worship, and hence fishing was prohibited on this day. But these people lived on the sea-shore, and were very fond of fish. Al-Qurtubi says that the Israelites, at first, invented all sorts of clever pretenses for catching fish on Saturday, and gradually started doing so openly. There now grew a division amongst them on this point. On the one hand were these transgressors, and, on the other, some scholars and pious men who tried to dissuade them from such disobedience. When the former paid no heed to them, the latter broke away altogether from the sinners, and began to live in a separate part of the town. One

day they felt no sound was coming from the other part of the town. Growing curious, they went there and found that all the transgressors had been changed into apes. Qataadah says that the young ones had become apes, and the old ones swine. The apes could recognize their relatives and friends, and would approach them weeping out of remorse, and seeking their sympathy and help. Then all of them died after three days.

As to the question whether the apes and the swine we see today bear any kinship to these Israelites who had been metamorphosed, the correct position is that people who have been metamorphosed into beasts by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) as a punishment cease to breed, and leave no progeny behind. According to a Hadeeth reported by Imam Muslim from the Sahaabi,

disbelievers alike -- its action is to be seen in the shape of worldly well-being and prosperity. The other is special, and pertains to believers alone -- it will manifest itself particularly in the other world in the shape of salvation and closeness to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

It appears that the last phrase of the present Aayah has been addressed to the Jews who were the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). Since having faith in him is also a part of the Covenant, these Jews too have been included among those who had been guilty of infringement. In this Aayah, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) asks them to realize that it is in His Mercy alone that he has not, in spite of their treason, sent down on them the kind of catastrophic punishment in this world as used to descend on the other infidels and traitors who have gone before.

Since a number of authentic Ahaadeeth declare that it is the “Barakah” of the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) that catastrophic punishments no longer descend on any people, some commentators have identified this particular mercy and grace of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) with the sending down of Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) as a Prophet and Messenger of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa).

In order to emphasize what the present Aayah has said, the next Aayah tells the story of another group of earlier transgressors and of the dreadful punishment which overtook them all of a sudden.

It is the “Barakah” of the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) that catastrophic punishments no longer descend on any people, some commentators have identified this particular mercy and grace of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) with the sending down of Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) as a Prophet and Messenger of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)



Sayyedina 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ood, some people asked the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) whether the apes and the swine were the descendants of the metamorphosed Jews. The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) reminded them that apes and swine existed in the world even before, and said that when Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) sends down this particular kind of punishment on a people, the race comes to an end with this, and there is no further breeding.

(Some 'modernizing' Muslims have tried to explain away this metamorphosis by suggesting that these disobedient Jews did not actually and physically turn into beasts, but that the change was only psychological in so far as they acquired the evil characteristics of apes and swine. To say such a thing is to deny an explicit statement of the Holy Quraan, which no Muslim can do, if he wishes to remain a Muslim. Moreover, in denying the possibility of physical change, the modernizers are also denying the power of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), and putting limitations on it. Even as a piece of literary exegesis, the modernist interpretation is flimsy. For, even before the

punishment fell on them, these Jews had been displaying the moral and psychological traits of beasts: the greed of swine and the craftiness of apes. Where was, then, the change which the Holy Quraan declares to be a punishment for the offenders and a warning for others? Our 'modernists' are, in fact, all too ready to swallow without batting an eye-lid the most preposterous and unfounded notions, only if they come from the West. So, they have complete certitude with regard to Darwin's speculation, that the apes evolved into man, although no verifiable data has yet been gathered to support the contention; but when it comes to the statement in the Holy Quraan that men were changed into apes, they look askance at it, although this kind of change is rationally and logically as possible as the other.)

Let us now go back to the Aayah under discussion. The people who witnessed the event, or heard of it, were of two kinds -- the disobedient and the obedient. For the disobedient, it served as a 'deterrent', an example and a warning, which persuaded them to repent of their disobedience. For the obedient, it was a lesson and a reminder that they should be steadfast in their obedience. It

serves these two purposes even now.

INJUNCTIONS AND RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

We have been saying that the Jews who were changed into apes had used certain ruses or pretenses to justify their sin in their own eyes. This brings us to a rather delicate question of Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Certain 'modernists' have quite shamelessly been busy maligning the master-jurists of Islam by suggesting that these masters have invented very intricate "stratagems" (حيل "Hiyal", plural of حيلة "Hilah") for helping the rich and powerful to infringe the laws of the Shari'ah and get away with it. This is a petty calumny, and should not have been worthy of consideration except for the fact that such 'modernists' have had some success with the gullible and the ignorant by playing upon the Arabic word حيلة "Hilah". As everyone knows, the lexical meaning of a word is one thing, and its technical signification, when it is used as a term in some science, is another. In its literal sense, the word "Hilah" no doubt means "a trick, a stratagem", but as a technical term in فقه "Fiqh" it signifies a device for and a means of giving legitimacy to an action in a contingency by making certain necessary modifications in it in consonance with the Shari'ah. Thus, it is not a way of by-passing the Shari'ah, but of helping people to conform to it even in a situation where necessity or human weakness would compel them to go against it.

The present Aayah has a particular relevance to the question, and would help to clarify it a great deal. The transgression on the part of the Jews which the Aayah speaks of, and which drew upon them such dreadful punishment, was not a clear and explicit infringement of Divine Law, but the use of certain "tricks" which necessarily involved the negation of the Divine Commandment. For example, on Saturday they would tie one end of a cord to the tail of a fish and the other end to something on the shore, and leave the fish in the water; on Sunday, they would take it out and eat it. Such a ruse not only negates an injunction of the Shari'ah, but is actually a mockery. That is why those who practiced such "stratagems" were considered to be disobedient and rebellious, and subjected to dire punishment.

But this particular instance does in no way go to prove that the حيل "Hiyal" are impermissible. We have explained the nature and purpose of such "devices" alone. Not only do they form an integral part of Fiqh, but some of them have actually been

suggested by the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) himself. For example, bartering a kilo of good dates for two kilos of bad dates is, according to the Shari'ah, a kind of usury. The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has suggested a "device" (حيلة "Hilah") for avoiding the infringement of this regulation in a situation where such a transaction becomes necessary that is, instead of bartering one commodity for another, one may employ the exchange value of money: first sell two kilos of bad dates for two rupees, and then with the two rupees thus obtained buy a kilo of good dates. The intention in using this "device" is to conform to the Shari'ah, and not to by-pass it. The negation of the Shari'ah is neither intended here, nor does it actually take place. This principle holds good in the case of all the Hiyal which the فقهاء "Fuqahaa" (Jurists) have proposed in order to save people from practicing what the Shari'ah has prohibited. It is a travesty of the truth to compare them to or represent them as the "tricks" employed by the Jews to negate and mock the Shari'ah.

Aayah 67

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرًا
فَالْوَالُوْا أَنْتَجَهُنَا هُرُواٰ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِيْنَ

"And when Moosaa said to his people: 'Allah commands you to slaughter a cow'. They said: 'Are you making us a laughing stock?' He said: 'I seek refuge with Allah that I be one of the ignorant'."

(Al-Baqarah 67)

According to مرقاة "Mirqaat", a commentary on مشكوة المصايخ "Mishkaat ul Masaabeh", a man among the Israelites wanted to marry a girl, but her father refused. The suitor was so incensed that he killed the father, and disappeared. It is mentioned in معلم النزيل "Ma'aalim al-Tanzeel" which says on the authority of Kalbi that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) had not yet sent down any injunction with regard to man-slaughter. If it was so, this shows that the incident happened before the Torah was revealed. Anyhow, the Israelites requested the Prophet Sayyedina Moosaa (Moses) to tell them how to trace the culprit. Under the commandment of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), he asked them to sacrifice a cow. As was their regular habit, they started raising all kinds of doubts and objections, of which the next Aayaat give us the details.

(To be Continued)



BOOK OF FAITH

LIFE AFTER DEATH BARZAKH, LAST DAY, THE HEREAFTER (VI)

(Continued)

(Part-XII)

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

(115/115)

عَنْ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ عَفَّانَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَشْفَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ثَلَاثَةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ ثُمَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ ثُمَّ الشَّهَادَاءُ. (رواه ابن ماجه)
(115/115)

It is related by Sayyidina 'Uthmaan bin 'Affaan that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"On the Day of Judgement three types of men will (particularly) intercede: the Prophets, the Ulaamaa and the Martyrs."

(Ibne Maajah)

but that a special intercession will be made by them. Some other pious and high-souled persons will also be permitted to intercede, and, as we have indicated earlier, even children who had died in their infancy will intercede for their parents and intercession by good actions will also take place.

(116/116)

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ إِنَّ مِنْ أُمَّتِي مَنْ يَشْفَعُ لِلْفَنَامِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَشْفَعُ لِلْقَبِيلَةِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَشْفَعُ لِلْعَصَبَةِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَشْفَعُ لِلرَّجُلِ حَتَّى يَدْخُلُوا جَنَّةً. (رواه الترمذى)

(116/116)

It is related by Sayyedina Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

COMMENTARY

It does not mean that no one aside of the three groups mentioned above will be able to plead on behalf of others on the Day of Requital



"Among my followers there will be some who will intercede on behalf قبليه "Qabeelah" (Tribes i.e. Nations and Communities), and some who will intercede on behalf of عصبه "Asbah" (Groups of ten to forty people) and some who will intercede on behalf of رجل "Rajul" (One person) till everyone shall enter Jannah (because their station in the eyes of their Lord is so high that He, with His limitless "Blessings", will accept intercession of all of them)."

(At-Tirmizi)

(117/117)

عَنْ أَنَسِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُصْفِفُ أَهْلَ النَّارِ فَيَمْرُّ بِهِمُ الرَّجُلُ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ فَيَقُولُ الرَّجُلُ مُهُومٌ يَا فَلَانُ أَمَا تَعْرِفُ أَنَّا الَّذِي سَقَيْتُكَ شَرَبَةً وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَنَا الَّذِي وَهَبْتُ لَكَ وَضُوْءَ فَيُشَفِّعُ لَهُ فِي دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ (رواه ابن ماجه)

(117/117)

It is reported by Sayyedina Anas that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"On the Judgement Day, the people of Jahannum will be marshalled in a row (i.e., some sinful men among Believers who will be deserving of chastisement will stand in a row on some occasions on the Last Day). A dweller of Jannah will pass by them and one of the men standing in the row will call out to him, saying: 'Do you not recognize me? I am the person who once gave you water (or in some other, wholesome beverage) to drink'. And another man standing in the same row will say: 'I am the person who had (once) given you water to perform the Wudhu (Ablution).

Thus, the dweller of Jannah will intercede with Allah on behalf of those people and get them admitted to Jannah."

(Ibne Maajah)

COMMENTARY

The bond of affection with devout and virtuous men in the present world is going to avail a great deal in the Aakhirah (Hereafter) provided one is blessed with Iman (Faith).

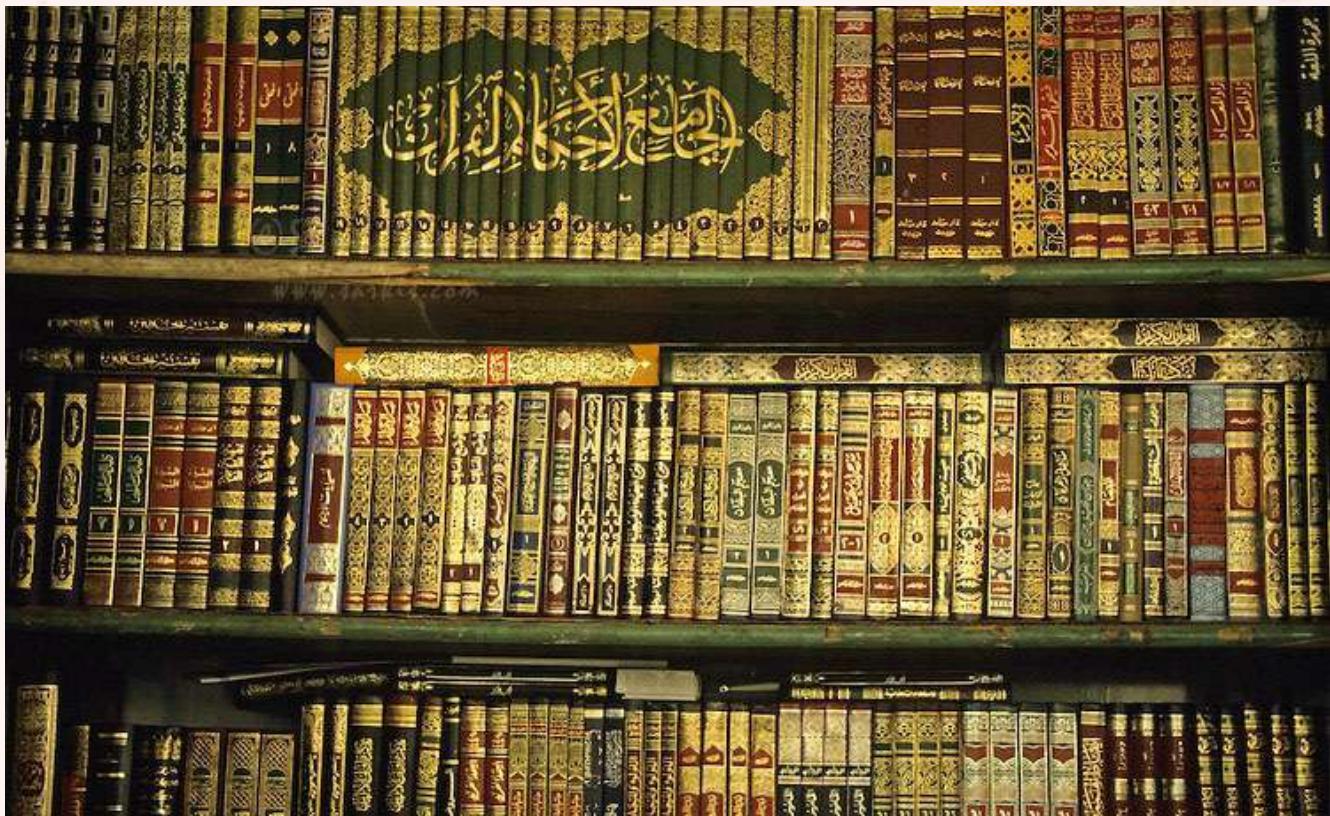
HEAVEN AND ITS BLESSINGS

Jannah (Heaven) and Jahannum (Hell) are among the realities of Futurity in which it is essential for a Muslim to believe. These are the ultimate and eternal dwelling places of mankind. In the Quraan, Jannah, with its incomparable blissfulness, and Jahannum (Hell), with its dreadful chastisement have been dwelt upon so frequently and with such thoroughness that if all the Aayaat relating to them are collected they alone will make a volume.

Likewise, in the compilations of the Ahaadeeth, hundreds of sayings of the Prophet

The reality of what the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has said about the structure of Jannah, its walls and floors, will become evident to us only when we shall see it. The basic things is that Jannah has not been constructed the way buildings are in our world. It has been built solely at the bidding of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and without the aid of masons and architects exactly as the heavens and the earth and the sun, the moon and the stars have got created directly in response to His Command.

(SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) dealing with Jannah and Jahannum hell are preserved from which an adequate idea of the two places are obtained. The exact import of what is revealed in the Quraan and the Ahaadeeth about Jannah and Jahannum will, however, be known only when we will reach there and see the whole thing for ourselves. What to speak of Jannah, it is an everyday experience that the image formed in our minds after hearing or reading about a beautiful



city is much incomplete of what it actually is. In any event, the account of Jannah and Jahannum contained in the Quraan and the Ahaadeeth should be read in the light of this basic principle.

The aim of the Quraanic Aayaat and the sayings of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is far from delineating the topography of Jannah and Jahannum or giving a detailed

Jannah is the home of cloudless bliss and eternal felicity. There will not be the faintest trace of suffering in it, neither sickness, nor death, nor old age, nor any other type of affliction, worry or anxiety. As soon as the dwellers will enter Jannah they will be made comfortable with the tidings of imperishable life and everlasting happiness.

picture of what is to be experienced there. Rather to produce a fear of Jahannum and its punishment, so that men may abstain from vices that lead them to it and to arouse a love and eagerness for Jannah and its boons and comfort. Men may be induced thereby to practice virtue and perform good deeds to make them worthy of admission to it. The Aayaat and Ahaadeeth of the above category,

therefore, demand that feelings of dread and desire, as the case be may be produced as a result of reading or listening to them.

(118/118)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّدَ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَعْدَدَ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنُ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذْنُ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا حَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبٍ بَشِّرٍ وَاقْرَأَ وَإِنْ شِئْتُمْ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أَخْفَيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُوْرَةٍ أَعْيُنٍ . (رواه البخاري و مسلم)

(118/118)

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

"I have prepared for My Faithful slaves that which no eye has seen nor ear heard nor the thought of which has even crossed their mind. And, if you like (you may read the Aayah):

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أَخْفَيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرْبَةٍ أَعْيُنٍ

"So, no one knows the delight of eyes that has been reserved for them in secret"

(As-Sajdah 32:17)
(Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

This is a Hadeeth Qudsi or a celestial Tradition. If the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe

WaSallam) says something with the explicit remark that it is stated by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) (and it is not found in the Quraan) then such a Tradition is called a Hadeeth Qudsi or a celestial Tradition. A general aspect of the glad tidings for truthful bondsmen is that in the Aakhirah they will be favored with boons and blessings which no man has experienced or even imagined in the existing world. The other special aspect lies in the words:

"I have prepared for My faithful bondsmen that..."

(119/119)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَوْضِعُ سَوْطٍ فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا. (رواه البخاري ومسلم)
(119/119)

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

"A sweeping-place in Jannah is better than the world and all that it contains."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

In ancient Arabia the custom was that when a caravan of riders made a halt, each rider would throw some rubbish at the place where he intended to put up. It was, then, considered, to have been reserved for him. The word "sweepings-place" in this Tradition, thus, denotes the small place which was set aside for the traveler who threw the waste-matter over it. That little place in Jannah is more valuable than the whole world.

The words موضع سوط have been translated as "place of a lash" or place of a , whip" by Bukhari (translated by Dr Muhsin) and Mishkat (translated by Robson).

(120/120)

عَنْ أَنَسِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ غَدَوَةً فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ رُوْحَةً خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا وَلَوْاً أَمْرَأَةً مِنْ نِسَاءِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ أَطَلَعَتْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ لَا ضَانَتْ مَا بَيْنَهَا وَلَلَّاتُ مَا بَيْنَهَا رِيحًا وَلَنَصِيفُهَا عَلَى رَأْسِهَا خَيْرٌ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا. (رواه البخاري)

(120/120)

It is related by Sayyedina Anas that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"To set out in the path of Allah, once in the

morning or in the evening, is better than the world and all that it contains, and if a bride from among the brides of the dwellers of Jannah cast a glance at the world, the whole space intervening between the two (i.e., from the Jannah to the earth) will be filled with light and fragrance, and the covering of her head is better than the world and all that is contained therein."

(Bukhari)

COMMENTARY

In the opening part of this Hadeeth the virtue of setting out in the way of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) (i.e., undertaking a journey in the service of Faith) has been referred to and we are told that to do so once in the morning or in the evening is better than the entire universe. The specification of the morning and the evening, here, is probably, due to the fact that, in the older times, people habitually started on a journey during those parts of the day otherwise if a person left his home at any other time for a religious purpose it will possess the same merit.

In the later part, the wondrous beauty of the celestial brides of the dwellers of Jannah and the worth and value of their apparel have been mentioned, possibly with a view to encourage people to set off from their homes in the service of Faith by telling them if they will leave their homes and their wives for some time with the object of serving the cause of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), they will be rewarded forever and in Jannah with spouses of such rare charm and elegance that if they glanced towards the earth the

The first thing is about the wonderful trees of Jannah. It says that their shade is so extensive that a horseman cannot cross it in a hundred years. It, then, assures that a bow-length of space in Jannah is of more value than the world and all that there is in it.

entire atmosphere would be filled with radiance and sweet scent. And their dress was so very costly that the headgear alone was more valuable than the whole of the world.

(121/121)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ شَجَرَةً يَسِيرُ الرَّاكِبُ فِي ظِلِّهَا مائةً عَامٍ لَا يَقْطُعُهَا وَلَقَابَ قَوْسٍ



أَحَدٌ كُوْنَ فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَيْرٌ مِّا طَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ أَوْ تَغَرَّبُ . (رواه البخاري
و مسلم)

(121/121)

It is related by Sayyedina Abu Hurairah that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"In Jannah there is a tree (which is so large that if a horseman rides under its shade even for a hundred years he will not be able to pass from one side of it to the other, and the space of anyone of you in Jannah, even of the length of a bow, is better than the world on which the sun rises or sets."

(Bukhari and Muslim)

COMMENTARY

The object of this Hadeeth is to produce in the in the hearts an earnest yearning for Jannah by stressing the superiority of celestial joys and comforts over those of the world. The first thing is about the wonderful trees of Jannah. It says that their shade is so extensive that a horseman cannot cross it in a hundred years. It, then, assures that a bow-length of space in Jannah is of more value than the world and all that there is in it. We have referred earlier to the Arab custom of throwing rubbish over the place by the rider where he wanted to stay as a mark of reservation. In the same way, when a person travelling on foot wanted to make a halt at some place he used to put his bow at it. A bow-length of space in the above Hadeeth, thus, signifies that even the smallest place in Jannah is more precious than the entire universe.

(١٢٢/١٢٢)

عَنْ جَابِرٍ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ أَهْلَ

الْجَنَّةِ يَأْكُلُونَ فِيهَا وَيَشْرُبُونَ وَلَا يَنْقُولُنَّ وَلَا يَبْوَأُنَّ وَلَا يَتَغَوَّطُنَّ وَلَا يَمْتَحِنُونَ قَالُوا فَمَا بِالطَّعَامِ قَالَ جُشَاءَ وَرَشْحُ كَرْشَ الْمِسْكِ يَأْهُمُونَ السَّبِيعَ وَالْتَّحْمِيدَ كَمَا تَهْمُونَ النَّفَسَ . (رواه مسلم)

(122/122)

It is related by Sayyedina Jaabir that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said that the dwellers of Jannah will eat and drink in Jannah but neither a secretion will be formed in their mouths and nostrils nor will they have to empty their bowels or bladders. Some of the Sahaabah (Companions) asked:

"What will, then, happen to the food (taken by them)?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

"It will be passed out by means of eructation and perspiration which will be smelling like musk, and on the tongues of the dwellers of Jannah the praise of Allah will go on, by His Command (effortlessly), (and) in the same way as your respiration goes on (without any effort)."

(Muslim)

COMMENTARY

The foods and drinks of Jannah will be free from all bulk-forming properties. They will be so light, pure (empyrean) that no effete matter will be formed by them in the bowels. The stomach will become empty after a light eructation and the other waste-matter will be eliminated through perspiration which will be as sweet-scented as musk. Moreover, just as in this world we breath in and out without an effort, in Jannah the remembrance of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)

will be carried out unconsciously and words of praise to the Almighty like **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ** "Subhaan Allah wa Al-Hamdulillah" and **سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ** "Subhaan Allah wa Be Hamdihi" will be on the lips of everyone all the time.

(١٢٣/١٢٣)

عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ وَأَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ يُنَادِي مُنَادٌ أَنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَصْحُوا فَلَا تَسْقُمُوا أَبْدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْبُبُوا فَلَا تَقْتُوْنَا أَبْدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَشْبُهُوا فَلَا تَهْرُمُوا أَبْدًا وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَعْمُلُوا فَلَا تَبَاسُوا أَبْدًا. (رواه مسلم)

(123/123)

Sayyedina Abu Sa'eed and Sayyedina Abu Hurairah related that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said that when the dwellers will enter Jannah, a heavenly herald will proclaim:

"Here good health is your right and good health has been ordained for you; so, now you will never fall ill. Here life has been decreed for you; so, now you will never die. Here only youth is your lot; so, now you will never grow old. Here only happiness has been bestowed upon you; so, now neither pain nor sorrow will afflict you."

(Muslim)

COMMENTARY

Jannah is the home of cloudless bliss and eternal felicity. There will not be the faintest trace of suffering in it, neither sickness, nor death, nor old age, nor any other type of affliction, worry or anxiety. As soon as the dwellers will enter Jannah they will be made comfortable with the tidings of imperishable life and everlasting happiness.

(١٢٤/١٢٤)

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ قُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا خَلَقَ الْخَلَقَ؟ قَالَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ قَلَنَا الْجِنَّةَ مَا بَأَءَهَا قَالَ لِبْنَةُ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلِبَنَةً مِنْ فَضَّةٍ وَمَلَاطِهَا الْمِسْكُ الْأَذْفَرُ وَحَسَبَاهَا الْأَلْوَانُ وَالْأَيْقُوتُ وَتَرَبَّهَا الرَّعْفَرَانُ مَنْ يَدْخُلُهَا يَنْعَمُ وَلَا يَيْسُ وَيَخْلُدُ وَلَا يَمُوتُ وَلَا يَلِي ثَيَابَهُمْ وَلَا يَفْنِي شَبَابَهُمْ. (رواه احمد والترمذى والدارمى)

(124/124)

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah has narrated that he enquired from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam):

From what have the living things been

created?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) replied:

"From water."

Sayyedina Abu Hurairah, then, asked:

"Of what is Jannah made (i.e. is it built with bricks, stones or what)?"

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) informed:

"It has been built in such a way that one brick is of gold and the other of silver, and the binding material is of sweet-scented musk, the gravel spread over it is of pearls and rubies, and its dust is, as you would say, saffron. Those who enter it will live in never-ending peace and happiness. No distress will ever touch them, and they will live forever -- death will not come to them in Jannah -- and their clothes will never become dirty and worn-out, nor will their youth wither away (at any time or in any degree)."

(Musnad Ahmad and At-Tirmizi)

COMMENTARY

It shows that all living beings have been created from water. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) first created water, and, then, from it, He made all the other creatures. In the Quraan, too, it is stated:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ ﴿٤٥﴾

"Allah has created every moving creature from water."

(An-Noor 24:45)

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ ﴿٢٠﴾

"And We created from water every living thing."

(Al-Anbiyaa 21:30)

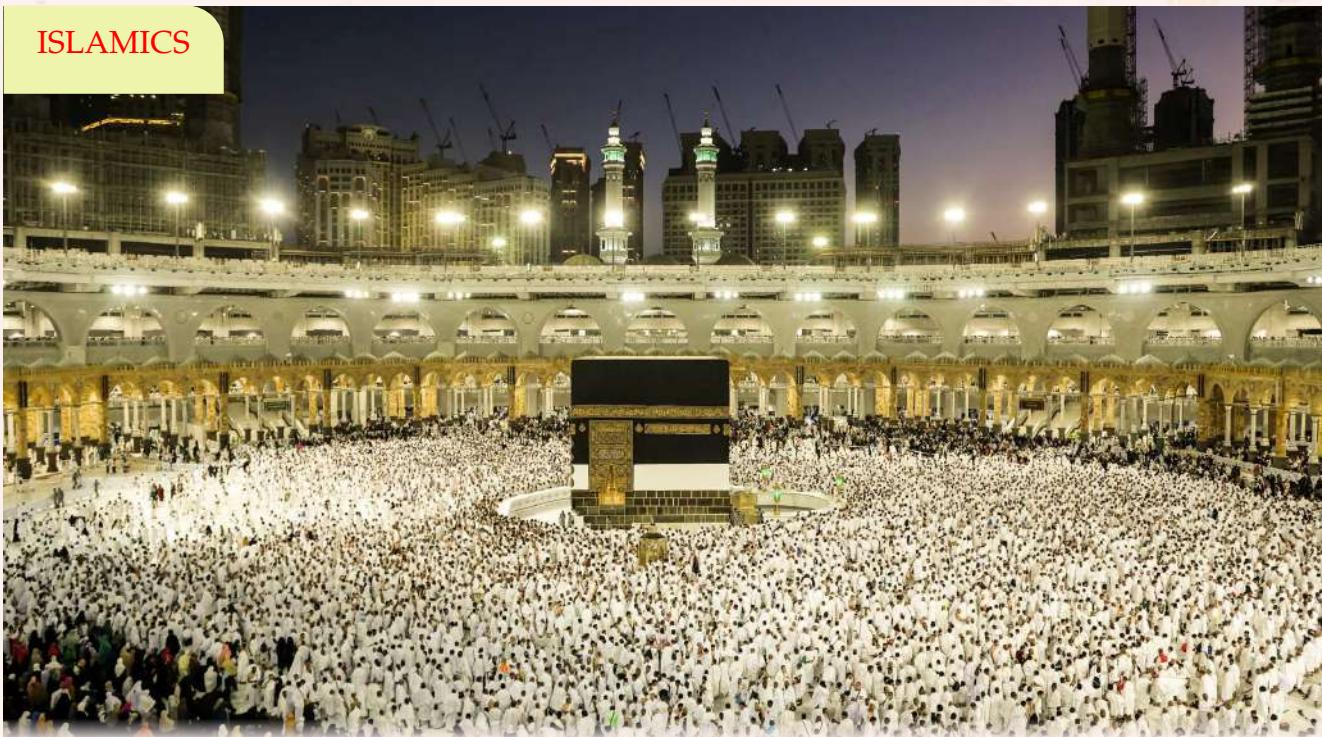
The reality of what the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) has said about the structure of Jannah, its walls and floors, will become evident to us only when we shall see it. The basic things is that Jannah has not been constructed the way buildings are in our world. It has been built solely at the bidding of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and without the aid of masons and architects exactly as the heavens and the earth and the sun, the moon and the stars have got created directly in response to His Command.

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

"His practice, when He intends to do something, is no more than He says: 'Be! And it comes to be.'"

(YaaSeen 36:82)

(To be Continued)



A LIVING MIRACLE BOOK OF ALLAH (SUBHAANAHU WA TA'AALAA)

Sent by: Abdul Rauf Roofi

The most significant aspect of the Quraan as a being miracle is its source. The Quraan says that it was revealed by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), the Almighty, to His Prophet, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

Of all the Divine Books from the world's religions that exist today, the Quraan is the only Book that is still in its original form as revealed by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) to His Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). What exactly do we mean when we discuss the Quraan being a miracle?

To answer this question we need to know what a miracle is. One definition given in Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary states a miracle is "an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs."

There is no doubt that the revelation of the Quraan by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) is a miracle in this sense, for Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says:

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَزَّلَ رِبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

"And truly this (the Quraan) is a revelation

sent down by the Lord of all that exists."

(Ash-Shu`araa 26:192)

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ أَنَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

"This is the revelation of the Book from Allah, the Mighty, the Wise"

(Az-Zumar 39:1)

The same dictionary gives a second definition, which states that a miracle is "an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment."

We can see that the Quraan has various aspects that may qualify as a miracle in the second sense too. We know that the prophets came before the Prophet of Islam, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), such as Sayyedina Moosaa (Moses) and Sayyedina 'Eesaa (Jesus), performed many miracles in their life — a wooden stick was transformed into a snake through the hands of Sayyedina Moosaa, and a dead man came back to worldly life through the miracle of Sayyedina 'Eesaa. The question arises, did Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) perform any miracles?

Muslims admit that Prophet Muhammad

(SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) was given his own miracles by Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), like any other prophet.

A spectacular miracle such as parting the sea, for instance, was a divine gift given to Sayyedina Moosaa. But none of us saw the parting of the sea. We read about it and believe in it.

What do we find of the people of Sayyedina Moosaa even then, after the performance of that miracle? Did they accept Sayyedina Moosaa as the Prophet of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)? Yes, they did, but some only, for a short period. Some of his followers' belief in him only lasted until they were able to escape from the clutches of Pharaoh. After that, some of them forgot everything and abandoned Moses to become idolaters of a cow made by "Samiriy".

What about Sayyedina 'Eesaa? It is said that through him many blinds got the power to see; he restored a dead man to life, and did much more. But even after all this, some of his people did not believe in him. The Gospel of Mark says, "hey all forsook him and fled" when he most needed their support and help.

This means that showing miracles of the kind described above did not always have a lasting effect on people. On the other hand, the miracle of the Noble Quraan is a lasting miracle, the effect of which can be tested even now.

The Quraan came at a time when a new age was dawning in the world.

At the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), humanity was in a critical juncture in the history of mankind, passing from an age of ignorance to an age of enlightenment.

Miracle of Quraan is more than other miracles. It was an appeal to the rationality of humans, to arouse in them a thirst for study and research and an eagerness to delve into the secrets

of nature. This is what the Quraan does through its Aayaat that encourage people to observe and contemplate the phenomena of nature:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخْتِلَفُ الْأَيَّلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالنُّلُكُ
الَّتِي بَعَرَى فِي الْبَحْرِ يِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ
فَأَخِيَّا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَنَصَرِيفُ الْرِّيحَ
وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَحَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَأَيْتَ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ١٦٤

"Surely, in the creation of heavens and earth, and the alternation of night and day, and the ships that sail in the sea, carrying that which

benefits men, and in the water Allah sent down from the sky, then revived with it the earth after it was dead, and in every creature He has scattered on it, and in turning of winds, and in the clouds employed to serve between heaven and earth, there are signs for those who have sense."

(Al-Baqarah 2:164)

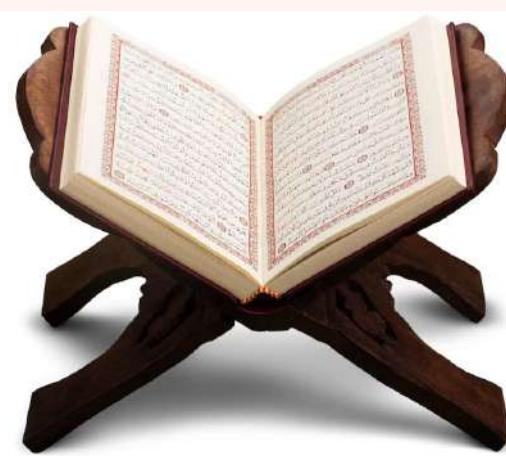
To read more about the scientific miracles of the Quraan, one can read Quraan himself that declares such things to its readers.

The essential message of the Quraan says that we must lead a life of complete and unconditional submission to the One True God i.e. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa), the Creator of all existence. Everything else in the Quraan is secondary after this fundamental teaching, for Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says what means:

الْأَرْكَاتَ دُبُّ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ لِتُخْرِجَ النَّاسَ مِنَ الظُّلْمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ يَأْذِنُ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَمِيدِ

"This is a book We have sent down to you, so that you may deliver the people, with the will of their Lord, out of all sorts of darkness into the light, leading them to the path of the Almighty, the Praiseworthy."

هَذَا بَلْغٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَعِنَدُهُ يَهُ وَلَعِلَّمُوا أَنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌ وَحْدَهُ
وَلَيَذَّكَرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ٥٤





"This is a message for mankind, so that they (take lesson and) be warned, and so that they may know that He is One God, and so that the people of understanding may observe the advice."

(Ibrahim 14:52)

An important aspect of the Quraan is its unity and coherence in spite of the fact that its Aayaat were revealed in the course of 23 years. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says in the Quraan what means:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ
أَخْنَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤٨﴾

"Do they not, then, ponder about the Quraan? Had it been from someone other than Allah, they would have found in it a great deal of discrepancy."

(An-Nisaa 4:82)

We may say that the Quraan can be viewed as a running commentary on the prophetic career of Sayyedina Muhammad (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The miracle is that through the Quraan, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) groomed Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) to mold a cultured and disciplined society of the time out of a savage group of tribes. Before the advent of Islam, they knew little about law and order, social justice, human rights, and peaceful coexistence.

At a time when religion means running away from the contentious world of everyday reality, the Quraan helped the Prophet (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) in struggle with the problems of life in the cities of Makkah al Mukarramah and Madinah al Munawwarah to build there a model society.

The progressive revelation of the Quraan, which corresponded to the needs of the emerging society, the continuation of the revelation until the society attained a perfection unimaginable in those days — this was a miracle in its own right.

Another miracle of the Quraan, which was revealed 14 centuries ago, is the fact that it can be read and understood by the Arabic-speaking people today. Every language undergoes changes as time passes, and one or two hundred years is long enough for a language to undergo substantial changes.

The English of 600 years ago is an entirely different language from the English of today. This is well known to anyone who has tried to read the 14th-century poet Chaucer in the original. If that is so, what about the Arabic of the Hijaz region, spoken 14 centuries ago?

Anyone who knows the rudiments of the history of languages knows that logically it should be impossible for Arabic-speaking people of today to read and understand a book 14 centuries old.

We may say that the Quraan can be viewed as a running commentary on the prophetic career of Sayyedina Muhammad (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The miracle is that through the Quraan, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) groomed Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) to mold a cultured and disciplined society of the time out of a savage group of tribes. Before the advent of Islam, they knew little about law and order, social justice, human rights, and peaceful coexistence.

And yet, every day, every hour, every minute, and in fact every second of the 24 hours of the 365 days of every year of the past centuries has been alive with the reading and studying of the Quraan. The volume and scope of it multiplies in every imaginable way with the arrival of modern information technology.

Thus we see that the Quraan is the ever-present miracle of Prophet Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), rivaling all other miracles that came before. Add to this the astounding fact that, in spite of all the hostile propaganda unleashed against Islam by some of the most powerful organizations in the world today, Islam is yet the fastest growing religion in the world.



MANKIND'S DEBT TO THE PROPHET

(SALLALLAAHO 'ALAIHE WASALLAM)

Part-II & Final

By: Shaikh Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Prophet of Islam and his followers conferred favors on humanity which have played an unforgettable role in the promotion and development of culture and civilization. We will mention here only two of these, amply supported by historical evidence.

Students of history are aware that in the thirteenth century the civilized world, divided by the two great religions, Christianity and Islam, was suddenly confronted with a situation which threatened the imminent destruction of both the then vast empires, their arts and sciences, their cultures and morals. In short, all that the human race had laboriously achieved during the past hundreds of years once again faced its reduction to barbarism. This was brought about by the sudden rise of Genghis Khan (Tamuchin), a chieftain of the nomadic Mongol tribes, who possessed remarkable qualities of leadership and was able to subdue all that sat in his way. In 619/1219, Genghis Khan turned towards the western and northern civilized countries, ravaging them with fire and sword. How severe a blow the Mongol invasion dealt to all social and cultural progress can be gauged by a few graphic descriptions of Mongol rapine and slaughter, as given by Harold

Lamb, Genghis Khan's biographer:

"cities in his path were often obliterated, and rivers diverted from their courses; deserts were peopled with the fleeing and dying, and when he had passed, wolves and ravens often

It is, thus, our moral duty to acknowledge both these great favors conferred by Islam which have had a revolutionary impact on the world. When we speak of those who conferred these gifts or reassess their achievements we must at least keep in mind the rules of courtesy which have been accepted by all nations and cultured peoples and schools of thought.

were the sole living things in once populated lands.

And consternation filled all Christendom, a generation after the death of Genghis Khan, when the terrible Mongol horsemen were riding over Western Europe, when Boleslas of Poland and Bela of Hungary fled from stricken fields, and Henry, Duke of Silesia, died under the arrows with his Teutonic Knights at Liegnitz¹² — sharing the fate of the Grand-Duke George of Russia.

Such details are too horrible to dwell upon today. It was a war carried to its utmost extent — an extent that was very nearly approached in the last European War. It was the slaughter of human beings without hatred — simply to make an end of them.

Unchecked by human valor, they were able to overcome the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and seas, the severities of climate, and the ravages of famine and pestilence. No danger could appeal them, no stronghold could resist them, no prayer for mercy could move them.

His achievement is recorded for the most part by his enemies. So devastating was his impact upon civilization that virtually a new beginning had to be made in half the world. The empires of Chathay, of Prester John, of Black Cathay, of Kharesem, and — after his death — the Caliphate of Baghdad, of Russia and for a while the principalities of Poland, ceased to be. When this indomitable barbarian conquered a nation all other warfare come to an end. The whole scheme of things, whether sorry or otherwise, was altered, and among the survivors of a Mongol conquest peace endured for a long time.

Harold Lamb correctly says that the impact of the Mongols, brought about by Genghis Khan, has been well summed up by the authors of the Cambridge Medieval History in these words:

This 'new power in history' — the ability of one man to alter human civilization — began with Genghis Khan and ended with his grandson Kublai, when the Mongol Empire tended to break up. It has not reappeared since.

The terror of the Mongol invasion was not confined to Turkistan, Iran and Iraq alone. Mongol atrocities provoked trembling even in far-off corners of the world where they could hardly have been expected to carry their arms. Edward Gibbon writes in his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:

The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage hostility; a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden; and the remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars, whom their fear and ignorance were

The Mongols first attacked Bukhara and razed it to dust. Not a single soul was spared by them. Thereafter, they laid Samarkand to ruin and massacred its entire population. The same was the fate of other urban centers in the then Islamic world. The Tartars would indeed have most probably devastated the whole of Christendom



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A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell

under Mongolian domination.

Harold Lamb also writes:

We only know that the German and Polish forces broke before the onset of the Mongol standard, and were almost exterminated; Henry and his barons died to a man, as did the Hospitallers In less than two months they had overrun Europe from the headwaiters of the Elbe to the sea, had defeated three great armies and a dozen smaller ones and had taken by assault all the towns excepting Olmutz.

Then a miraculous event changed the course of history. It not only allowed the civilized world to heave a sigh of relief but also permitted culture and civilization to be built afresh. The hearts of the indomitable Mongols were captured

by the faith of their subjects who had lost all power and prestige. Arnold writes in The Preaching of Islam:

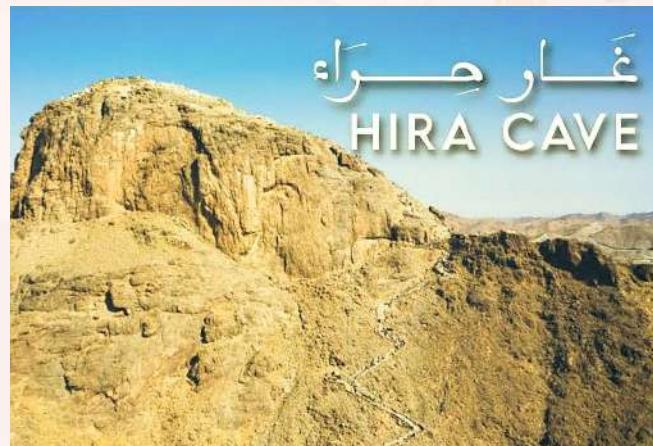
In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and savage tribes that followed in their wake were at length brought to submit to the faith of those Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet.

The names of only a few dedicated servants of Islam who won the savage Tartars to their faith are known to the world, but their venture was no less daring nor the achievement less significant than a great and successful reform movement. Their memory shall always be cherished as much by the Muslims, as by Christendom, or rather by all mankind, since they rescued the world from the barbarism of a savage race, the insecurity of widespread upheaval, and allowed it to once again devote its energies to the establishment of social and political stability. Normalcy thus restored, the world was allowed to resume its journey of cultural development and the promotion of arts and crafts, learning and teaching, preaching and writing.

After the death of Genghis Khan, his vast conquests were divided into four dominions headed by his sons' children. The message of Islam then began to spread among all these four sections of the Mongol empire and before long all were converted to Islam.

The Tartars not only accepted Islam but a number of great scholars, writers, poets, mystics and fighters in the way of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aala), rose from amongst them. Their conversion to Islam completely changed their outlook and disposition as also their attitude towards humanity and civilization. This, in turn, benefited not only the Islamic East but also Christendom and even India.This achievement of Islam, the transformation of the Tartars into a civilized people, was a service of a defensive nature rendered to humanity in general, and to the West in particular.

Another accomplishment of Islam, in contrast to the one just described, was its introduction of a new way of thinking and learning. It was like a flash of light in the Dark Ages of Europe one which paved the way for its Renaissance. It transformed not only Europe but helped the entire human race to benefit from new researches and discoveries. A new era of empirical sciences was inaugurated which has changed the face of the earth. The intellectual patrimony of the ancients (consisting of philosophy, mathematics



and medicine) found its way to Europe through Muslim Spain. This intellectual gift consisted of observation and experiment a replacement of inductive logic with deductive logic where by Europe's whole way of thinking was changed. Science and technology were the main fruits. All the discoveries made by European scientific explorations — in short, whatever success has so far been achieved in harnessing the forces of nature — are directly related to inductive reasoning, not known to Europe until it was bequeathed to it by Muslim Spain. The noted French historian, Gustave Le Bon, writes of the Arab contribution to Modern Europe:

Observation, experimentation and inductive logic which form the fundamentals of modern knowledge are attributed to Roger Bacon but it needs to be acknowledged that this process of reasoning was entirely an Arab discovery.

Robert Briffault has also reached the same conclusion, for he says:

There is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic civilization is not traceable.

He further says:

It is not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its first glow to European life.

Those who have studied the history of the Catholic Church and the Reformation are aware of the profound effect Islamic teachings had on the minds of those who initiated reform in Christendom. We can, for example, see the influence of Islam reflected in the thought of Martin Luther's (1483-1546) Reformation movement. The revolt against autocratic leadership in the Catholic Church in medieval Europe also reveals the influence of Islam, which had no organized church.

It is, thus, our moral duty to acknowledge both these great favors conferred by Islam which have had a revolutionary impact on the world. When we speak of those who conferred these gifts or reassess their achievements we must at least keep in mind the rules of courtesy which have been accepted by all nations and cultured peoples and schools of thought. We should not abandon the norms of politeness, moderation, dignity and truthfulness, for these have been commended by the scriptures of all religions, moral treatises, as also by great writers and critics. It is on such civilized behavior that good relations between different religions, communities and peoples depend; such behavior alone makes possible a purposeful dialogue between people holding different views. In its absence, all serious writings, critiques and reviews must degenerate into obscene and sensational novels, vulgar and outrageous parodies. Such writings can unleash negative and disruptive forces, not only contemptible in themselves and harmful to serious intellectual endeavor, but also likely to embitter relations between different nations and countries.

The argument that any restraint placed on freedom of expression amounts to coercion, restriction of personal freedom, or interference in the rights of individuals under the constitution of an independent country, is simply untenable. The obscene and offensive description of the benefactors of mankind, prophets and reformers, particularly if such narration is against the established facts of history, hurts the feelings of millions who respect and revere them and is also likely to cause disharmony between different groups within a country or even between countries. It is an intolerable infringement of moral values, an offense against humanity that should not be overlooked by any peace-loving nation upholding the value of harmonious co-existence between its different ethnic and religious communities. Western political thinkers, too, do not subscribe to such an unlimited right of freedom of expression. They have argued that such unlimited liberty would be even more harmful than the limits placed on freedom of expression. The subject might be treated at great length, but I will cite here

only two authorities who have explained why limitations on freedom of expression are essential for the maintenance of public order.

Isaiah Berlin explains the two concepts of liberty in these words:

To protest against the laws governing censorship or personal morals as intolerable infringements of personal liberty presupposes a belief that the activities which such laws forbid are

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fundamental needs of men as men, in a good (or, indeed, any) society. To defend such laws is to hold that these needs are not essential, or that they cannot be satisfied without sacrificing other values which come higher — satisfy deeper needs — than individual freedom, determined by some standard that is not merely subjective, a standard for which some objective status — in principle or a priori — is claimed.

The extent of man's or a people's liberty to choose to live as they desire must be weighed against the claims of many other values, of which equality, or justice, or happiness, or security, or public order are perhaps the most obvious examples. For this reason, it cannot be unlimited.

A speech delivered in the American Senate by Blackstone in 1897 and which forms the basis of American law on the subject, says about freedom of expression:

Every free man has an undoubted right in law to air what sentiment he places before the public; to forbid this is to destroy the freedom of the press: but if he publishes what is improper, mischievous, or illegal, he must take the consequences of his own temerity. To subject the press to the restrictive power of a licenser .. is to subject all freedom of sentiment to the prejudices of one man, and make him the arbitrary and infallible judge of all controversial points in learning, religion and Government. But to punish .. any dangerous or offensive writings which when published, shall on fair and impartial trial be adjudged of pernicious tendency, is necessary for the preservation of peace and good order, of Government and religion, the only solid foundations of civil liberty. Thus, the will of individuals is still left free; the abuse only of that free will is the object of legal punishment. 



APRIL FOOL

Sent by: Brother Abdul Waheed, UK

As April draws near, non-believers around the globe celebrate a holiday on the first of the month known as April Fool's Day. The traditional practice of this day is to play some sort of practical joke on someone and make him the "April Fool".

Pranks performed on this day range from the simple, (such as saying, "your shoes are untied!") to the elaborate. Whatever the prank, the trickster usually ends it by yelling to his victim, "April fool!"

The history of April Fool's Day is not totally clear. No exact date can be found pinpointing the first official celebration of this day. There are, however, many narrations regarding the reason the tradition is practiced. One narration states that it is a day the Spanish celebrate in remembrance of the day that they defeated the Muslims and swept them from power in lower Spain. According to this narration, the Christian army could not conquer the Muslims there and sent spies to discover why. They discovered that the Muslims were strong in faith and obedient to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The tradition goes on saying that the Christians sent in alcohol and tobacco, which the Muslims used and became the means in which they lost their obedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa

Ta'aalaa). Then the Christian army invaded lower Spain and conquered the Muslims on the first of April and began celebrating April Fool's Day ever since. As this story has been circulating between our Muslim brothers strengthening their beliefs about the history of this day, it deems appropriate to clarify a few points about the history of April Fool's Day. The truth of the matter is that this story is not true in many aspects.

First, let us confirm the historic fact that Muslim rule in Spain ended

According to Christian historical books such as Encyclopedia Britannica as well as many others trace the roots of the holiday back to 16th century France. Prior to the year 1582, the new year was celebrated for eight days, starting with the 25th of March. The celebration culminated on April 1st.

on the 12th of January in the Christian year of 1492 A.D. April Fool's Day was not heard of until over sixty years later. The most authentic reports according to Christian historical books such as Encyclopedia Britannica as well as many others trace the roots of the holiday back to 16th century France. Prior to the year 1582, the new year was celebrated for eight days, starting with the 25th of March. The celebration culminated on April 1st. With the reform of the Christian calendar under King Charles IX, through the influence of Pope Gregory, the Gregorian calendar was introduced, and New Years Day was moved to the first of January. However, due to lack of communications in those days, many people did not receive the news for several years. Others, the most obstinate

crowd, refused to accept the new calendar and continued to celebrate the New Year on April 1. These backward people were classified as "fool" by the general public and were often subject to

Second, we should acknowledge the fact that tobacco products were not even invented until after the time of the fall of Muslims in Spain. According to the State College in Framingham,

AN EVIL CHARACTERISTIC

Lying is an evil characteristic, which all religions and systems of ethics warn against and which man's innate common sense (فطرة "Fitrah") agrees that it is wrong. Those who possess chivalry and sound reason also say this. Truthfulness is one of the pillars on which the moral survival of the world depends. It is the foundation of praiseworthy characteristics, the cornerstone of Prophethood, the result of تقوى "Taqwaa" (Allah-Fearing). Were it not for truthfulness, the rulings of all Divinely-revealed Laws would collapse. Acquiring the characteristic of lying is akin to shedding one's humanity, because speaking is an exclusively human trait.

Our purely monotheistic Shari'ah warns against lying in the Quraan and Sunnah, and there is consensus that it is حرام "Haraam" (Forbidden). The liar will have bad consequences in this world and in the next.

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says:

إِنَّمَا يَقْتَرِي الْكَذِبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِعِلْمِ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

"It is (not the Prophet but) the disbelievers in Allah's Aayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) who forge lies, and it is they who are the liars."

(an-Nahl 16:105)

Ibne Katheer said: "Then Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) tells us that His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is not a fabricator or a liar, because only the most evil of people who do not believe in the signs of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) -- those who are disbelievers and atheists -- who are known amongst the people for telling lies, tell lies about Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). The Messenger, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) was the most truthful of people, the most righteous, the most perfect in knowledge, action, faith and certain belief. He was known amongst his people for his truthfulness; none of them doubted that, to such an extent that he was known amongst them as 'al-Ameen (the trustworthy) Muhammad.' Hence when Heraclius, the ruler of Rome, asked Abu Sufyaan about the characteristics of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), one of the things he asked was: 'Did you ever accuse him of lying before he said what he said?' He said: 'No'. Heraclius said: 'If he refrained from telling lies about people he would not go and tell lies about Allah.'" (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, 2/588)

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

أَيَّهُ الْمُنَافِقُ ثَلَاثٌ إِذَا حَدَّثَ كَذَبَ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ أَخْلَفَ، وَإِذَا أَوْتُمْ خَانَ

"The signs of a hypocrite are three: When ever he speaks, he tells a lie; and whenever he promises, he breaks his promise; and whenever he is entrusted, he betrays (proves to be dishonest)."

(Bukhari, Muslim)

An-Nawawi said: "What the commentators and most of the scholars said – which is correct – is that this means that these characteristics are the characteristics of hypocrisy, and the one who has these characteristics resembles the hypocrites in this sense.

The words of the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), 'he is a pure hypocrite' mean that he strongly resembles the hypocrites because of these characteristics. Some of the scholars said: 'this is concerning one in whom these characteristics predominate; one in whom these characteristics rarely appear is not included in this. This is the favored view concerning the meaning of this hadeeth. Imam Abu 'Eesaa at-Tirmizi narrated this meaning from the scholars and said: 'The meaning of this according to the scholars is hypocrisy in one's actions.'"

(Sharh Muslim, 2/46-47)

some ridicule. Hence, the tradition of April Fool's Day began.

they quote that smoking of any kind did not exist in Spain until after it was brought back from the

وَلَنْ تَرْضَهُ عَنْكَ الْمُهْمَدُ وَلَا
الْمُصْدَرِيْ حَتَّى تَبْعَ مُلْتَمِ

"The Jews will never be pleased with you, nor will the Christians, unless you follow their faith."

(Al-Baqarah 2:120)

Know that Islam is the only religion, which is free from faults and innovations. Such an easy religion to follow is Islam. The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"Indeed religion is easy"
(Bukhari)

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) just asks that we obey Him and His Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). Yet we try to go out of our ways to be obedient to those cursed people who have shown disobedience to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). What a pity for him who chooses to enjoy the pleasures of the world over the pleasures of

the Aakhirah (Hereafter). By imitating the nonbelievers, all we do is show people that we are one of them and that they are beloved to us as we to them. The Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) said:

"A person will be raised on the Day of Judgment with whom he loves."

So whom do we prefer to be raised with, the Noble Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) and his Sahaabah

(Companions) of the Prophet Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) or the celebrators of April Fool's Day? The answer is obvious to all. In this age of innumerable trials and tribulations, we must try our hardest to stay steadfast on the straight path shown to us by our Beloved Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), which is the only path with guaranteed success from Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). In the long run, he will be successful who avoids such useless practices that are nothing more than a waste of time.

May Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) keep us pure from such deceptions and avoid making us the "April Fool". Aameen! 

APRIL

1

DON'T BE A FOOL BY PARTICIPATING IN APRIL'S FOOL.

New World in the times after King Ferdinand of Spain had come to power. Tobacco use did not become widespread until the 19th century. (Introduction to human biology, Framingham State College, Roger N. Morrisette, Ph.D.)

So regarding the rumor claiming that April Fool's Day is a celebration of the takeover of Muslim Spain, it is clear the whole thing is a fabricated story. It is in fact a lie made by the nonbelievers to mislead Muslims and in reality create a "Muslims Fool Day"! True Muslims would never propagate lies especially when it comes to the history of Islam. It is our duty to educate our brothers on these kinds of topics.

Regardless of the history of April Fool's Day or not, there still isn't any sort of a reason for a Muslim to practice such a foolish tradition. It is in reality a holiday created by the enemies of Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) to prove how really foolish they are by denying the truth revealed to the world through the Holy Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam). As Muslims it is our job to avoid imitating the nonbelievers in all aspects of life and this includes celebration of their holidays. No matter how hard you try to please them you will always fail unless you become one of them. And to become one of them is to earn Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s wrath. And to earn Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s wrath is to condemn oneself. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) says in the Quraan:

As Muslims it is our job to avoid imitating the nonbelievers in all aspects of life and this includes celebration of their holidays. No matter how hard you try to please them you will always fail unless you become one of them. And to become one of them is to earn Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s wrath.



JOYOUS DAY OF SPIRITUALITY

Sent by: Shaikh Ahmed Sharfi

‘Eid ul Fitr is the day of thanksgiving and joy. It marks the end of the Ramadhaan (Month of Fasting), and it is when we feel happy and give thanks to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) that He enabled us to obey His commands. We all observed Sawm (Fast) during the month of Ramadhaan, and by the end of the month, we realize that Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa)’s commands are good for us; they aim at our well-being.

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) does not want to put any burden on us; He gave us the rules of observing Sawm for our own benefit. Sawm has many benefits for individuals and for communities. It has spiritual, moral, and physical benefits.

‘Eid ul Fitr has a deep significance. Its spirit is marked by distinguished values and virtues:

- Thanksgiving and expressing gratitude to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa)
- Experiencing joy and rejoice
- Receiving the great reward of obeying Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa)
- Maintaining ties of kinship

- Taking care of the poor and the needy
- Thanksgiving and Expressing Gratitude

‘Eid ul Fitr is a day that marks the successful completion of the sacred month of Ramadhaan. It is a festival that signifies the completion of an act of duty and devotion. It teaches us that real happiness results from performing one’s duty and making sacrifices for a noble objective.

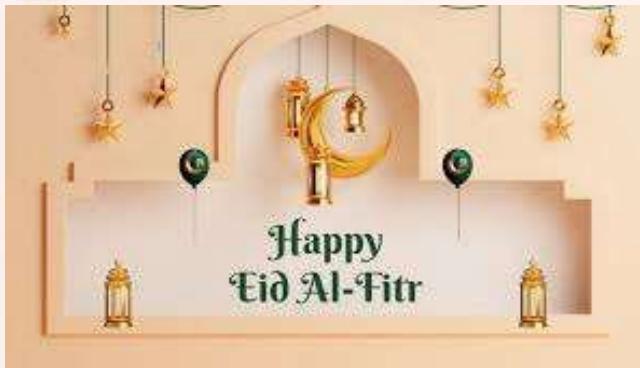
We should thank Almighty Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa), for He guided us to Sawm in Ramadhaan, to doing good deeds, and to reciting the Quraan. We should thank Him, for He is the One Who gave us the money we paid for Zakaat ul Fitr and other charities. Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) says in the Quraan:

وَلِتُكْمِلُوا أَيَّامَهُ وَلِتَكْبِرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَنَكُمْ
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“All this is so that you may complete the number (of Sawm i.e. Fasts as prescribed) and proclaim the Takbeer of Allah for having guided you, and (so) that you may be grateful.”

(Al-Baqarah 2:185)

JOY AND REJOICE



‘Eid is our joy; it is our feast. The month of Ramadhaan is a test from Almighty Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa). At the end of the month, we experience a great sense of achievement and closeness to Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa). It is the joy of spiritual fulfillment.

The day of ‘Eid ul Fitr is time for celebration. On that day, we should not indulge in insulting or abusing others, as this may detract from the achievements of the month of Ramadhaan. ‘Eid ul Fitr is a day of decent happiness and joy.

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) says:

قُلْ يَفْضِلُ اللَّهُ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي ذَلِكَ فَلَيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

“Say: ‘With the grace of Allah and with His mercy (this book has been revealed). So they should rejoice in it. It is much better than that (wealth) which they accumulate’.”

(Younus 10:58)

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

لِلصَّائِمِ فَرْحَانٌ يُفْرِحُهُمَا إِذَا أَفْطَرَ فَرَحَ، وَإِذَا لَقِيَ رَبَّهُ فَرَحَ بِصَوْمَهُ.

“There are two pleasures for the Sawm-observing person, one at the time of Iftaar (breaking his fast), and the other at the time when he will meet his Lord; then he will be pleased because of his Sawm observing.”

(Bukhari and Muslim)

However, in celebrating ‘Eid Al-Fitr, we should enjoy our time by sticking to what is permissible and avoiding what is unlawful.

GREAT REWARD

The Day of Eid Al-Fitr is a blessed day for those who have observed their duty toward Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) for observing Sawm during Ramadhaan. In heavens, ‘Eid ul Fitr is called the يَوْمُ الْجَازِهِ “Day of Reward”.

It is reported in a Prophetic Hadeeth that,

on the day of ‘Eid ul Fitr, the angels stand on both sides of the roads and proclaim:

يَا أَمَّةَ مُحَمَّدٍ إِذَا رَجَوْتُمْ رَبَّكُمْ يُعْطِي الْجَزِيلَ وَيَغْفِرُ عَنْكُمْ الْعَظِيمَ.

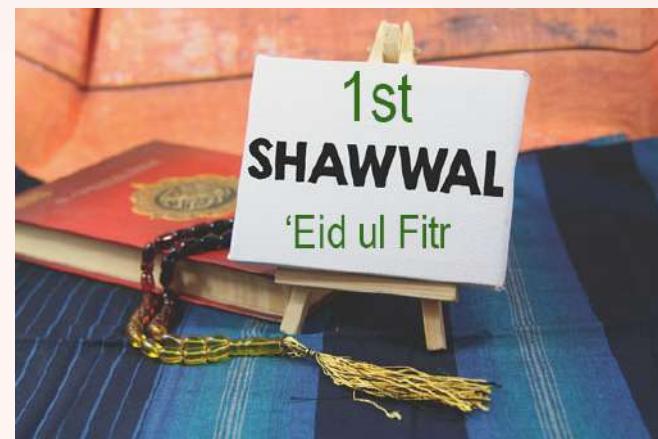
“O Ummah of Muhammad! Come forth from your houses towards a Lord Who is Noble and Gracious, Who grants much and pardons the major sins.”

When they proceed towards the places for their ‘Eid Salaah, Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) says to the “Malaaiakah” (Angels):

مَا جَرَأَ الْأَجْيَرُ إِذَا عَلِلَ عَمَلُهُ.

“What indeed is the reward of that laborer who had rendered his services?”

The Malaaiakah (Angels) reply:



الَّهُنَّا وَسِيِّدُنَا جَزَاتُهُ أَنْ تُرْفِيَهُ أَجْرُهُ.

“O Lord and Master! It is only right that he should receive his reward in full for his services.”

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta’alaa) then says:

فَيَقُولُ فَلَلِي أَشْهِدُكُمْ يَا مَلَائِكَتِي إِنِّي قَدْ جَعَلْتُ ثَوَابَهُمْ مِّنْ صِيَامِهِمْ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ وَقِيَامِهِمْ رِضَائِي وَمَغْفِرَتِي وَيَقُولُ يَا عِبَادِي سَلُونِي فَوَعَرَّتِي وَجَلَّلِي لَا تَسْتَلُونِي الْيَوْمَ شَيْئًا فِي جَمِيعِكُمْ لَا خَرَّتُكُمْ إِلَّا أَعْطَيْتُكُمْ وَلَا لَدِنِيَا كُمْ إِلَّا نَظَرْتُ لَكُمْ فَوَعَرَّتِي لَا سُرْتُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ عَثَرَاتِكُمْ مَا رَأَيْتُمْ فَبَتُوُونِي وَعَرَّتِي وَجَلَّلِي لَا أَخْزِيُكُمْ وَلَا أَقْضَحُكُمْ بَيْنَ أَهْلَبِ الْحَدُودِ فَانْصَرُفُوا مَعْفُورًا لَكُمْ قَدْ أَرْضَيْتُمْنِي وَرَضِيَتْ عَنْكُمْ فَنَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَسَتَشَرُّبُونَ بِمَا يُعْطِي اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ هَذِهِ الْأَمَّةُ إِذَا أَفْطَرُوا مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ.

“I call you to witness, O My Malaaiakah! that for their having observed Sawm during the month of Ramadhaan, and for their having stood before Me in Salaah by night, I have granted them as reward My pleasure and have granted them forgiveness. O My servants! Ask now of Me, for I swear by My Honor and My Greatness, that whatsoever you shall beg of Me this day in this assembly of yours for the needs of the Aakhirah

(Hereafter), I shall grant you; and whatsoever you shall ask for worldly needs, I shall look at your (real) benefit. By My Honor I swear! As long as you shall obey My commands, I shall cover your faults. By My Honor and My Greatness! Do I swear that I shall never disgrace you among the evil-doers and disbelievers. Depart now from here, you are forgiven. You have pleased Me and I am pleased with you."

(Fadhal-e-A'maal by Shaikh Zakariyya)

MAINTAINING TIES OF KINSHIP



Eid Al-Fitr is a day when Muslims become more keen on visiting their relatives and friends. In the process, they exchange greetings and maintain ties of kinship. We should all visit our relatives or at least call them. Muslim brothers and sisters greeting "Happy Eid" to one another by saying: *تَقَبَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ وَمِنْكُمْ صَاحِحُ الْأَعْمَالِ.*

"May Allāh accept your good deeds and ours."

TAKING CARE OF THE POOR AND THE NEEDY

Although Almighty Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) commanded us to take care of the needy, the poor, and the orphans throughout the year, taking care of them during 'Eid ul Fitr and 'Eid ul AdhHaa is given greater emphasis.

Sayyedina 'Abdullah Ibne 'Abbaas reported that:

فَرَضَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صِدْقَةَ الْفِطْرِ طُهْرَةً لِلصَّائِمِ مِنَ الْلَّغْوِ وَالرَّفْثِ،
طُعْمَةً لِلْمَسَاكِينِ، فَنَأَدَاهَا قَبْلَ الصَّلَاةِ؛ فَهِيَ زَكَاةً مَقْبُولَةً، وَمَنْ
أَدَاهَا بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ؛ فَهِيَ صِدْقَةً مِنَ الصِّدَقَاتِ.

"Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s Messenger (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) made Zakaat ul Fitr obligatory as a means of purifying the Sawm-observing person from idle talk and foul language, and to feed the poor. Whoever pays it before the Salaah, it is an accepted Zakaah, and whoever pays it after the Salaah, it is just a kind of Charity (Sadaqah)."

(Abu Daawood)

Purifying means purifying the soul of the one who has observed Sawm during Ramadhaan. With regard to the word foul language, it is said that it refers to obscene speech. Feeding the poor refers to food that is edible. Whoever pays it before the Salaah means before Salaat ul 'Eid. It is an accepted Zakaah means Sadaqat ul Fitr. Just a kind of charity' means a kind of charity that could be given at any time.

Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) and His Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) instructed us to fulfill the needs of the poor and the needy in both 'Eids, so that they would not be in need of begging.

This is the spirit of 'Eid ul Fitr, so let's always keep this spirit among us. Let's strengthen our bonds with our Creator and with one another. Let's be more united and more and more committed to righteousness as individuals, families, and communities.

CONCLUSION

The Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam) is reported to have said: *الْتَّائِبُ مِنَ الذَّنَبِ كَمَنْ لَا ذَنْبَ لَهُ.*

"The one who repents of his or her sins shall be equal to the one who did not sin."

So, seek Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa)'s forgiveness and seek His favors and gifts.

Finally, here are some tips that can help us all keep the spirit of 'Eid ul Fitr:

- Take part in 'Eid celebrations to see your Muslim brothers and sisters.
- Make Du'a for your Muslim brothers and sisters everywhere.
- Try to celebrate the 'Eid through permissible practices and keep away from unlawful ones.

May Allah (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa) accept our good deeds and grant us His forgiveness and mercy. Aameen!





JEWISH & GERMAN REVERTED TO ISLAM

Sent by: Brother Abu Nasr Mansoori

Aron (name changed) is from New York City. He is from a Jewish family and converted to Islam after his student exchange year in Indonesia. This is his story.

I grew up in New York City, USA. We are Jews. My forefathers came from the area of Eastern Europe, from what is today Poland. They left their home when the increasingly antisemitic Russian Empire controlled parts of Poland after 1795.

After a long journey, they arrived and settled in United States of America, in New York. My family were never orthodox Jews. Nevertheless, Judaism did play an important role in our life and was an important marker of our very identity. We followed the traditional rituals and celebrations while engaging with the society around us.

MUSIC BROUGHT ME TO INDONESIA

From an early age, I developed a passion

for music. By the time I was a teenager, I was all into experimental music. And I was especially fascinated with traditional music and musical instruments from other parts of the world. I would use the different sounds and include them in my own compositions.

One day a friend told me about Indonesia and that I can study ethnomusicology there. I was determined to travel to Indonesia and enroll in the Art Institute that offered the degree in ethnomusicology.

I CONCEALED MY JEWISH IDENTITY

When I arrived in Indonesia and enrolled in the Institute, I did not tell anybody that I was Jewish. In Indonesia, you usually have to state your religion. I just stated that I was Buddhist.

MISCONCEPTION OF RELATING MUSIC WITH ISLAM

Gongs and percussion instruments made of tuned metal are found throughout Southeast Asia. In Java (an island in the Republic of Indonesia), ensembles built around such instruments are called gamelan. The first known Javanese gamelan consisting of multiple instruments appeared in the fourth century AD. Over the following centuries, the gamelan spread from Central Java to other parts of Southeast Asia, resulting in a wide variety of styles now indigenous to specific geographic areas.

Consistent with centuries of tradition, Gamelan had acquired the status of traditional instrument, arranged and performed to accompany religious or ceremonial rituals, including rain-inducing ceremonies in the Central Javanese rice-fields, trance ceremonies and weddings.

The sacredness of gamelan extended to its role in religious lyrics as prayers to gods and goddesses and its players treat their instruments with total respect and would never step over them as they falsely believe they are tied to heaven and stepping over the instruments could break these ties.

During the early days of Islam in Indonesia, the ancient gamelan was continued to be used by the new Indonesian Muslims under the influence of their previous practices to celebrate events of joy and happiness.

Gradually, playing gamelan, as Gamelan Sekaten (or Sekati) during the annual Sekaten festival became its part. The word "sekaten" itself is derived from "Syahadatain" or شهادتین "Shahaadatayn" i.e. (1) bearing witness that "there is no God except Allah" and (2) bearing witness that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", the first requirement for converting into Islamic faith.

By the time, "Gamelan Sekaten ensemble" obtained a place in the celebrations to commemorate the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (Subhaanahu Wa Ta'aalaa). The same trend is found in subcontinent, where musical instrument, imitated from Hindu religious traditions became a part of religious lyrics among the new commers in Islam, although clearly contrary to the teachings of the Prophet of Islam, Sayyedina Muhammad (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam).

Once Sayyedina 'Abdullah ibne 'Umar heard a musical instrument being played. He placed his fingers in his ears and veered off to one side of the road. He then asked Nafi';

يَا نَافِعُ هَلْ تَسْمَعُ شَيْئًا

"O Nafi'! Can you hear anything?"

Nafi' replied:

لَا

"No."

He then took his fingers out of his ears and said:

كُنْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَسَمِعْ مِثْلَ هَذَا فَصَنَعْ مِثْلَ هَذَا

"I was with the Prophet (SallAllaaho 'Alaihe WaSallam), and he also did the same when he heard a musical instrument being played.

(Abi Daawood, Hadith: 4924)

That was the easiest choice at this time.

I was worried that people will show hostility towards me because I was Jewish. And since I did not practice my former religion to a

great extent, I did not mind to claim that I was Buddhist.

And honestly, during that time in the early 2000s, it was kind of hip to claim that one was Buddhist. Indonesians viewed us "new Western Buddhist" as exotic and did not ask uncomfortable questions.

AT FIRST I WAS NOT INTERESTED IN ISLAM

I stayed for more than two years in Indonesia. During that time I joined many music projects. And I tried to stay out of religious discussions as best as possible. I concentrated on my music and even my own Jewish religious traditions became very distant. I was away from my family. Away from my Jewish community that usually endorsed joining our traditional celebrations.

Islam seemed like this local religion that was just not for me. And I thought that practicing Muslims just spend too much of their time praying than doing really important things.

GAMELAN AND ISLAM

Then, one day I joined a traditional Gamelan performance. Gamelan is a traditional percussion instrument in Java made from metal.

Next to me sat an old man who started talking to me. It was in the middle of my second year and my Indonesian-language had become quite good.

He explained to me the connection between the Gamelan and the Muslims of Indonesia in olden days.



He narrated the story of how the ancient royal Gamelan ensemble used by Muslims in religious events. This story impressed me because I had never thought about the spiritual aspect of music. His explanations made impact on my thoughts.

READING ABOUT ISLAM

I continued composing experimental music. And my gamelan recordings became an important part of it. I started reading more about the spiritual aspect of Islam and especially the so called Islamic mysticism in Indonesia.

And honestly, it touched me. It influenced me. I understood that Islam was a lived religion and that it was full with the spirituality I wanted in my life. I had seen Islam as a dry and strict religion that only focuses on the outer aspects and rules.

Reading about Islam in Indonesia, I learned that my perception was far from reality. And the more I read, the more interested I became. I also read about Islam in other places of the world. And I was fascinated about its richness.

FOLLOWING MY HEART

I was interested to embrace Islam and become Muslim. But I worried about my family. What would they say? A Jew becoming Muslim? I did not want to lose them.

Eventually I followed my heart. I spoke my Shahaadah (Pledge of accepting Islam as my religion: "There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger") in a small

Muslim community center in New York City. I started offering Salaah (Prayers). And I joined the regular حلقہ "Halaqah" (Muslim Learning Circles) for ذکر "Zikr" (Remembrance of Lord Almighty) and تعلیم "Ta'leem" (Teachings of Islam). I found the rhythmic Remembrance of Allah wonderful which soothes the heart and calms the mind, far beyond the instrumental music. Later, when I acquired more knowledge of real Islam, I now, try to practice "Islamic teachings" in letter and spirit in my daily life.

TELLING MY FAMILY

I did not tell my family that I converted to Islam for a long time. Since I did not live with them anymore, it was quite easy to keep it hidden. But eventually they were suspicious of me. I tried to get my family events and Jewish community gatherings without involving into their rituals.

When I told them, they were just quiet for what seemed like forever. Then my mother asked me if I was happy. And I said:

"Yes!"

But my father made a request:

"Can you please wait to make it all public?

I mean, nowadays people have bad opinions about Muslims. And I don't want our friends to think negative about you or us."

I complied with my father's request. And I still do. We just don't talk about religion. I only very occasionally join the community gathering. Otherwise I keep low profile. It has been working well for all of us. I can still see and visit my family.

"Al-Hamdulillaah" (Praise be to Allah). 