

MAY/JUNE 2012 • J.AKHIR 1433 • NO: 35 • £3 UK • US\$5 • AU\$5

WISDOM

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AL-TINOLUK

JUSTICE IN ISLAM

*"We shall set a just balance
for the Day of Resurrection
so that no soul is wronged
in aught. Though it be of
the weight of a grain of
mustard seed, We bring it.
And We suffice for
reckoners."
(Anbiya, 47)*



Osman Nuri Efendi
Justice In Islam

Prof. Hasan Kamil Yilmaz
Allah's Justice in the Universe

Prof. Yasar Kandemir
The Justice of the Prophet (pbuh)

EDITORIAL

*D*ear Readers,

“O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.” (Nisâ, 135)

“There are seven categories of people whom God will shelter under His shade on the Day when there will be no shade except His. [One is] the just leader.” (Hadith)

A woman from Bani Makhzum, one of the most aristocratic tribes, stole something and the companions including Usama bin Zayd asked for a lessening of her punishment. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) responded, “O people! Those before you were ruined in that if a noble person among them stole something, they left him alone. On the other hand, if a lower class person stole something, they punished him!” Then He said that if his daughter Fatimah were to steal, he would not hesitate to punish her.

As Khurram Murad says, “justice is the supreme purpose and it provides the framework for the entire corpus of Islam, shaping and moulding its beautiful configurations. The paramount purpose for which the Prophets were sent and struggled all their lives was to guide man to achieve justice. Indeed, no conception of Islam and Muslim should be possible without justice. Justice, in Islam, lends meaning and colour to all human endeavours, both on an individual level and as a societal ideal, extending from now into eternity. It serves as the ultimate criterion for the internal ordering of the soul and the external regulation of relationships.”

Our teacher Osman Nuri Efendi explains in his article that a Muslim who follows justice – everywhere, always, and for everybody – gains the love of Allâh and His servants, and reaches nobility and happiness in this world and Hereafter. Professor Hasan Kamil Yilmaz explicates ‘Allah’s Justice in the Universe.’ We hope you enjoy reading this edition.

We pray to our Lord to kindly favour us with an appreciation of his justice and wisdom in the world and to also treat us with his kindness and mercy on the day of judgement, resurrection day.

Elif Kapici

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Wisdom

WISDOM Bimonthly Islamic Journal

Copyright 2012

No: 35 MAY/JUNE 2012 - 1433

Price: \$5 (USA), £3 (UK), AUS \$5 (AUS)

WISDOM is published by ALTINOLUK Publishing Co.

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Design

Altinolukgraphic • Saban Muslu

Subscription Rate For One Year

(Including Postage) \$30 (USA) - AUS \$ 30 (AUS) - £18 (UK)

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Printed by

ERKAM Printing • Phone: +90.212.671 07 07

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**Prof. Hasan
Kamil Yilmaz**

**Allah's Justice
in the Universe**

**Ahmet
Tasgetiren**

**Faith and
Steadfastness**



**Halime
Demiresik**

**Sayyidah
Â'isha (VIII)**

**Prof. Yasar
Kandemir**

**The Justice of
the Prophet
(pbuh)'**



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الله



Justice In Islam

True knowledge is that which leads humanity to the recognition of Allâh – that is, our knowing Allâh the Almighty in our hearts. Therefore, knowledge directs us to goodness, justice, and truth.

This orderly universe has not come to exist by chance. Neither was it created as a tool for the satisfaction of desires. It was created for a noble purpose; and it has been made a place of examination for human beings. Therefore neither the creation of the universe nor the creation of humanity is absurd.

Nothing is created in vain, without wisdom or reason, for another beautiful Name of our Lord is *al-Haqq* – the Right, the Real, the Truth. He is free from doing anything absurd or futile. All things coming from Him are right. The Qur'ân declares:

He it is who created the heavens and the earth with truth. (An'âm, 6/73)

Look at the universe as a whole, at humankind, and at all other creatures. Each is a wonderful work of art. Their creation displays innumerable wisdoms and lessons, subtle measures and balances. Every person of sound mind should carefully reflect on the manifestation of this divine power.

Allâh the Almighty directs our attention to this truth with a warning.

He has raised up the sky and set the measure, so exceed not the measure... (Rahmân, 55/8)



The noble Qur'ân clearly states that this world is a testing place. We did not come here without purpose, nor are we left here on our own.

And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for sport. We created them not save with truth; but most of them do not know. (Dukhân, 44/38-39).

Does man think that he is to be left aimless? (Qiyâmah, 75/36).

Have you supposed that We created you in vain, and that you shall not be brought back to Us? (Mu'minûn 23/115)

The noble Qur'ân clearly states that this world is a testing place. We did not come here without purpose, nor are we left here on our own. We have a will that we can use for good or for evil, but our Lord has set some limits, and has commanded us to observe these limits. We are not in this world merely to satisfy our lowest desires. Whoever pursues these desires may easily and unwittingly become a tyrant. In that way we risk our eternal life.

In fact, servanthood means observing the limits set by Allâh. By observing these limits, humanity saves itself from divine chastisement. Whoever breaks them has prepared his own punishment, and therefore has tyrannized himself. It must not be forgotten that the opposite of justice is tyranny.

THE OPPOSITE OF JUSTICE IS TYRANNY

In the noble Qur'ân, Allâh Almighty identifies tyranny and foolishness as attributes of humanity:

"...Lo! he (man) has proved a tyrant and a fool." (Ahzâb, 33/72)

Violent ignorance, *jahiliyyah*, is one of the major causes leading to injustice and oppression. The opposite of the *jahiliyyah* mentioned in the Noble Qur'ân is knowledge, *ilm*.

True knowledge is that which leads humanity to the recognition of Allâh - that is, our knowing Allâh the Almighty in our hearts. Therefore, just as ignorance destines humanity to injustice, so knowledge directs us to goodness, justice, and truth.

The core and origin of truth is Allâh the Almighty. Right and truth are made known to us by the Creator and Possessor of the cosmos. In the Noble Qur'ân, Allâh tells us:

...Say: The guidance of Allâh is guidance indeed, and we are commanded to surrender to the Lord of the Worlds. (An'âm, 6/71).

Remaining indifferent to the commands and prohibitions of Allâh and His Messenger; our guides to endless happiness, is indeed a bad idea. Whoever does that, tyrannizes himself. The gravest injustice is to willfully remain blind to ultimate truths. Every injustice defines its own punishment. The punishment corresponding to a crime committed against ultimate truths is *an endless chastisement*. Thus failing to keep faith with Allâh destines one to Hell forever, because it is the gravest injustice and oppression against all the bounties of one's Lord.

Although injustice evidently causes others to suffer, ultimately it leads whoever commits it into a terrible chastisement. The unjust harm themselves most. This is why in the

Qur'ân we frequently find the expression *"those who tyrannize themselves."*

Rûmî says of justice and injustice: "What is justice? It is watering fruit trees. What is injustice? It is watering briars," and "A person with no notion of justice is like a she-goat who suckles a baby wolf."

That is, the injustice such a person feeds will lead to his own destruction. It destines him to collapse and disappear.

History bears witness that those who violate the rights of others for their own private temporary interests only pave the way for their own dreadful ends. Finally they are destroyed by their own works. Thus, even if it is quite difficult, one must always uphold justice and support the right.

In the simplest language, injustice means to make people suffer without any good reason.

Despite the fact that human beings have the noblest place in all of creation, we neglect our elevated worth and dignity to chase after transitory pleasures, lowly desires, and fleeting passions. In this way, through sin and rebellion against the divine order, people destined themselves to endless chastisement. But who shall be held responsible for this situation?

The capacity to act justly and mercifully toward others is first and foremost the result of our acting justly and mercifully toward ourselves. And our best guide in reaching this end is the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The best example of justice

Our Lord sent our Prophet (pbuh) to illustrate ideal human behavior, and in this way clarified the divine commands and prohibitions. The praiseworthy life of the Prophet (pbuh) demonstrates the intentions of Allâh for human beings through living human examples. Our noble religion, Islam, is a religion of real life as it may actually be lived in the best manner. Its principles differ from human worldviews which are purely theoretical and cannot be put into practice. Thus the understanding of justice in Islam, although exalted, is also very concrete. Responsibilities are clear.

When the Prophet (pbuh) commanded his community to do something, he and his relatives were primarily responsible for applying that command. When he prohibited something, he and his relatives were primarily responsible for abstaining from it. In matters of justice, he did not assume any privilege, nor did he grant privileges to wealthy or influential people. The life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is full of examples of virtuous behavior that make one marvel. Here are a few of them.

EVEN IF SHE WAS MY DAUGHTER FÂTIMAH...

During the Age of Felicity, a woman of a noble family of the Banu Makhzûm clan committed theft, and the victim invoked the law against her. Relatives of the woman

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Our Prophet, whose whole life was an explanation of the Qur'ân, stood for the rule of law and a respect for the demands of justice even if his own family were to be involved.

sought someone to intercede with the Prophet (pbuh) so that she might escape punishment. Finally they decided to send `Usamah ibn Zayd, who was one of the dearest Companions of the Prophet (pbuh). `Usamah went to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked whether she might be spared. The Prophet (pbuh) listened, and his face changed color. He looked at his beloved Companion reproachfully and asked, "Are you arguing for the cancellation of one of Allâh's limits?"

Hearing this, `Usamah became utterly regretful. He apologized to the Holy Prophet, and said, "O Messenger of Allâh! Please pray to Allâh for my forgiveness." (Bukhârî, Maghâzî, 53; Nasâ'î, Qat' al-Sâriq, 6, VIII, 72-74).

Then the Prophet stood up and announced; "Nations before you were destroyed for the following reason: When somebody with a noble family or a higher rank committed theft, they used to leave him free, but when some poor and alone committed theft, they would punish him immediately. By Allâh, if Fâtimah, the daughter of Muhammad, were to commit theft, I would cut off her hand!" (Bukhârî, Anbiyâ', 54; Muslim, Hudûd, 8, 9).

In the Noble Qur'ân, Allâh says:

"O you who believe! Be staunch in justice, witnesses for Allâh, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case concerns) the rich or the poor, for Allâh is nearer unto both (them you are). So follow not passion, lest you lapse (from truth)..." (Nisâ 4/135)

This episode clearly shows that our Prophet, whose whole life was an explanation of the Qur'ân, stood for the rule of law and a respect for the demands of justice even if his own family were to be involved. He certainly rejected granting privileges to people of social influence.

UPHOLDING JUSTICE

Even before he was entrusted with the mission of prophethood, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) participated in a Makkan civic association known as the Alliance of the Virtuous (*hilf al-fudûl*). This Alliance was established to make justice predominate in business and social life. The group used to help foreigners whose rights were violated and who (through lack of social connections) were unable to insist on their due. It would work to extract from the powerful what was due to the poor, and to restore respect for the rights of the poor.

This sensitivity regarding the implementation of rights and justice can be seen throughout the Prophet's life. One catches a glimpse of it in the following Prophetic sayings:

"....Any society in which a poor man cannot receive his rightful due without being hurt cannot prosper long..." (Ibn Mâja, Sadaqât, 17)

"...How should Allâh purify a society (from sins) where the rights of the poor are not extracted from the powerful?" (Ibn Mâja, Fitan, 20)

"On the Day of Judgment, out of all the

people, the dearest and closest to Allāh will be just rulers. And on the Day of Judgment, out of all the people, the most unlovable and distant from Allāh will be unjust rulers.”

(Tirmidhī, Ahkām, 4/1329; Nasā’ī, Zakāh, 77)

Again, in the last teaching reported from him, when the Prophet (pbuh) was about to depart from this world, he said: “Be aware of the designated prayers! Be careful about the designated prayers. And be fearful of Allāh regarding the rights of those who are under your protection.” (Abū Dāwūd, Adab, 123-124/5156; Ibn Māja, Wasāyā, 1)

OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE: A SHARE OF HELL

The pride of the universe, our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), declared:

“I am only a human being. You come to me asking decisions regarding issues in contention among you. It may happen that one of you is more talented in presenting his evidence and making his case than others. And I may decide in favor of him, based on what I hear. However, if I have decided in favor of anybody based on deceptive evidence, I have allocated that person a share of Hell.”

(Bukhārī, Shahādāt, 27; Muslim, ‘Aqidah, 4)

Indeed, some people may cover up their unjust actions and convince people of their innocence through mental acuteness and an ability to speak effectively. Let them not think that they will get away with their

crimes! Even if they deceive the courts of this world, nevertheless, in the Divine Court of the Hereafter everything will be known, and rights will be restored to the defrauded. Such an awful situation in the Hereafter is much more terrible than anything one might experience in this world.

Therefore, anyone who asks the judge for justice must search his conscience as to whether he is truly right in that case.

The issue of justice is important not only in some dimensions of life, but in all of them. It must be implemented in business, in education, and in issues concerning the environment, as well as within the family.

JUSTICE AMONG ONES’ CHILDREN

To discriminate in favor of sons and against daughters is disrespectful of Allāh’s decree, and a sign of a weak faith and a weak Islam.

It is common knowledge that daughters have been deprived of many of their rights and suffered various oppressions. It is totally unjust and tyrannical to regard gender as criterion of superiority, since Allāh declares that the only criterion of superiority is *taqwa* (piousness)– reverent consciousness and carefulness in ones’ acts toward Allāh.

One of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) was in a meeting with the Prophet

The issue of justice is important not only in some dimensions of life, but in all of them. It must be implemented in business, in education, and in issues concerning the environment, as well as within the family.



The Messenger of Allāh said, “Beware of the curse of the oppressed, for there is no veil between his curse and Allāh.”



(pbuh). When his little son ran in, he embraced him and put him on his lap. After a while, his little daughter came in too. The Companion bade her sit down next to him. Noticing this, the Prophet (pbuh) said: “Should not you observe justice between your children?”

Thus he indicated that one must not discriminate between a son and a daughter on the basis of their gender. One must not prefer one over the other simply on this basis.¹

Nû mân ibn Bashîr relates:

My father took me to the Prophet e and said, I have given a slave that I owned to this son of mine.

The Prophet (pbuh) asked: “Have you given the same to your other children?”

My father said, “No, I have not.”

And the Messenger of Allāh said, “Then you must change your decision about this gift.” (Bukhârî, Hibah 12, Shahâdât 9; Muslim, Hibât 9-18).

DISTRIBUTING RIGHTS CAREFULLY TO THOSE WHO ARE ENTITLED

After the victory at Khaybar, the Prophet (pbuh) used to send Abdullah ibn Rawâhâ there to handle tax collection. Each time, Abdullah would carefully estimate the quantity of dates to be levied and would collect the relevant amount of tax.

Certain Jews who farmed at Khaybar were unhappy with Abdullah’s estimation, and tried to bribe him to change the levy. They collected their wives’ jewelry and offered it to Abdullah, saying, “All this might be yours if you give us a break on the tax!”

Abdullah replied, “I don’t like you, because of your many wicked actions. But I swear by Allāh that my dislike will not prevent me from treating you with justice. Now you are offering me a bribe. But taking bribes is forbidden: we don’t do that.”

When these Jews understood that they could not bribe Abdullah, they appreciated

his integrity. They said, "Here are the justice and truthfulness that keep the heavens and the earth in running order." (Muwatta', Musâqât, 2)

Allâh says:

O you who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allâh in equity, and let not hatred of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to reverence... (Mâ'idah, 5/ 8)

How great is our religion which commands strict observance of justice even toward those who oppose it! A conscious Muslim always respects the right and complies with the requirements of justice, since he keeps in mind that if he commits injustice, even against a nonbeliever, he will be held responsible for it. In fact, in a prophetic tradition, the Messenger of Allâh said, "Beware of the curse of the oppressed, for there is no veil between his curse and Allâh." (Bukhâri, Zakâh 41, 63, Maghâzî 60, Tawhid 1; Muslim, Îmân 29, 31)

Here is another historical example of the observance of rights and of just treatment offered to non-Muslims.

In the early days of Islam, the city of Hims was under Muslim protection. When the Muslims heard that the Byzantine military was marching toward them, they immediately returned the tax that they had collected from the inhabitants of Hims. They said, "Since we are under military attack now, we are not able to protect you. We only collected these taxes from you in exchange for protecting you. Now you are free to do whatever you want."

The people of Hims said, "We swear by Allâh that your government and justice are better for us than the oppression and injustice we suffered under our earlier government. We shall defend the city under your governor's command."

The Jewish and Christian population of other cities that had signed pacts with the Muslims chose to act in the same way. In the end, when the Muslim military won victory, these citizens opened up their cities to the returning Muslims and welcomed their rule. They went on living in peace and they paid their taxes.²

It is incumbent upon Muslims to support just governors, and to warn them without hesitation when they do something wrong.





Those whose hearts support what is right are blessed by the power of the right. Firmly supported by the right, such people support it in return. It is they who offer resistance to oppressors.

It is because of such sensitive measures that many non-Muslim thinkers throughout history have appreciated the greatness of justice taught by Islam. Indeed, when the French revolutionaries were faced with drawing up a Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789, they did research into all the legal systems of the world. Lafayette, who was then a member of the commission, studied Islamic law. He is reported to have exclaimed, "O glorious Arab! You discovered true justice!"

Justice is the main pillar that upholds societies and keeps States functioning. One old proverb says, "An unbeliever may prosper; but a tyrant will not." Another says, "Justice underlies rule." It is true that nations and States function thanks to governors who possess might and power. However, might and power are acceptable to people only to the extent that they reflect justice. Might without right becomes oppression. Indicating this, Hazrat Abû Bakr said, "Justice without power is impotence. Power without justice is tyranny." That is, power must be bound by justice to be useful, but justice must be delivered by power to be effective.

When, after the passing of the Prophet, Hazrat Abû Bakr was elected to be caliph, he announced his office to the people with admirable modesty. "O people! I am chosen as caliph even though I am not the best person among you. If I carry out my duties properly, please help me in this cause. If I do wrong, please show me the right path..." (Ibn-i Sa'd, III,

182-183; Suyûti, *Târikhu'l-Khulafâ*, s. 69, 71-72; Hamidullah, *Islâm Peygamberi*, II, 1181)

It follows from the spirit of this declaration that it is incumbent upon Muslims to support just governors, and to warn them without hesitation when they do something wrong.

RESISTANCE TO INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "The best jihad is to speak the truth before an unjust ruler." (Abû Dâwûd, *Malâhim*, 17; Tirmidhî, *Fitan*, 13) This is because where truth is not spoken, lies prevail. To remain quiet when it is time to defend the right is to turn oneself into a silent devil. To remain quiet before an unjust person is to worship him as an idol.

The people around Pharaoh who encouraged him to claim divinity and demand; "*Am I not your lord most high?*" acted like devils despite having the form of human beings. Since they supported Pharaoh's oppression, they were destined to share his disappointment. Fawning on oppressors for the sake of worldly gain is a cause of permanent abasement.

Those whose hearts support what is right are blessed by the power of the right. Firmly supported by the right, such people support it in return. It is they who offer resistance to oppressors.

Thus Hasan al-Basrî did not remain silent against the oppression of Hajjâj the Tyrant, whose injustice is well-known. Hasan

al-Basri, taking all kinds of risks, declared the truth, and distributed that which was rightfully due. And Imam al-A'zam Abû Hanîfah, who did not wish to support the unjust policies of the caliph Ja'far Mansûr in any way, rejected his appointment to be Chief Qadi (Judge) of Baghdad.

Words of truth are the voices of faith. Telling the truth and distributing what is rightly owed are among the marks of mature people of faith. As long as there are people who do these things, the roads to tyranny will be closed.

Those who, following their base desires, commit or support oppression must know well that lies and force win only temporary victories. Eternal victory is beyond them, for the destiny of oppression is its disappearance. Since rejecting what is true and violating the measures of right and justice means opposition and rebellion against Allâh the Exalted, unjust people are doomed sooner or later to encounter chastisement by divine power.

The histories of oppression and injustice are full of examples of the manifestation of divine vengeance. In this regard, the noble Qur'ân says:

...And never did We destroy communities unless the folk thereof were unjust. (Qasas, 28/59).
[s. 17]

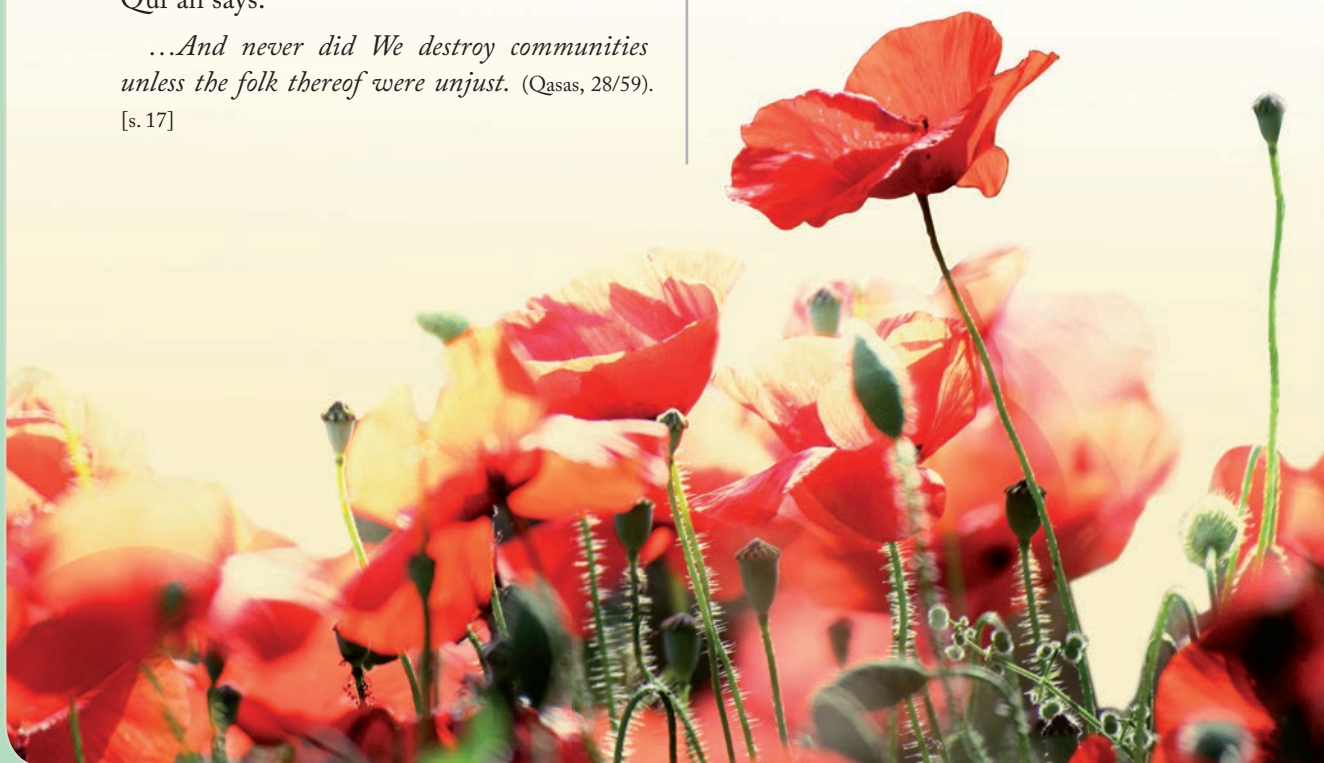
Some people cling to brute force because tyranny seems brilliant at the beginning...but only at the beginning. History repeatedly shows us that darkness is at the end. Justice, on the other hand, may be difficult to get started, yet its end is bright and peaceful.

A Muslim who follows justice - everywhere, always, and for everybody - gains the love of Allâh and His servants, and reaches nobility and happiness in both worlds. But those who depart from justice for the sake of lowly desires can receive nothing. Even if they gain deceitful and ephemeral benefits, these yield nothing but damage, regret, and disappointment at the end.

May our Lord protect our hearts from bending toward tyranny for the sake of temporary advantages. May He count us all among His happy and fortunate servants who are able to live according to the principles of right and justice, and who enter the Divine Presence with a peaceful mind!

Amin...

Footnotes: 1. Tahâwî, *Sharhu Ma'âni'l-Âthâr*, Beirut 1987, IV, 89; Beyhakî, *Shuab*, VII, 468; Haythamî, VIII, 156. 2. Balâzûrî, *Futûhu'l-Buldân*, Beirut 1987, s. 187.





Faith and *Steadfastness*

The 'straight path' has attained the quality of a spine such that at every moment of their lives, Muslims feel the need to be upon it moment by moment.

Sufyan bin `Abdullah al-Thaqafi reports that he (once) asked;

"Messenger of Allah, tell me something about Islam that would suffice me and leave me in no need of asking anyone else after you."

The Prophet (pbuh) gave this answer:

"Say: I have faith in Allah, and then remain firm upon this." (Muslim, Iman, 62)

In this way, the Messenger of Allah summed up constancy in Islam in two words.

Faith and steadfastness.


One is constancy of the heart, the other is a way of life.

The journey of a Muslim in this world is to say "I believe" and then to set off, advancing consistently without being misguided or zigzagging.

Siraat: The path

Mustaqim: Straight

Siratal Mustaqim: The straight path



It is Prayer (*salah*) that is the soul of a Muslim's life. Without prayer, Islam is deprived of its soul.

For this reason, the 'straight path' has attained the quality of a spine such that at every moment of their lives, Muslims feel the need to be upon it moment by moment.

This was specifically taught to Muslims by Allah through the *Qur'ân* and by means of Allah's Messenger (pbuh).

It is Prayer (*salah*) that is the soul of a Muslim's life. Without prayer, Islam is deprived of its soul. Muslims were taught to supplicate in every prayer declaring the unity of Allah in the following manner: "We only worship you, we only desire your help" then saying "Show us the straight path, guide us to the straight path, illuminate our way.

The path is not a new path. We have travelled on it before, we have experienced it, some gave the path its due rights and met with divine favour, some fell victim to divine wrath because they wavered on the path and left it. The path of those who were given divine favour is not for those who have fallen victim to divine wrath.

In verse 49 of Surah *Nisa*, when "those whom Allah has bestowed his favour upon" are described, "the Prophets, the steadfast, the martyrs and the righteous" are mentioned among them and it is explained that the people of "the straight path" will be "together with them". The Prophets (Allah's chosen ambassadors), the steadfast (those who remain true to the promise "you are our lord" that they have made to Allah), the martyrs (those who take their life exams on the path of Allah and are successful), and the

righteous (those who dress every aspect of their lives in peace, who compete to do good and encourage goodness.)

In other words, the matter is very clear, there is no ambiguity. It is not unknown where those who walk on the straight path will finally reach. Indeed we learn from the *Qur'ân*, that '*Siratal Mustaqim*' (the straight path) is the path which belongs to Allah Himself.

"Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus doth He command you. that ye may be righteous." (*An'am*, 153)

Also, in verse 41 of Surah *Hijr*, Allah once again claims ownership of "his path"

"(Allah) said: This (way of My sincere servants) is indeed a way that leads straight to Me." (*Hijr*, 41)

In other words, by continuously walking on this path, "the meeting with Allah" will be realized.

In verses 52 and 53 of Surah *Shura*, Allah refers to the Prophet's (pbuh) role as the guide to '*Siratal Mustaqim*' (the straight path).

"And thus have We, by Our Command, sent inspiration to thee: thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith; but We have made the (*Qur'an*) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will; and verily thou dost guide (men) to the Straight Way,

The Way of Allah, to Whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Behold (how) all affairs tend towards Allah!”

In other words, hold his hand and your path will become the ‘*Siratal Mustaqim*’ (the straight path).

Later, there are also warnings against taking other paths, because when attention is upon other paths, there is a risk of “being parted from Allah’s path”.

For example as in the following verse:

“Verily, this is My way, leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus doth He command you. that ye may be righteous.” (*An’am*, 153)

Because there is an “enemy of mankind” who recognizes the opportunity to sit in wait against those walking along the “the straight path”.

Shaitaan (Satan): “He said: “Because thou hast thrown me out of the way, lo! I will lie in wait for them on thy straight way.” (*A’raf*, 16)

“(Iblis) said: “O my Lord! because Thou hast put me in the wrong, I will make (wrong) fair-seeming to them on the earth, and I will put them all in the wrong,” (*Hijr*, 39)

There is the risk of encountering

highwaymen who have placed alluring diversions on the journey and aim to divert hearts.

However, “servants who have attained “*ikhlas*” (perfection)” on this path, in other words people who keep their hearts firm without losing their determination, or the strength in their knees, whose hearts are not swayed and who don’t lose their devotion on the way, avoid the trickery of *Shaitaan* (Satan), succeed in their test and reach the place they intended to reach. This is not an easy journey at all.

If the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), the best of creation, who guarded himself his whole life speaks about the difficulty of the test of steadfastness, it is necessary to stop there and re-evaluate ourselves.

- “*Surah Hud* and its brothers aged me. It whitened my hair.”

It is understood that when the Messenger (pbuh) refers to “The brothers of *Surah Hud*” he means the following *Surahs*:

-*Surah Waqi’a*, *Sura Haaqqah*, *Surah Ma’arij*, *Surah Mursalat*, *Surah Naba’*, *Surah Takwir* and *Surah Qari’a*

The responsibility that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) refers to in *Surah Hud* which whitened his (pbuh) hair is the responsibility which came with the decree ‘*Fastaqim*



We learn from the Qur’ân,
that ‘*Siratal Mustaqim*’
(the straight path) is the
path which belongs to
Allah Himself.



If the worry and concern of “being straight” in this world makes your hair white, you should know that you will have a “fearless” journey to the eternal world.

kama Umirtu’- “Be upright as you have been commanded” (*Hud*, 112). Scholars of *tafsir* (Qur’ānic commentary) point out that these “brother *Surahs*” are concerned with the Day of Reckoning, the (Final) Place of Gathering, and the Afterlife as well as having the qualities of “whitening one’s hair”.

Thus, when the responsibility of “being upright/straight” has been understood by the honoured Messenger (pbuh) in a manner suitable to his sensitive character through the divine statement; “You are upon a straight/upright path” (*Yasin*, 4) it allows the placing of this new feeling of responsibility which “whitens hairs”.

When we look at the Qur’ān, what do we find with regards to the description of the ‘straight/upright path’?

We find a general framework like this:

1. The understanding that Allah is the “Lord of the Universe, and our servitude to Him:

“It is Allah Who is my Lord and your Lord; then worship Him. This is a Way that is straight.” (*Al’i Imran*, 51)

2. Attaching oneself closely to Allah:

“And how would ye deny Faith while unto you are rehearsed the Signs of Allah, and among you Lives the Messenger? Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown a way that is straight.” (*Al’i Imran*, 101)

3. The pure religion of Ibrahim who never worshiped an idol and always remained firm:

“Say: “Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight, a religion of right, the path (trod) by Abraham the true in Faith, and he (certainly) joined not gods with Allah.” (*An’am*, 161)

We are told that the intended destination (*manzil-i maqsud*) on the straight path is “uniting with divine blessing” and Allah places his divine blessing among the clear statements of the “*Qur’ān ‘Mubin*” (the open and clear Qur’ān). By carefully and subtly analyzing even a little of the framework of divine favour within these Qur’ānic statements, it is as if, in a sense, one is already sipping that joy, for example:

“In the case of those who say, “Our Lord is Allah”, and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them (from time to time): “Fear ye not!” (they suggest), “Nor grieve! but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised! We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter: therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire; therein shall ye have all that ye ask for! A hospitable gift from one Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!” (*Fussilat*, 30-32)

If the worry and concern of “being straight/upright” in this world makes your hair white, you should know that you will have a “fearless” journey to the eternal world.

“Verily those who say, “Our Lord is Allah,” and remain firm (on that Path), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. Such shall be Companions of the Gardens, dwelling

therein (for aye): a recompense for their (good) deeds.” (*Ahqaf*, 13-14)

In his book, “*Ruh’ul Beyan*” (Statement on the Soul) Hz. Ismail Hakkı of Bursa analyzes the states which the personalities of people are ‘*Mustaqim*’ (straight/upright) and presents to us a dissection, in a sense, of our lives in terms of our words, actions and hearts. He says the following:

“There are different kinds of being straight/upright:

1. Those who are upright with their words, actions and hearts.
2. Those who are upright with their actions and hearts but not with their words. The first is higher than the second.
3. Those people who are steadfast with their actions and words but not upright with their hearts.
4. Those who are upright with their hearts and words but not with their actions.

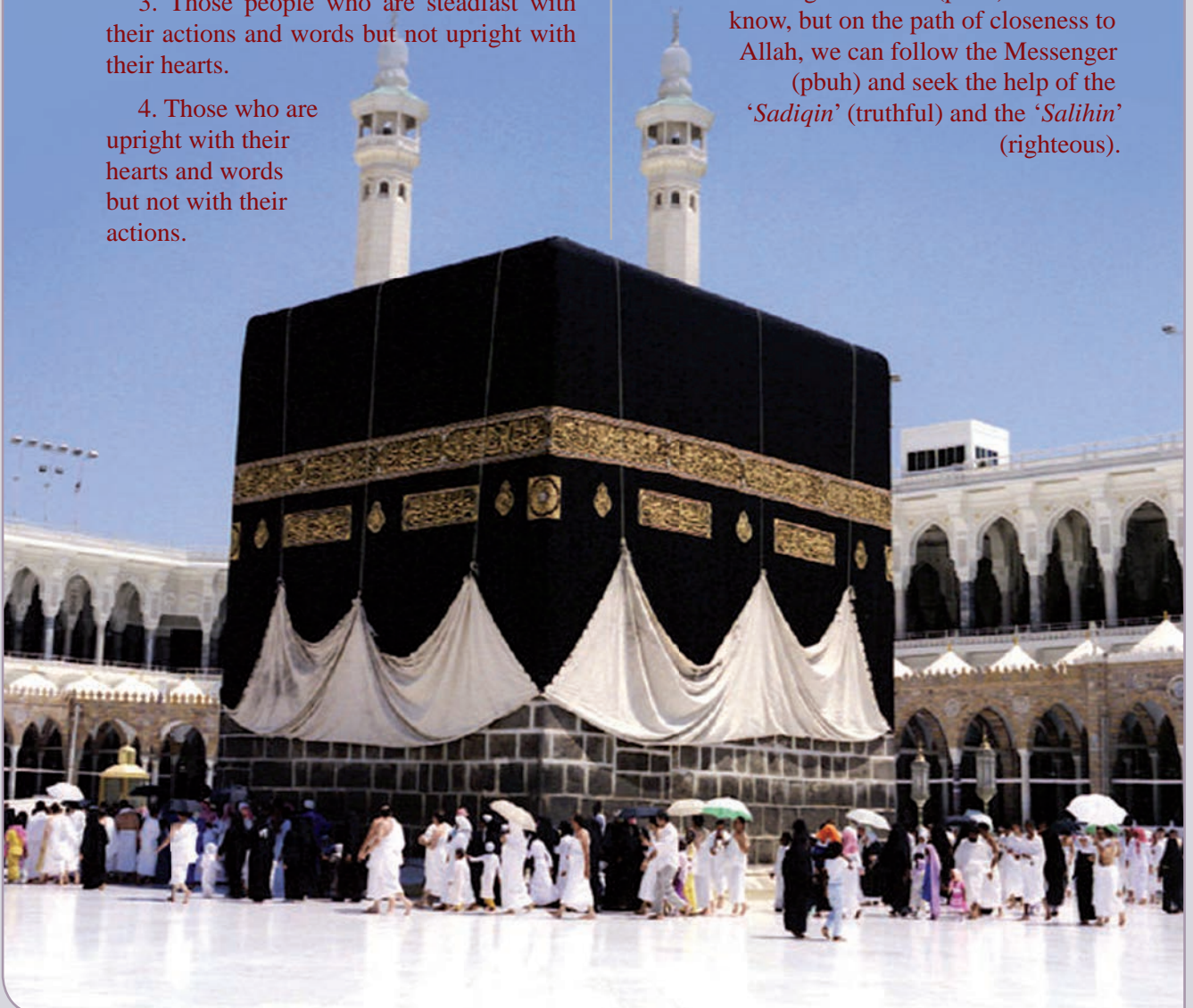
5. Those who are only steadfast with their words, but are not upright with their actions or hearts.

6. Those who are only steadfast with their hearts but they are not upright with their words and actions.

7. Those who are upright with their actions but not with their words and hearts.” (*Ruhul Beyan*, v. 1, 115)

Of course the aim is to be “upright with one’s words, actions and heart”. In other words, we should aspire to reach a state of complete harmony in all the layers of our personalities.

Can we persevere and bear a responsibility which “whitens hair” like the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)? We can’t know, but on the path of closeness to Allah, we can follow the Messenger (pbuh) and seek the help of the ‘*Sadiqin*’ (truthful) and the ‘*Salihin*’ (righteous).



العدل

كتبه على تلمیخ نجم الدين



Allah's Justice IN THE Universe

When Allah brought His creatures into existence, there was only 'adl' (justice) in the world. Everything was created from justice and put in its proper place. Thus, there is a kind of justice in the universe which is without cause.

"*Adalet*" (Justice) is a two-dimensional concept in the sense that it is both an attribute of Allah and it likewise concerns the relations between his servants.

With regards to its relation with Allah, before everything else, *'Al-Adl* (the Most Just) is from among Allah's Beautiful Names (*Asma-ul-Husna*) and it is mentioned in the *Hadith* about the Beautiful Names.¹

The Qur'an emphasizes the just nature of Allah's promise², and many verses inform us that '*adalet*' (justice) is far from '*zulm*' (wrongdoing/injustice), its opposite.³ As an attribute of Allah '*adl*' (just) means the one who creates everything in its proper place, who created the universe and all its beings and their affairs in harmony and who gives every creature the potential and capability which it is worthy of or deserving of.

As a word, '*adl*' is in the '*masdar*' (infinitive) form and is a noun meaning "very just", conveying a sense of hyperbole. In the

If we now come to the dimension of justice which is relevant to humans, it is a virtue which depends upon the principles of integrity, equality and wisdom which bring peace and order to the individual and social realms.



Qur'ân, the words '*adl*' (just/justice) or '*adalef*' (justice) in their different derivations occur in 60 different places altogether.

Without knowing what '*adalef*' (justice) is, it is not possible to comprehend Allah's just nature; without being acquainted with His actions and the universe which He has created and which He controls, it is not possible to understand His justice. To comprehend justice, there is a need to know His wisdom and to appreciate His ingenuity in a broader sense. Several wisdoms are found in the manifestations of justice.

In an interesting verse which explains the creation of man and draws attention to his separation/estrangement from Allah it is stated that Allah created man justly: "O man! What has seduced thee from thy Lord Most Beneficent? Him Who created thee. Fashioned thee in due proportion, and gave thee a just bias; In whatever Form He wills, does He put thee together."⁴ Allah declares that just as he created man with '*adl*' (justice), he also created the sun, the moon, the sky and earth with a separate balance and justice from within Himself and He wishes that this harmony is not corrupted.⁵

It is agreed upon by *tasawwuf* experts that in the verse which informs us "Allah created everything in/with '*Haqq*' (truth)"⁶ the words '*Haqq*' (truth) and '*Adl*' (justice) have the same meaning and they are considered to be "*Hakikat-i Muhammadiyya*" (The Muhammadan Reality). Justice in created beings, (the creation of creatures who are 'possible', by Allah who is 'necessary') begins the manifestation of Allah's hidden characteristics. When Allah brought His creatures into existence, there was only '*adl*' (justice) in the world. Everything was created from justice and put in its proper place. Thus, there is a kind of justice in the universe which is without cause.

If we now come to the dimension of

justice which is relevant to humans, it is a virtue which depends upon the principles of integrity, equality and wisdom which bring peace and order to the individual and social realms. For this reason Allah uses the two concepts of justice and kindness together in a verse which clarifies the underlying principles of human relations and in essence, orders that these two concepts be the principles underlying individual and social harmony: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."⁷ The issues described and encouraged in the verse emphasize the importance of justice, balance, moderate action, giving a little extra and doing a task properly for the sake of human relations and social harmony.

In general when justice is mentioned only equality comes to mind. Equality is one of the elements of justice. However, justice doesn't only mean equality. Indeed, in the story about the lion testing the wolf, narrated in Rumi's '*Mesnevi*', it is clearly shown that justice doesn't only mean equality. We encourage those who are interested to read this story.⁸ Justice and fairness are also relevant to "*Absani Taqwim*"⁹, the mystery explaining man's creation. "*Absani Taqwim*" means the most beautiful form, in other words the ability to perceive "*husni mutlaq*" (absolute/perfect beauty). A steadfast integrity which isn't affected by the mundane requests or suggestions of others can be explained by the justice particular to the mystery of "*absani taqwim*" (the most beautiful form). It is clear that the blessed one who has reached the correct path and attained this quality of justice will not be equal to those incapable and dumb ones who are deprived of this quality.¹⁰

In the matter of what justice means, Rumi's explanation and interpretation offers a very different perspective.

It is clear that the blessed one who has reached the correct path and attained this quality of justice will not be equal to those incapable and dumb ones who are deprived of this quality.



In the just universe, there is also physical and spiritual support from Allah Himself for those things He wishes his servants to improve upon, which manifest His kindness and beauty.



Rumi says:

What is justice? It is to give water to fruit trees. What is ‘*zulm*’ (wrongdoing)? It is to water thorns.¹¹

In the just universe, there is also physical and spiritual support from Allah Himself for those things He wishes his servants to improve upon, which manifest His kindness and beauty. However, to give support to evil, mischief and ugliness which manifest His wrath, to give water to thorns as in *Rumi’s* statement is a cruel behaviour which destroys the balance of the universe to the extent that it will leave the rose to be choked by thorns.

To open the way to the “*nafs*” (soul) which invites to mischief without restraining it or holding it in check is a cruel behaviour against a person’s own soul and is like wounding the standards of justice. Indeed, Allah explains the *dua* (supplication) of Adam and Eve due to the sin they committed with the following words: “They said: “Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we shall certainly be lost.”¹²

The most valuable thing for man in the world is “*taqwa*” (piety).¹³ According to the *Qur’an*, the path to ‘*taqwa*’ passes by justice¹⁴ and speaking just words.¹⁵ The measure of justice however is integrity.¹⁶

Rumi says:

What is justice? To put everything in its place. What is ‘*Zulm*’ (wrongdoing)? To put a thing in a place which is not its own.¹⁷

Continuing on from this, Rumi calls attention to the relation between justice and wisdom and explains to us how we are not faced with anything in the world in an empty and meaningless way; but rather these things help us to appreciate the necessity of Allah’s justice and wisdom:

“Rage, anger, softness, giving advice, deceiving, trickery... we never face any of these

in vain. Everything has wisdom. Nothing that Allah has created is without need or place.

None of these are entirely good. They may not be good but they are not entirely evil either.

Everything in its own place has benefit and harm; and it is for this reason that it is compulsory to attain knowledge, because it is beneficial.”¹⁸

Rumi believes that the true lovers will not be wronged by Allah, the owner of justice.¹⁹ Because on Judgement day, i.e. the day of resurrection everything will arrive in its proper place. Everyone will find what they deserve. The way shoes are worn on one's feet, hats are worn on one's head, so on the day of resurrection as well, reward will be given for good, punishment for evil. Because Allah's kindness and justice does not tolerate the

prostration (i.e. worship) of one who chokes roses with thorns. He wants everything to be in its proper place. Allah says in the Qur'an that: "We shall set up scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least, and if there be (no more than) the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it (to account): and enough are We to take account."²⁰

Notes: 1) Tirmidhi, *Da'arwât*, 83. 2) *al-An'am*, 6/115. 3) *al-Ankabût*, 29/40; *ar-Rûm*, 30/9 4) *al-Înfîtâr*, 82/6-8. 5) See *ar-Rahmân*, 55/5-8. 6) *al-An'am*, 6/73. 7) *an-Nahl*, 16/90. 8) Şefik Can, *Mesnevi* Translation, I, 194-196, b. 3042-3051. 9) *at-Tîn*, 95/4. 10) See. *an-Nahl*, 16/76. 11) *Mesnevi* Translation, V, 95, b. 1089. 12) *Al-A'râf*, 7/23. 13) *Al-Hucarât*, 49/13. 14) *Al-Mâidah*, 5/8. 15) *al-An'am*, 6/115. 16) *Al-A'râf*, 7/81. 17) *Mesnevi* Translation, VI, 522, b. 2596. 18) *Mesnevi* Translation, VI, 522. b. 2597-99. 19) *Mesnevi* Translation, I, 160, b. 2354. 20) *al-Anbiyâ*, 21/47.





THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SUFFERING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC SUFISM

The profound reflections of these Sufi savants hold rich treasures of insights on suffering, as well as keys that unlock the secret panacea that will eventually allow us to overcome pain and suffering: by making us understand the redeeming value of suffering in our spiritual journey to God Who is our Ultimate Goal.

If Divine Providence (*Qadr*) is just, why are there so much sufferings in this world? Philosophers, theologians, and even common folks ask this perennial question. Ancient and contemporary sages pondered on this question and they too had some answers to this paradox of life—answers that fill volumes upon volumes of books and philosophical treatises. Likewise, I would, from time to time, reflect on this existential mystery and I gained some glimpses of truth on the nature of suffering and its value in our spiritual maturity. I am not however pretending to give a comprehensive answer to this most ancient of questions. I am sharing this “cents-worth” of insights to those who may be right now are searching to find existential sanity in the midst of overwhelming suffering and hurts that they experienced in their lives; perchance, my reflection can be a source of inspiration for them to go on living their lives with meaning despite pains and suffering. My reflections on suffering are however not entirely my own; they are mediated by my philosophical and spiritual readings of the transcendental and

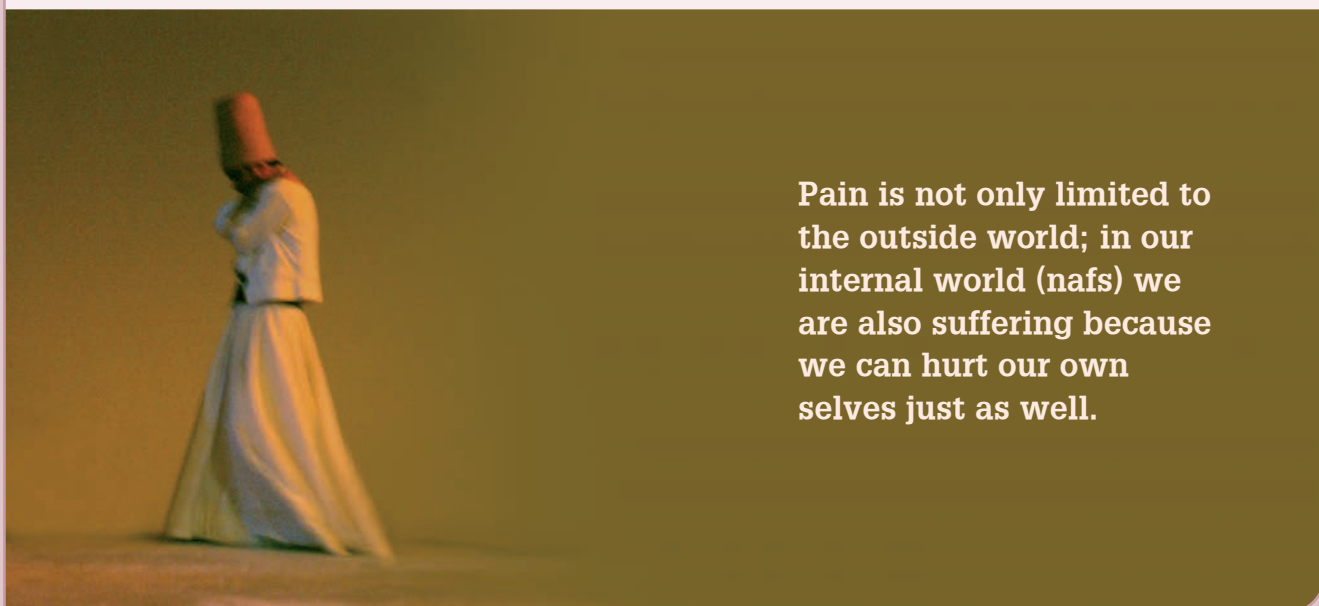
devotional writings of the sages and saints of mystical Islam (*Tassawwuf* or Sufism). For me, the profound reflections of these Sufi savants hold rich treasures of insights on suffering, as well as keys that unlock the secret panacea that will eventually allow us to overcome pain and suffering: by making us understand and appreciate the redeeming value of suffering in our spiritual journey to God Who is our Ultimate Goal.

The Perspective of Buddhist Philosophy: Suffering as Caused by Worldly Desires and Materialistic Cravings

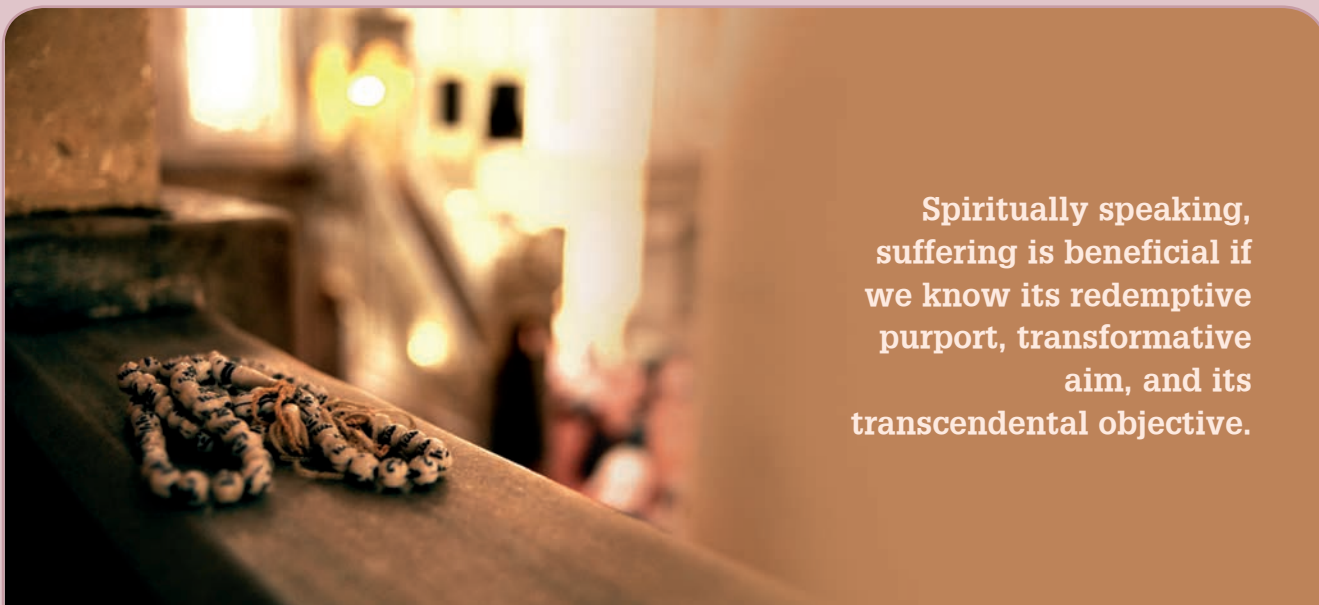
Taking a cursory look at our world, we find many unpleasant things and occurrences that are happening: death, injustice, hunger, human trafficking, natural and man-made calamities, cruelties, barbarities, wars, terrorism, chronic sickness, epidemics, etc. This phenomenal world is in pain and in constant suffering. Pain is not only limited to the outside world; in our internal world (*nafs*) we are also suffering because we can hurt our own selves just as well. Insults from people, broken relationships, misunderstandings with friends, bitter feelings towards another person, persecutions from enemies, sadness, ennui, boredom, guilt feelings, and our own materialistic cravings—all these can hurt us deeply. Why then do we have to suffer?

Gautama Buddha, the sage of Buddhism also questioned this formidably depressing situation characterizing human existence. In fact, his Enlightenment was the culmination of his long search for an answer to suffering. This is the first statement of Buddha's "Four Noble Truths": "Life is full of sufferings". This truth is very relevant for our own reflection on suffering since if this is properly contemplated and realized; that is, once we see the full existential picture of this truth, we begin to transcend suffering. From the perspective of Buddhist philosophy, once we truly accept the difficulty of life and the existence of suffering as part of the nuances of living, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters. It means that suffering as part of our human situatedness, once admitted and accepted, can be the starting point of our own spiritual healing. (See M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth*. London: Arrow Publishers, 1990; pp. 13-14.)

What is the main cause of suffering? The Buddhist perspective simply answers: "Limitless desires". The Buddha said: "Suffering is brought about by our infinite cravings or desires". Our unlimited cravings and desires pitted against the true nature of Reality are the causes of our own pains. For instance, we want to be rich and famous without being disturbed and without exertion. We want to be absolute knower



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**Spiritually speaking,
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purport, transformative
aim, and its
transcendental objective.**

without striving to learn. We want to be happy always freed from any inconveniences and botherations. We want to be healthy and well always; but if we look at Reality we will be frustrated since not all our desires can be satisfied the way we want them. Since we crave and desire with no limitations-but the nature of Reality does not permit our unlimited desires-we grumble and sigh: "Oh what a cruel world!"

Sufism's Existential View of Suffering as Part and Parcel of the Imperfect Condition Characterizing Human Existence

In contrast with the much rationalizing and overly cerebral attitude of Buddhism regarding suffering, Sufi-Islamic mystics offer a more profound existentialist perspective regarding the purpose of suffering with respect to "our human condition of unsatisfactoriness". Hazrat Bayazid Bistami, a Persian Sufi spiritual master, states: "Accepting our human condition of unsatisfactoriness is the antidote to suffering, for somebody who knows that the oil in his lamp is limited, will not moan after its extinction. One who knows that the lamp which he has lit is not safe from the harsh winds will not scream when it is blown out" (*Sirr-e-Dil* [Secrets of the Heart]. Dacca, Bangladesh: Naksbondi Sahit Kitabkhana, 1977; p.141). Sufism likewise accepts the inevitability of suffering as part of the overall makeup of

Reality. Therefore, we are obliged to accept the existence of suffering for our own mental and spiritual sanity.

Hazrat Maulavi Wahiduddin Khan, a contemporary Indian saint and Muslim scholar noted on the inevitability of suffering as part-and-parcel of our own human situatedness. He said: "Suffering is not *per'se*, negative; it happens to everyone in this imperfect world-we suffer because this world is far from perfect. Suffering is a great equalizer; suffering is therefore a 'given' and a 'constant' in this ephemeral world... that is why I call suffering a neutral occurrence. It is how we make of it that makes suffering negative or positive. The enlightened person approaches pain as a stepping stone towards his perfection and spiritual growth... the pessimist sees it as a stumbling block... it is your decision that matters as to how you see it and respond to its challenges" (cited in *The Grace of Contentment and Surrender*, by Sayyid Abubakr Qadri. Peshawar, Pakistan: Qadri Book Depot, 1975; p. 41).

The Redeeming, Transforming, and Purifying Value of Suffering in the Perspective of Islamic Sufism

Spiritually speaking, suffering is beneficial if we know its redemptive purport, transformative aim, and its transcendental objective. Hazrat Said Nursi, a great Turkish saint said that pain and sufferings instruct us so that we will be able to see a "higher view



It is through the pain of confronting and resolving problems that we grow spiritually strong and psychologically mature in life-thus we learn to face life in its multi-dimensional challenges and tasks.

of life". Suffering enables us to contemplate that God alone suffices for us; and that we need to submit ourselves to the Providence of God, in perfect trust, contentment, gratitude, forbearance and obedience (Cf., *Risale-i-Nur: The Flashes Collection*. Istanbul: Sozler Publications, 2004; p. 27-28). Furthermore, it is through the pain of confronting and resolving problems that we grow spiritually strong and psychologically mature in life-thus we learn to face life in its multi-dimensional challenges and tasks. As per Hazrat Said Nursi, truly wise people do not dread pain and suffering; they welcome them, learn from them, pour courage on them and find wisdom in them. Our experiences of suffering make us resolute, spiritually mature and holy; since the experience of pain and suffering prod us to place our reliance solely on the Benevolent God Who allows us to experience difficulties for the good of our souls.

It is only through sufferings and difficulties that one can attain mastery in life and living. Rumi, the famous 12th century Turkish mystic, keenly observed our human condition; thereafter, he articulated this very penetrating observation: "God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches you by means of opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly-and not just one" (*Mathnawi Selections*, Islamabad, Pakistan: Ruhani Suhba Press, 1985; p. 76). For Rumi, life is characterized by the alternating movements of opposites: conflict and peace, peace and conflict, happiness and

sufferings, sufferings and happiness, joy and pain, pain and joy... so on and so forth. God designs this alternating psycho-spiritual dynamics in the inward soul for the moral, mental, emotional, and spiritual development of humans.

The Holy *Qur'an* says: "Verily, with every difficulty, there is relief; verily with every hardship, there is ease. Therefore, when you are free from your immediate burden, still toil-and toil hard. And to your Cherishing Lord, turn all your attention. In your toil and ease, strive to please your Lord" (*Al Qur'an*, 94:5-8. Istanbul: Asir Ajans Publishers, 2005). Similarly, the view of the idealist German philosopher Hegel absolutely agrees with the abovementioned *Qur'anic* pronouncement when he said; "Conflicts, disputes, confrontations, and struggles are the laws of progress. Human development evolves in the battlefield of the mind and in the riot of the world. One can therefore reach stability and tranquility only through conflicts, disputes, and struggles. Here, I am not speaking only of struggles in society but also from the point of view of the struggle in man's inward psyche. Life's development and transformation are always borne out of conflict... conflict purifies experience... Struggle and striving are the vehicles of the evolution of man's spirit" (in Helmut Wilhelm Kuhn, *The Spirituality of Hegel*. Winchester: Anglican Resources, Ltd., 1985; p. 127).

In the same vein, Hazrat Said Nursi echoed Hegel's perspective regarding the

dialectic relationship between conflict and development. However, transcending Hegel's view, Said Nursi strongly articulated on the redemptive effect of conflict in our inner-life and in our spiritual growth towards deep communion with the Supreme Beloved. To quote Hazrat Said Nursi: "... by means of misfortune, illness and pain, and other motion-inducing contingencies, the cogs of the human machine are set in motion and revolution... It [i.e., suffering or conflict] induces in man to toil and labor for excellence. Thus by means of these contingencies, man becomes like a moving pen... he becomes a pen to write the decree of God in his very own life; due to this, he becomes an ode to the glory of God" (*Risale-i-Nur: The Flashes, op. cit.*, p. 28). For Said Nursi therefore, suffering is a venue by which we can reach the heights of spiritual excellence, and a vehicle whereby we can manifest the majesty of God in all our life's struggles.

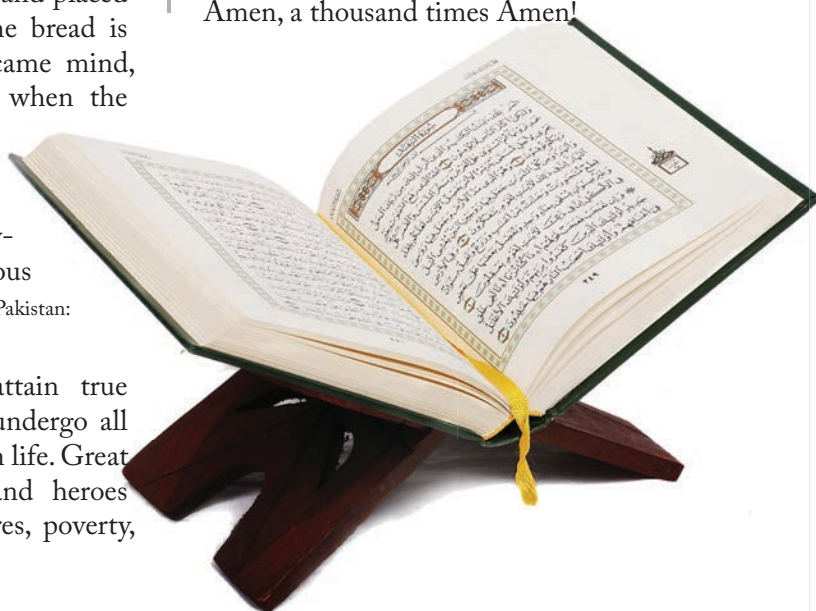
**The Believer's Experience of Suffering:
Venue towards Sensitivity of the Heart,
Training of the Spirit, and Openness to
Receive God's Grace into the Soul**

Rumi analogized on the educative aspect of suffering when he said; "They throw barley on the earth; then came out branches. Next, they crushed it in the mill; then it became delicious bread after being baked and placed in the burning furnace. Next, the bread is chewed and digested and it became mind, spirit, body, and emotion. And when the mind is bewildered with love for the Beloved, what a wonderful transformation this simple barley has gone through! (*sic*) This barley-grain has indeed taken a marvelous journey!" (*Mathnawi Selections*, Islamabad, Pakistan: Ruhani Suhbah Press, 1985; p. 81)

Therefore, if we long to attain true happiness of living, we have to undergo all difficult and painful experiences in life. Great men, saints, savants, martyrs, and heroes suffered from oppressions, tortures, poverty,

persecutions, and misunderstandings; they courageously persevered in going on with life-despite much difficulties-by God's grace, beneficence, and mercy; that is why they become heroes and saints. By responding with perfect submission, coupled with courage and trust to whatever challenges the Almighty God give us, we become co-workers with Him in furthering His Will in our lives and in the lives of others. Facing our suffering with courage, perseverance, fortitude, and faith is both a source of grace and a sure road to our sanctification and spiritual transformation. This is, I believe, how the Sufi mystics of Islam understood and realized the transcendental, sanctifying, and liberating value of suffering in our lives as human persons. May we therefore possess a mature realization that living entails both joy and suffering; hence, we should not escape suffering for sheer enjoyment, instead we should use our pain and suffering as vehicles for our emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth; for it is in learning and realizing the redemptive and transformative values of suffering where we can comprehend the secret of life's significance, meaning, and joy.

May our All-Compassionate Allah give us steadfastness (*istiqamah*) to face sufferings and pains in life. May He give us patience, courage and determination to overcome sufferings and pains by His mercy and grace. Amen, a thousand times Amen!





Muhammad




Our Prophet



May Peace Be Upon Him

The Justice of the **Prophet (pbuh)**

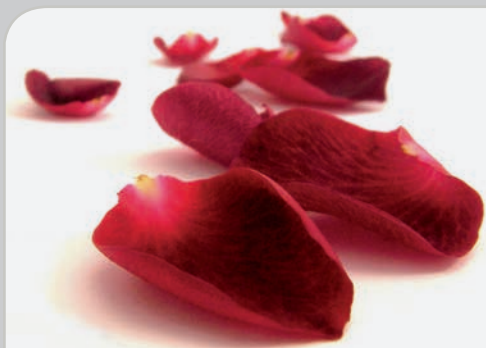


Our Prophet (pbuh) explained the necessity for all those having the position of authority, whether in their family or in society to deal justly with all those they have authority over.

Allah greatly honoured man; He wanted him to be happy and peaceful. He sent the principles which enable him to be happy and peaceful to His prophets (pbuh). The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) brought the most important of these basic values: like bread and water are essential for the people.

The Prophet (pbuh) presented all of the natural rights dignifying man to all people without discrimination. Thus, it was at this time that the children of man understood the value and meaning of being human.

The Qur'ân brought the basic rights required of all humans. It ordered one to be just, to implement justice in society (*Ma'idah* 5/8, *A'raf* 7/29, *Nahl* 16/90) and to measure and weigh in an honest and in a just manner (*An'aam* 6/152). It gave the good news of rewards for those acting justly (*Hujuraat* 49/9) and informed us that Allah will judge between all humans in the Day of Reckoning with justice; and that no-one will be wronged. (*Yunus* 10/54)



The Blessed Prophet (pbuh) indicated that the thing which compels people to be just and to treat everyone equally is the feeling of responsibility in one's heart.



JUSTICE EVEN WHEN OFFERING A GIFT

How did Allah's Messenger (pbuh) explain the divine commands on the subject of justice and equality, and how did he practice them?

Our Prophet (pbuh) explained the necessity for all those having the position of authority, whether in their family or in society to deal justly with all those they have authority over. It has been promised to the people who are just that they will be honoured next to Allah; on the Day of Resurrection when no shade can be found, they will relax in the shade of His throne. (*Bukhâri, Adhan* 36; *Muslim Imarah* 18, *Zakah* 91) He (pbuh) mentioned that the leader who governs his people justly is honoured by Allah and his 'duas' (supplications) are accepted. (*Tirmidhî, Da'awat* 128)

Once, the Prophet (pbuh) spoke of a compassionate practice that he had heard from the Ash'ari tribe. He explained a beautiful practice of theirs. When their food began to run out at war or at other times, they would get their remaining food and collect it together in the middle, later they would share it among themselves in an equal manner. Allah's beloved Prophet (pbuh) showed his appreciation for those who advocate this kind of sharing, looking out for one another in times of scarcity saying "they are from me, and I am also from them." (*Bukhâri, Shirkah* 1; *Muslim, Al-Fada'il-As-Sahabah* 167)

The Prophet (pbuh) revealed that those who practice this kindness without discriminating among good days and bad days, whether in joy or in grief are good people and believers. It makes sense that there is no chance of there being evil in a community of their own making. We can appreciate that the people who live in such a community will not be toppled when facing the difficulties of life; in difficult times they can gain strength from the community by relying upon supporting hands which will be reaching out to them.

Once, the Sahabi Nu'man ibn Bashir gave a valuable gift to one of his children and he mentioned this to the Prophet (pbuh). Allah's Messenger asked him "Did you also give the same gift to your other children?" After learning that he had not, the Holy Prophet said that this practice which was not in accordance with the principles of justice and equality was unjust and it was necessary to abandon it immediately. (*Bukhâri, Hiba* 12; *Muslim Hibaat*, 9-18) In this way, the things which the concept of 'equality' constitute were made clear; and it was revealed that there are no bounds to the sense of truth and justice.

The Blessed Prophet (pbuh) indicated that the thing which compels people to be just and to treat everyone equally is the feeling of responsibility in one's heart. He reminded all people regarding their responsibilities and made them conscious of the idea that everyone is responsible for someone else. He

taught that the State leader is responsible for his people, the manager for his employees, a man for his family and a woman for managing her household and for raising her children.

(*Bukhâri Jum'a 11; Muslim Imarah 20*)

THE GOLD HAVING BEEN LEFT ASIDE

A theft occurred during the days when Makkah was conquered. Since a girl from a well-known family was the one who carried out the theft, her relatives became worried. Despite knowing the Prophet's meticulousness in matters of justice and equality, in order to avoid being disgraced in public, one of her loved ones acted as an intermediary. They wanted the Prophet (pbuh) to behave as if the girl's crime did not happen. It upset the Prophet (pbuh) greatly that such a thing was being requested from him.

He informed them that in the past there were some nations who forgave their nobility if they carried out a theft; but if this crime was done by the poor they would punish them, and Allah destroyed them for this unjust discrimination. Later he said: "If my daughter Fatima had carried out a theft, I would also punish her" explaining how he would be unable to carry out the punishment differently. (*Bukhâri, Hudud 11, 12; Muslim, Hudud 8, 9*)

He (pbuh) explained that all societies which do not follow the principle of equality when meting out punishment and which attempt to change Allah's law by giving some people special treatment will be thrown into the midst of a tribulation.

Using the following example, the Prophet (pbuh) made it clear how justice and honesty are in man's nature and that at one time these principles used to be practiced very beautifully among religious people. He narrated this story:

A man from that time bought a piece of land from someone else and found some gold pots on it. He took the gold pieces to the house of the seller.

The Prophet taught that the State leader is responsible for his people, the manager for his employees, a man for his family and a woman for managing her household and for raising her children.



“Friend!” he said. Take this gold! Because I only bought a piece of land from you, not this gold”.

The original owner of the land refused this request:

“I can’t take this” he said. “I sold you that land together with all the contents; these gold pieces are not mine, they are yours”.

The gold having been left in the middle, they went to a judge in order to resolve the misunderstanding. The judge asked them whether they had any children or not. One said he had a son, the other a daughter. Upon this, the judge advised that they marry the boy to the girl and that they give one part of the gold to them and keep a part for themselves to spend. (*Bukhārī, Anbiyaa 54*)

Moral principles which affect all people, such as justice, equality and honesty, are vital to a society and should therefore be planted in the hearts of children and young people beginning from adolescence. The principal idea that “All humans are children of Adam

(pbuh)” should be adopted by everyone. It should be taught that to hate and to dislike one another, to get angry and to cut off relations with someone, to wrong others, to look at one another with contempt and not to aid someone expecting help from his Muslim brother are inappropriate behaviours for Muslims. (*Bukhārī, Adab 57; Muslim, Bir 32*)

The following fact is revealed from the lesson concerning the history of mankind:

Just governments continue to be sustained, even if it is a government of unbelievers; unjust governments however lose Allah’s support, even if it is a government of believers.

At no time have those who are unjust can remain standing. Even if they lived in this world for a while, at some point they collapsed in a terrible way and they vanished.

That being the case, to live peacefully in this world and to attain eternal salvation in the afterlife, one should not part from doing justice and equality.



True Speech Is The Fruit Of Not Speaking

*True speech is the fruit of not speaking.
Too much talking clouds the heart.*

*If you want to clear the heart,
say this much, the essence of all talking:*

*Speak truly. God speaks through words truly spoken.
Falsity ends in pain.*

*Unless you witness all of creation in a single glance,
you're in sin even with all your religion.*

*The explanation of the Law is this:
The Law is a ship. Truth is her ocean.*

*No matter how strong the wood,
the sea can smash the ship.*

*The secret is this:
A "saint" of religion may in reality be an
unbeliever.*

*We will master this science and read this
book of love.
God instructs. Love is His school.*

*Since the glance of the saints fell on poor Yunus
nothing has been a misfortune.*

Yunus Emre



Between the left and right brain: the limits of reason

Don't prioritise
accumulation of
wealth and pleasure
but rather prioritise
eternal happiness.

Close both eyes to see with the other eye. (Rumi)

As many of us know, the brain is divided into two hemispheres: the left and right. What many don't know is the particular abilities of each of these hemispheres. Our left brain is logical, makes plans and remembers. Our right perceives the external world, is impressed upon by our senses and is where we feel emotion. Making this distinction has only been possible since modern medicine has allowed us to monitor electrical signals in the brain and through imaging the impact of stroke affected patients with brain scans. But the idea of ourselves as mental beings divided into parts is not new.

Plato, in his *Republic*, describes the human being, as a mental being, as a being divided into three parts: reason, spirit and appetite. Reason thinks, the appetite desires and the spirit drives us towards our goals. For Plato, justice is the correct arrangement of these characteristics, that Reason govern by wisdom the spirit to control the appetite.

To put it another way, our desires are not innately natural and good, rather they need to be controlled by our wisdom. Left-brain wisdom allows us to perceive the true nature of things, their forms in the language of Plato. In contrast, hedonism asks us to forget left-brain concepts such as guilt and conscience and concentrate rather on the pleasure of living in the moment. I argue, perhaps controversially, that Sufi mystics combine aspects of these two ideas.

On the one hand Sufism is very much about living in the moment: taking pleasure in the witnessing of God's continuous sustenance of both the world around and the heart of the believer. This is achieved by remembrance of God (*zikrullah*). Like a child, we will forget the image of ourselves built up in our maturity and be enraptured by the moment. As Osman Topbaş Effendi explains:

"Zikrullah is like embroidering the word Allah on our hearts with love and yearning. In this way, the rust of sins and heedlessness will be erased from the heart and it will taste the true pleasures of faith due to it having attained to complete peace and contentedness." (Civilisation of Virtue, vol. 1)

In this text, we see the tension between hedonism and Platonism: the mystic at once experiences deep pleasure as well as inner peace and stillness. This tension is also apparent in Sufi poetry: dual themes of wine and the lover play on the idea of pleasure

being attained through drinking knowledge of the Beloved or the desperate need to fulfil a burning longing; other aspects of the poetry see the Sufi as almost timeless, she waits in unchanging stillness for knowledge to be revealed. Rumi expresses this tension beautifully in the piece about the lover at the door of the Beloved, answering with patience and apparent logic, but at the same time motivated by intense love and longing:

You said, 'Who's at the door?'

I said, 'Your slave.'

You said, 'What do you want?'

I said, 'To see you and bow.'

'How long will you wait?'

'Until you call.'

'How long will you cook?'

'Till the Resurrection.'

We talked through the door. I claimed a great love and that I had given up what the world gives to be in that love.

You said, 'Such claims require a witness.'

I said, 'This longing, these tears.'

You said, 'Discredited witnesses.'

I said, 'Surely not!'

You said, 'Who did you come with?'

'The majestic imagination you gave me.'

'Why did you come?'

'The musk of your wine was in the air.'

'What is your intention?'

'Friendship.'



Though our brain might be divided in two, our soul is one; and for those of us with healthy brains we have a chance to realise our path between the two extremes by finding our own unique experience of God.

**Prophet said: "Live
for this world as if
you will live forever
and live for the
next as if you will
die tomorrow."**



'What do you want from me?'
'Grace.'

Then you asked, 'Where have you been
most comfortable?'

'In the palace.'
'What did you see there?'
'Amazing things.'
'Then why is it so desolate?'

'Because all that can be taken away in a
second.'

'Who can do that?'
'This clear discernment.'
'Where can you live safely then?'
'In surrender.'

'What is this giving up?'
'A peace that saves us.'

'Is there no threat of disaster?'
*'Only what comes in your street,
inside your love.'*

'How do you walk there?'
'In perfection.'

*Now silence. If I told more of this
conversation,
those listening would leave themselves.*

*There would be no door,
no roof or window either!*

(Rumi Poems, ed. Peter Washington,
Everyman's Library, New York, 2006)

After this intense dialogue, Rumi
transcends left-brain language, with-holding

the rest of the conversation from us, and
right-brain perception of space, defying
all conceptions to define what is observed.
Even the child-like wonder of the hand of
the Creator in the world around us must be
transcended; in the story of the Dervish in
the Orchard, the seemingly sleeping mystic
is told to wake up and observe the Divine
marks around him. He responds: 'the outward
things are but marks of the marks', whereas
the real marks of the Divine are inner. The
left-brain logic must also vanish when the
thirst of love is so strong: will a thirsty person
ask to be proven that a cup of water is really
that or will she just drink?

Though our brain might be divided in
two, our soul is one; and for those of us with
healthy brains we have a chance to realise our
path between the two extremes by finding our
own unique experience of God. Somehow
both parts must be used to accomplish this
goal by finding balance between the two
extremes. As the Prophet is said to have
advised: "Live for this world as if you will
live forever and live for the next as if you will
die tomorrow." Don't prioritise accumulation
of wealth and pleasure but rather prioritise
eternal happiness. With such a philosophy
you won't stress about the future nor about
the lack of pleasure around you in the present;
but rather realise that your relationship with
Allah provides both immediate sustenance
and future happiness.

Pearls Of Wisdom

*And make provision for
yourself; the best provision
is taqwa.*

Qur'ân: 2/197

*What is destined will reach
you, even if it be underneath
two mountains. What is not
destined, will not reach you,
even if it be between your two
lips!*

Anonymous

*Then outwardly you are
the small universe! Then
inwardly you are the great
universe.*


Rumi

*When you want to mention
your friend's faults,
remember your own faults.*

Ibn Abbas

*How many lessons there
are and how little they
are taken.*

Sayyidina Ali



*Truth is timeless and
returning to truth is better
than continuing in falsehood.*

Sayyidina Umar

*My sin burdened me heavily.
But when I measured it
against Your Grace, O Lord,
Your forgiveness came out
greater.*

Imam Shafi

*Whoever does not hold his
tongue can not understand
his deen.*

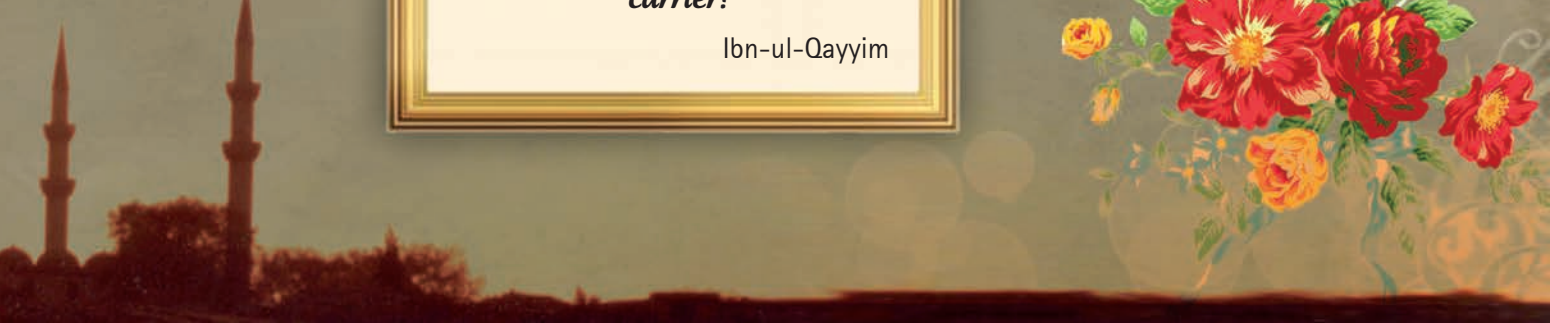
Hasan al-Basri

*Dhikr is the reason for
the life of the heart and
leaving it is the reason
for its death.*

Ibn Ajima

*Deeds without sincerity are
like adding dirt to water
then carrying it. It weighs it
down and does not benefit the
carrier!*

Ibn-ul-Qayyim



Sayyidah Â'isha

Part VIII

Her later years

Sayyidah Â'isha earned an exceptional position beside Allah's Messenger (pbuh) with her attributes such as; intellect, strong memory, comprehension, eloquence, and striving to understand the Qur'ân and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the best possible way.

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) had returned to Madinah from his first and last *hajj*, on the tenth year after *hijrah*. After a short while, on the last week of the month of *Safar* in the eleventh year after *hijri*, he fell ill. He moved to Sayyidah Â'isha's chamber with the consent of his other wives. All of them willingly agreed to his wish to spend the days of his sickness where he wanted. They all conceded their allotted days to Â'isha. Thereupon Allah's Messenger (pbuh) moved into the chamber of Â'isha. He passed away in her chamber, while his blessed head was resting on her lap. Then he was buried in that chamber.

Sayyidah Â'isha led a very simple life after the Holy Prophet (pbuh) passed away, as she had during his lifetime. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) had made provision for Â'isha, along with his other wives, the equivalent of 480 gallons (80 *vesk*) of dates and 120 gallons (20 *vesk*) of barley (or wheat) each year, from the income of Khaibar.

Although Sayyidah Â'isha was financially in a better position than the other wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), she used to love to give out the money and the precious goods she possessed as alms. She was so open-handed

She used to take orphans and poor children under her protection. It is reported that she emancipated many slaves, and that the number of these reached sixty two.



that she would not leave anything for herself even when she was fasting.

Caliph Umar used to consult her regarding legal matters concerning women. Through his daughter Hafsa, he asked Â'isha's permission to be buried at the foot of the grave of Allah's Messenger (pbuh), when Umar was heavily wounded after an assassination attempt. Â'isha allowed him to be buried in that place, which she had thought for herself, saying: "*I prefer Umar to myself.*"

HER DEATH

This blessed woman who had been married to our beloved Prophet, whose morals consisted of the *Qur'ân*, fell ill towards the end of her life: she acquired an acute illness. She used to smile at people who would console her by saying that she would be reunited with Allah's Messenger. She was sixty years old when she passed away on a Tuesday night, on the 17th or 19th of the month of Ramadan. There are different accounts regarding the year she passed away: according to some it was the 57th year of *hijrah*, and according to the others, it was the 58th.

THE VIRTUES OF SAYYIDAH Â'ISHA

Sayyidah Â'isha earned an exceptional position beside Allah's Messenger (pbuh) with her attributes such as; intellect, strong memory, comprehension, eloquence, and striving to understand the *Qur'ân* and the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in the best possible way.

When the Holy Prophet (pbuh) fostered the betterment of her competencies, the skills she had acquired in her family home flourished and matured under the guidance of Divine revelation. Â'isha never held back from asking the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about whatever matter that bothered her. She would not refrain from deliberating with him, either.

* * *

Sayyidah Â'isha led a very simple life.

She spent her nights with supererogatory (*nafl*) prayers, and her days by fasting, as far as possible. Â'isha disliked talking about anyone. She was content with what she had. She was also generous and moderate. She used to take orphans and poor children under her protection, and she would take great care in their nurturing and training. It is reported that she emancipated many slaves, and that the number of these reached sixty two.

* * *

She is a distinguished mother of the faithful, who received good tidings of being one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) in Paradise.

She is the one who has been acquitted and cleared by Almighty Allah's words, the Beloved of the beloved of Allah, and *Siddiqah*, the truthful, the daughter of Siddiq.

* * *

In several accounts, it is related that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) used to receive the divine revelation mostly when he was in Â'isha's chamber. Apart from a few instances, he did not receive it in his other wives' chambers. This account alone is sufficient to display the position of Â'isha among the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

Sayyidah Â'isha sets out the distinction between herself and the other wives of Allah's Messenger as follows:

"I have been rendered above other women in several points:

Allah's Messenger didn't marry any other virgin, except me;

None of the women who Allah's Messenger married had both parents from the *muhajireen*;

My acquittal was brought down from heaven by Allah;

The divine revelation used to come to Allah's Messenger when he was with me;

Allah's Messenger used to continue praying while I lay in front of him;

Allah's Messenger passed away when he was in my chamber with me, while I was awake; and, He was buried in my room.

* * *

According to the *Qur'ân*, the wives of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) are the mothers of the faithful. For Muslims, this is an everlasting honour. They acquired this position because of their marriage to the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and because of their outstanding merits and qualities. Following the death of Allah's Messenger (pbuh), his wives perpetuated his lifestyle for approximately fifty years, with all its pleasantness, purity and freshness: they strived for their best so that Islam was taught and lived properly.

Therefore: respecting them means

**She holds a lofty position,
which cannot be blemished
by the libelling of gossips:
for Allah has absolved her
and raised her dignity until
the Day of Judgment.**



respecting Allah the Almighty and His Messenger (pbuh).

Without doubt, Sayyidah Â'isha holds a pre-eminent position among the mothers of the faithful, who are all exceptional people. She holds a lofty position, which cannot be blemished by the libelling of gossips: for Allah has absolved her and raised her dignity until the Day of Judgment. Indeed libelling Â'isha because of the slander incident has been forbidden eternally in the verses of *Surah an-Nur*, which were revealed regarding her: “Allah admonishes you that you should not return to the like of it ever again if you are believers.” Most scholars have concluded that if anyone continues to slander Â'isha, despite the explicit declaration of this verse, they would become infidels.

The prominent historian and *mufassir* Ibn Katheer says:

“Generally, ‘Ahlul Kitab wa Sunnah’ regard Â'isha higher (among the wives of Allah’s Messenger) from the point of virtues. First of all, she is the daughter of Sayyidina Abu Bakr. She possesses an unprecedented mental faculty, knowledge and eloquence within the Ummah, and has more knowledge than Khadijah.”

“Allah’s Messenger didn’t love any other of

his wives as he loved her. Divine revelation was sent from seven heavens about her, declaring her innocence. Following the passing of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), she related a large amount of pure and blessed knowledge from him. Regarding her it was said: ‘Take half of your religion from Humeyra’.

Despite all these, instead of being wordy, it is more befitting to say ‘Allah knows best’ concerning this matter.”

However, the evaluation of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya on this issue, who is the student of Ibn Katheer, appears to be more comprehensive and fitting:

“If the intention in pre-eminence is pertaining to the rank in the next world, only Allah the Almighty knows this. On the other hand, if the intention is nobility, Fatimah az-Zahra is superior to all of them. If the intention is precedence in believing; believing in Islam, enduring the hardships suffered by Muslims in their earliest times and helping Allah’s Messenger; then Khadijah is superior to all of them. However, if the intention is perfection of knowledge, religious services and spreading the teachings and guidance of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), then no one can challenge Â'isha in this matter.”



Quiz For Children



1. Which is the most sacred place for Muslims?
 - a. Al Aqsa Mosque
 - b. Blue Mosque
 - c. Taif
 - d. Kaba
2. Which of the following is not one of the five Pillars of Islam?
 - a. Zakat
 - b. Shahadah
 - c. Azan
 - d. Salat
3. From where did Umayyad caliphs rule?
 - a. Makka
 - b. Cairo
 - c. Madina
 - d. Damascus
4. How many surahs were revealed in Makka?
 - a. 91
 - b. 28
 - c. 60
 - d. 86
5. Which of the following is a prophet in Islam?
 - a. Yunus
 - b. Yusuf
 - c. Adam
 - d. All the above
6. How many surahs in the Qur'an are named after prophets of Allah?
 - a. 10
 - b. 8
 - c. 6
 - d. 5
7. Which surah is read in every salah?
 - a. Ikhlas
 - b. Nas
 - c. Fatiha
 - d. Yasin
8. What was the name of the cave in which the Prophet first received the revelation?
 - a. Jabal
 - b. Thawr
 - c. Hira
 - d. Kuba
9. Which city did the Prophet migrate to from Makka?
 - a. Madina
 - b. Taif
 - c. Abyssinia
 - d. Yemen
10. Allah says: "I have only created jinns and men, that they may serve Me". Where can this verse be found in the Qur'an?
 - a. Yasin
 - b. Dhariyat
 - c. Baqarah
 - d. Kafirun

Hey Kids! Maybe you can win a prize!

The first 25 entries that answers the questions correctly will win. Encircle your answers, fill out the form, and mail to: Wisdom - Quiz, 8508 So. 71st East Ave. Tulsa, OK 74133 USA.

Name: Age:

Address:

Parent's Name (for consent purposes only):

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