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WISDOM

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COVERING ONESELF IN ISLAM: TASATTUR



Osman Nuri Efendi

Covering oneself and protecting the
next generation

Stuart Clark

Hajj: an Inward and Outward
Journey

Halime Demiresik

Sayyidah Hafsa

*D*ear Readers,

“O Prophet, tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their outer garments around them (when they go out or are among men). That is better in order that they may be known (to be Muslims) and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.” (Ahzab, 33:59)

“Sayyidah Aisha reported that Asma’ the daughter of Sayyidina Abu Bakr came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) while wearing thin clothing. He approached her and said: ‘O Asma! When a girl reaches the menstrual age, it is not proper that anything should remain exposed except this and this. He pointed to the face and hands.’” (Hadith)

We all know that modest dressing is a vital principal for both families and societies. The nations having women who do not cover modestly, are destined to having moral breakdowns. Modest and decent dressing is must for the benefit and happiness of the families and societies. We should always remember that chastity of a woman is her adornment.

In this edition; our beloved teacher Osman Nuri Efendi points out that we have to protect our human dignity and modesty that Allah has kindly favoured us with. Professor Faruk Beser elucidates in his interview that ‘tasattur’ (covering oneself) is a form of worship which is found in all religions.

Stuart Clark shares with us some of his personal reflections on the hajj in his article: ‘Hajj: an Inward and Outward Journey’ and Alice Tastemur shares with us her spiritual journey from atheism to Islam.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and we wish a Dhul Hijjah filled with blessings and peace to all of you. We wish you a blessed Eid and hope to meet you in the next issue.

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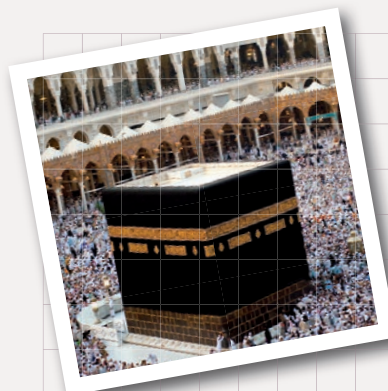
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**Stuart R.
Clark**

**Hajj: an Inward
and Outward
Journey**



**Hudayi
Uskudarlı**

**Eternal
Affection
And The
Muhammedan
Light**



**Halime
Demiresik**

**Sayyidah
Hafsa (I)**

Salih Kareem

**Wastefulness
(I) Concerning
Faith, Creed,
and Worship**



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Covering oneself and protecting the next generation

**“The whole world
is just a temporary
convenience. The
best comfort in this
world is a righteous
woman.”**

(Prophet Muhammad)

The Qur’ân informs us how those nations which lost their spiritual characteristics: signs of servitude; human dignity and values in this world, which Allah has created as a place of worship, were wiped off the world map as a warning to creation. By showing the way of guidance to mankind, it illuminates the path to eternal happiness.

Since man is the most honoured creation, it is with regards to him, as different to the rest of creation, that divine commands have come to protect his dignity, honour, pride, and modesty and strengthen him. One of these commands is to cover oneself “Tasattur”. Among creation, ‘Tasattur’ is a matter reserved only for humans.

It is remarked in a verse of the Qur’ân:

“O Children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame, as well as to be an adornment to you. But the raiment of righteousness, - that is the best. Such are among the Signs of Allah, that they



Islam speaks of woman having a very valuable status, and also women find their true happiness in the peaceful environment of the Qur'ân and Sunnah.

may receive admonition! “ (Al-Araf, 26)

In order for people to protect their human dignity and modesty that Allah has kindly favoured them with, it is compulsory for them to cover themselves. Otherwise these human characteristics are lost, and man falls to the level of the creation below him. The loss of modesty in society and the spread of fornication and immorality until it is practiced openly are also from the clear early signs of the coming of the day of reckoning.

In a hadith it is remarked that “Modesty is from Iman (faith)” (Bukhari, Iman, 3). Prophet Adam (pbuh) and Hz Hawa practised modesty with one another and with other created beings despite there being no other humans. They rushed to cover themselves with the leaves that were available there. This also shows that covering oneself materially, and its spiritual association being good manners and modesty, are from the most outstanding characteristics present in man's fitra (nature) and is a sign of piety.

Islam provides some rules with regards to dressing ourselves in consonance with human dignity. One of these is that the clothing should not be thin or transparent to the extent that it reveals the outline of one's body. When the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saw Sayyidah Ayesha's sister Asma wearing thin clothes, he turned his head away and said the following:

“Oh Asma! After reaching the age of maturity it is not right for any part of a woman's body to be seen apart from this and this (pointing to her face and hands)” (Abu

Dawud, Libas, 31)

Furthermore, it is also necessary for women to honour their femininity and men their masculinity.

Upon this matter the Prophet (pbuh) also said the following:

“Women who dress like men and men who dress like women will remain far from Allah's mercy.” (Abu Dawud, Libas, 28)

Islam speaks of woman having a very valuable status, and also women find their true happiness in the peaceful environment of the Qur'ân and Sunnah. However, unfortunately nowadays women are being forced outside of their homes in search of happiness, with different promises and deceptive words. Allah created women more emotional than men, and her richness of emotion and feeling aids the fundamental and original role of women in the family providing the basis for the protection and moral education of the family. The difficult conditions of social and work life do not suit the nature of women and they turn to her disadvantage and can have the effect of wearing her out. For this reason, if women are pushed outside of the divine arrangement relating to themselves then their original nature is betrayed.

Allah has apportioned a very beautiful balance of roles between women and men whereby they complete each other. He also gave each of them different abilities. Only when man and woman complete each other materially and spiritually does a maturity appropriate to the purpose of their creation

arise. This is the basis of the family that the foundation of a peaceful society.

What a shame that in our time, competition for equality has started between women and men harming the feminine and maternal roles of women. Thus the tranquillity of the family has been lost, social life has been shattered and the community has become the setting for the tragedy of the family.

When harmony is spoiled individuals who are dissatisfied with the conflicts and unrest in the family are impelled to find peace and happiness in other places in a manner opposed to the original characteristics that Allah has given to men and women. Finally, families as the carriers of the most sacred structure in society are destroyed by divorce, something which makes the throne of the Lord quake. In such a way, children who can't find the warmth of the family in the home, and who are subjected to the poor example of their parents as their role-models are left to the mercy of the streets. The children who escape from home and join with street children shortly falling into the web of various criminal organizations, cigarettes, alcohol, glue sniffing, narcotics and prostitution are paving the way for social catastrophe. It is without doubt that this situation also brings in its wake a terrible erosion of morality which renders social life barren.

Many times in the history of the world

has a selfish generation, who live their lives without a thought other than to carry out the desires of their egos and nafs (lower self) and who have said their farewells to human dignity and honour because they have been deprived of religion and faith, witnessed the unfolding of the scenes of disaster.

Women living in accordance with their original nature turns society into a heaven. Peaceful families are the source of happiness in society. When we look at the pages of history we see that communities became prosperous with women, and again became broken in their hands.

Women's happiness is in living while protecting their dignity and taking care of their family. How wonderful is the hadith "Jannah is under the feet of mothers" for a righteous mother (Suyuti, Al-Jami as-Sagir, I, 125).

In another hadith it is remarked that "The whole world is just a temporary convenience. The best comfort in this world is a righteous woman" (Muslim, Radha, 64)

A virtuous mother is the focal point of compassion for the individuals of the family, as she is the manifestation of an embrace of mercy from divine power, the source of happiness in the family, and a light of pleasure and ease. She is the exclusive and exceptional place in the world for the divine manifestation of the names of our lord 'Rahman' (The most



Women living in accordance with their original nature turns society into a heaven. Peaceful families are the source of happiness in society.



Strong societies come about through strong families. And strong families are more often the work of virtuous women who have been educated spiritually, in other words those who have surpassed the limit of the nafs.

gracious) and ‘Rahim’ (The most merciful). Mothers have a very important place in raising good progeny. All the ‘Awliyallah’ (friends of Allah) and victorious conquerors received their first education/understanding from a righteous mother. Our Prophet (pbuh) remarked in a hadith that:

“The Muslim woman who is occupied with educating her (fatherless) children in her home will be together with me in Jannah”. (Suyuti, Al-Jami as-Saghir, I, 104).

Strong societies come about through strong families. And strong families are more often the work of virtuous women who have been educated spiritually, in other words those who have surpassed the limit of the nafs (lower self). The most beautiful examples of this are the women companions. They taught sacrifice for one’s children with one’s life and wealth, and they imbued the hearts of their young ones with the love of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

It is necessary not to forget that the Qur’ân is the most important spiritual guide that the servants of the Creator of the Universe have been kindly favoured with in order for them to attain happiness in the world and the hereafter. With regards to this, the following matters should be given particular importance in institutions which offer religious education:

1. Before everything else, students should be regarded as a trust from Allah. Their minds should be inspired about Allah’s

Divine Magnificence and the flow of power in the universe, and the admirable morality of the Prophet (pbuh) should be inculcated within them. Alongside knowledge, spiritual education and teaching should be made into something pleasurable and enjoyable by strengthening them with love. This is because being able to feel the pleasure of Iman (faith) is the greatest impetus for ‘hizmet’ (being of service to others).

2. All such institutions should be the places of compassion, devotion, and service to others. More than an accumulation of dry knowledge within walls, the Qur’ân should be taught full of love and enthusiasm. Practicing the Qur’ân is living the ‘Sunnah’.

3. Students should be approached with gentleness, good manners and a smile; if they make mistakes, they should be corrected with kindness and mercy. It is necessary not to forget that a repairman’s art and skill emerges in the repaired product.

4. People feel an affinity towards those with a good personality or special character. They attempt to imitate someone they adore. They are under the charm of those they love because love is like a live connection between two hearts. From this perspective, it is necessary for those who teach the Qur’ân to make themselves loved by acting as an example and exhibiting a perfect character. It is also for this reason that a rule should be adopted: “Don’t become a burden after becoming a lover”, in other words relieve the burden of your friends after becoming their

friend: its equivalent being, 'don't place a burden upon anyone'.

5. Alongside the cleanliness of the heart attention should also be paid to outward cleanliness and smartness. An example should also be set with one's dress/attire and outward appearance. This is because our Prophet (pbuh), who ordered clothes to be cleaned and was displeased with clothing being shabby also saw it as inappropriate for one's hair or beard to be messy. Indeed on one journey, when the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was in the Mosque, a man with dishevelled hair and beard turned up. The Messenger (pbuh) showed him with his hand how to tidy his hair and beard. Once the man had obeyed this command, the Prophet remarked:

"Isn't this state more beautiful than any one of you wondering about with dishevelled hair/head like 'shaitan'?" (Ali al-Qari, Mirqat, VIII, 261)

On another occasion on a journey he asked a man who came into his presence with his hair dishevelled:

"Do you have any property? How is your situation, your time?" After learning that the man's material condition was good he (pbuh) cautioned him saying:

"In that case, when Allah gives you wealth let its signs be seen on you" (Nisai, Zinat, 54; Ahmad bin Hanbal, IV, 137)

6. In order to attain a more profound

understanding of the Qur'ân and to be able to reflect the noble meanings of the Qur'ân in one's behaviour as righteous actions it is necessary to fill hearts with positive energy: in other words with love and spirituality.

In order to attain worthy enlightenment from the Qur'ân, its 'door' should be opened with respect, honour and good manners. It should be read to people with the understanding that 'the Most Merciful' taught us. Because in a verse of the Qur'ân it is remarked that:

"(Allah) Most Gracious! It is He Who has taught the Qur'ân.

He has created man: He has taught him speech (and intelligence)." (Ar-Rahman, 1-4)

7. A spiritual state should be attained which enables one to judge/find a balance in light of the signs of life and the Universe. That is, especially by keeping in mind the lessons in the stories of the Prophet (pbuh), the trials which will manifest close to the day of reckoning, the information regarding the signs of the day of judgement and by following the laws which separate belief from disbelief, worship from rebellion, haram from halal and truth from falsehood.

8. Those with roles in institutions of spiritual education should be people ripe and ready to serve. They should be those who adorn themselves with moral virtues such as mercy, compassion, generosity and have righteous actions. Furthermore, whichever

A spiritual state should be attained which enables one to find a balance in light of the signs of life. That is, especially by keeping in mind the lessons in the stories of the Prophet.

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How can a person who is without knowledge of his inner self and who can't improve himself spiritually, be able to improve others?

group they belong to, they should know to protect their beliefs and their own selves. Even in chaotic environments they should possess a spiritual state which positively influences those in their vicinity but is not affected by negative influences. Whatever the situation, they should keep their hearts away from the worry of worldly gains such as wealth, property and status.

9. One shouldn't attempt to offer everything in one go, but rather train and educate in a gradual manner by letting it settle and become familiar. Attention should be paid to the level of understanding and ability of the student. Matters which must be taught at an advanced level should not be embarked upon without offering an introduction and the necessary foundational knowledge.

11. Subjects should be explained in a more enduring and potent manner by supporting them with abundant comparisons, anecdotes, question/answers and stories. The greatest skill and art of the educator is to find a path to the student's soul and be able to reach his heart, because the greatest victory is the victory of hearts. As Rumi remarked: "The heart is the place which is seen by Allah, the Almighty, the Greatest".

12. Teachers should have the skill of figuring out the condition of a student by their faces. They should value them, dealing with their worries one-to-one in private and resolving their problems. They should know that they will be able to win the hearts of those people whose problems they solve. For this reason, they should give particular importance to matters of special relevance.

Allah's servants should adopt serving others as their principle with thankfulness, because it was through the others' means that this service was granted. For this reason when offering religious education, it should become one's natural habit to smile and give thanks to those being addressed.

14. It is necessary for those who will instill the love of iman in the hearts of others to first reform the condition of their own hearts. The

hardest task is improving people spiritually. How can a person who is without knowledge of his inner self and who can't improve himself spiritually, be able to improve others? Rumi tells us a great story about the situation of an ignorant person who is devoid of a steadfast heart.

Children are a divine trust gifted to parents. The pure and clear hearts of children presented to parents with the Islamic fitra (disposition) are raw goodness ready for the creation of a model society. Whether they are given a thorn or a rose, a bitter or a sweet fruit is based upon the condition of the seeds which are thrown upon them.

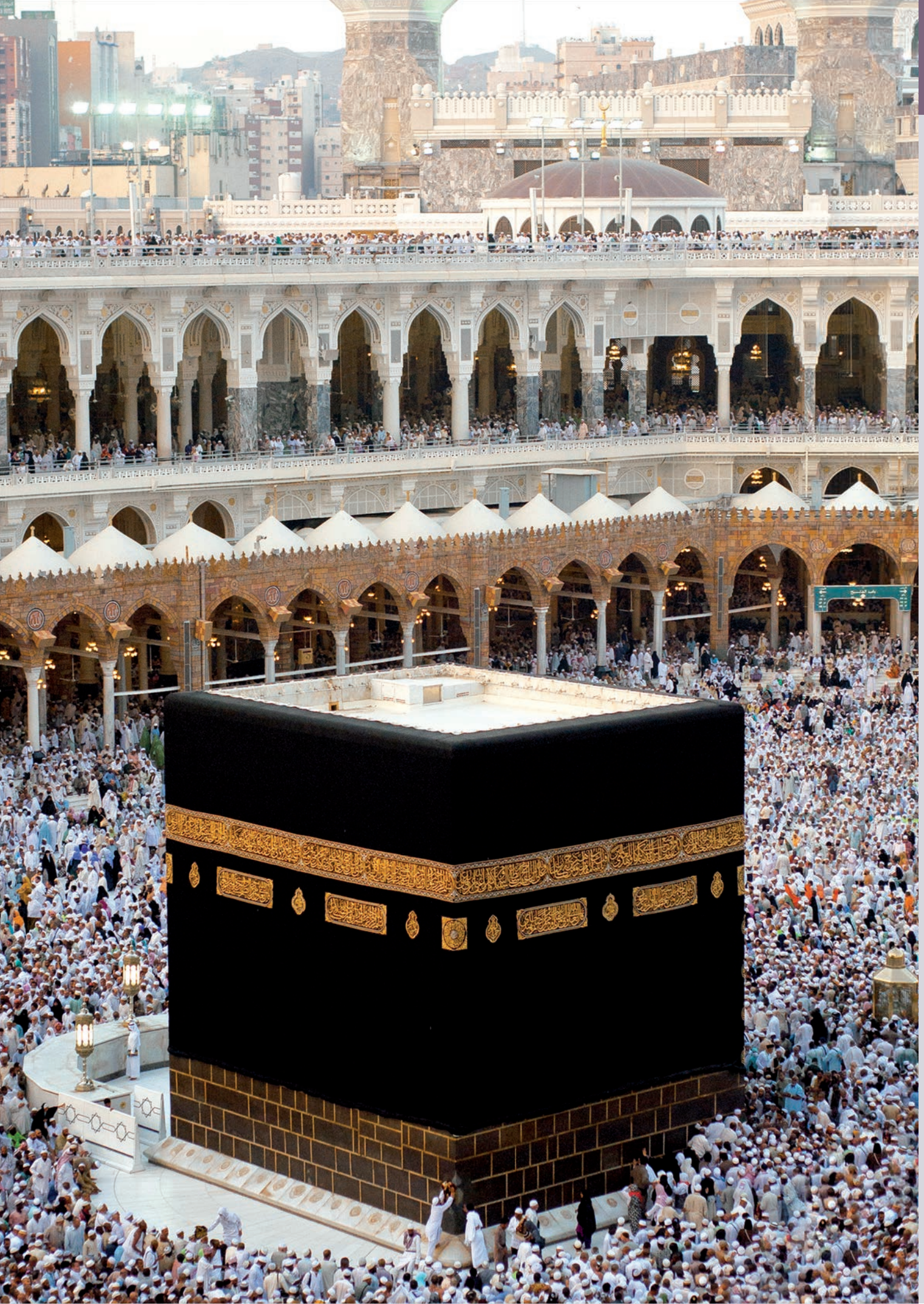
Parents protecting their sons and daughters from Hellfire is more important than protecting them from the adversities and worries of the world. Saving hearts from the fire of hell is dependent upon enlightening them with the love of Allah and the Prophet (pbuh). Parents who don't instill the love of Allah and the Prophet (pbuh) in their young ones are preparing them for catastrophe both in this world and the hereafter.

In conclusion, in order for eternal happiness in the hereafter, it is necessary to make the blessings of wealth, and property out of the resources of this life, one by one into a means of gathering the pleasure of our Lord. In order for our grave as our last residence in this world, not to remain desolate, empty and dark we should assess our present circumstances well and put the effort into leaving behind a good generation. Let us make our sons and daughters the noble capital of our hearts, so that each of them may be a 'Sadaqah Jariya' (ongoing charity) for us during our long and difficult journey, Inshallah.

May our Lord allow the blessing of marriage, family and children which He has bestowed upon us to be a means of happiness in the world and the Hereafter.

Allah created women more emotional than men, and her richness of emotion and feeling aids the fundamental and original role of women in the family providing the basis for the protection and moral education of the family





Hajj: an Inward and Outward Journey

While we symbolically drove the whisperer away, we also found that through all the heat and hardship and all the walking that we had managed to subdue our own darker sides and negative habits.

In this article, I would like to share with you some of my personal reflections on the hajj, a journey to the center of the Muslim world to where the faith began, not just for Muhammad (pbuh) but because it was there Abraham (pbuh) built the first house of pilgrimage dedicated to a monotheistic conception of God. Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, and when talking to non-Muslims I often hear that they find the five pillars of Islam challenging to understand. Firstly, they involve what they consider significant personal sacrifices: especially dedicating regular parts of the day to prayer and giving up food during the daytime in Ramadan.

Another major pillar that puzzles non-Muslims is the Hajj: it is a global yearly pilgrimage attracting millions. Rich and poor, black and white, common and noble born all perform and enact the same rituals for its completion. These rituals are often a source of fascination; so different are they from the regular rites of the faith and so different is the experience from the ordinary lives of those performing it. I thought I'd elucidate some of my observations about my journey to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, Hajj 2011 (1432 Hijri).



The frailest people I have ever seen braved hot temperatures, crowds, long waits and camping to complete the rites. Seeing those less mobile than I brave such conditions was a massive boost to my stamina.

To start with, I'll make some general observations and then move to the more specific religious and spiritual observations. Firstly, and rather amazingly, there is no common language. One might think Arabic was the common language, and though it forms the basis of common ritual prayers, rites and Qur'anic recitation, it is not spoken natively by the vast majority of Muslims. There are basically two Arabic words that can be heard: the first, 'tariq', meaning road but in the context meaning "Make way, I'm coming through!" The second: 'hajji' meaning us, the pilgrims. These words are usually followed by hand signals that form the basis of communication. The result was often comical to behold, with various combinations of hand signals and these two words being used. In the case of a wheel chair rapidly approaching, hearing the young boy pushing it calling 'Tariq!' usually saves some minor injuries to one's heels.

The large numbers of people attending the Hajj are nearly impossible to control. Pilgrims are the majority, but significant numbers of traders and beggars are present as well. The additional police, security and army brought in are almost lost in the crowds. With the hajjis essentially in a state of anarchy, the question arises: is crime prevalent? Does man, left with little state controls, pursue self-interests? At the Hajj at least, the answer is no; crime is almost absent. The only crime I witnessed was the theft of some unattended items. And although jostling, queue-jumping and littering were common place and all nationalities are more or less equally guilty in their practice, these rarely led to anything but annoyance. Angry reactions were infrequent and quickly calmed by other pilgrims.

On another notes, as a (relatively) young man, I was amazed at the age of some of those attempting the pilgrimage. The frailest people I have ever seen braved hot temperatures, crowds, long waits and camping to complete the rites. Seeing those less mobile than I brave such conditions was a massive boost to my stamina.

The Hajj takes place at four major sites. In Mecca itself, one must perform a 'tawaf' of the Ancient House, believed to be dedicated to God by Abraham and his son, and a place of pilgrimage since then. Before arriving in Mecca however, one must don the clothes of a pilgrim or 'ihram'. For men, this consists of basically two large towels covering my body, but also implies being in a certain state: no cutting of hair, use of perfume, killing of animals or vermin or intimate interactions. The pilgrim in a way leaves the usual garb of the living and adopts the shroud of the dead, no-longer participating in the fineries or pleasures of the world but what is required to live. When we completed our pilgrimage, we left the ihram, shaved our heads like a newborn and entered again into the world of the 'living'.

On a slightly more comical note, before setting out, I'd carefully practiced the art of wearing these clothes, tying them and wrapping them correctly so as not to reveal anything untoward (fortunately there were no major accidents in this regard that I saw). I was careful not to allow much of my torso to show, though other male pilgrims were not so cautious, sometimes wrapping there upper garment around their necks like a sweat rag. After greeting the House (Kabaa in Arabic), the next

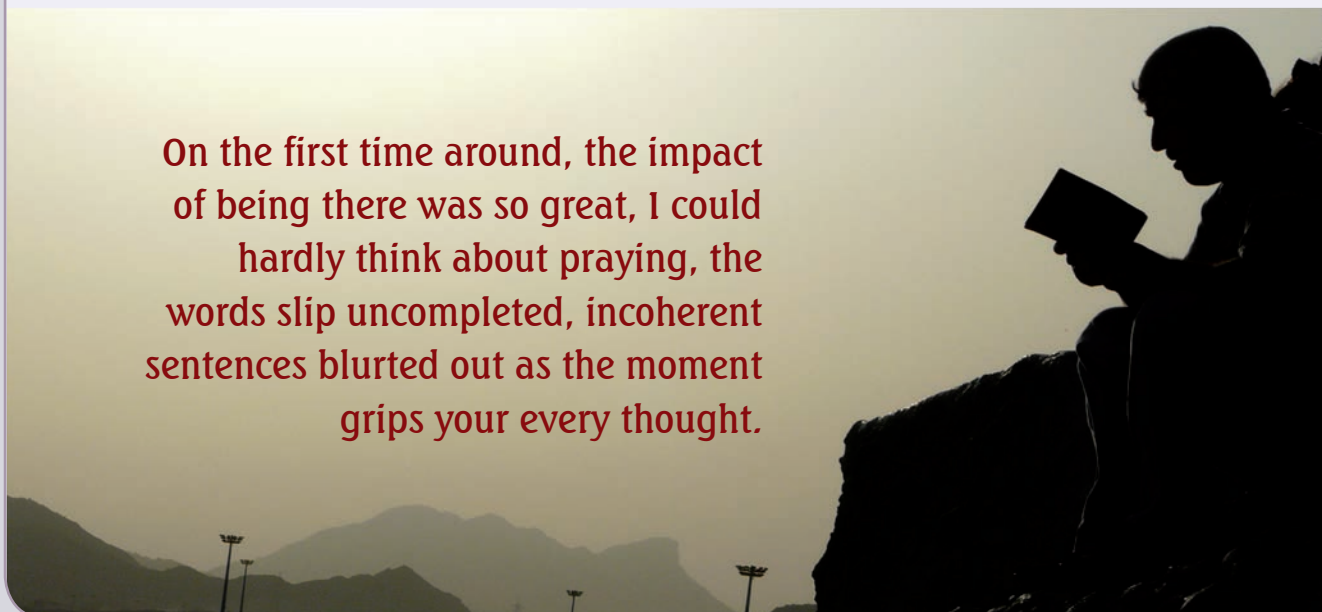
major step is to walk counter-clockwise around it seven times. Immediately around the Kabaa, the crowd was large, even two weeks before the Hajj officially begins. Here the area is thick with people, and your bodies crush against each other no matter how much you try to avoid it. Women and men mix freely in this space, but (hopefully) their minds were all directed to a higher purpose; hardly noticing each other, except for a husband trying to shield his wife or, as in my case, my mother-in-law. On the first time around, the impact of being there was so great, I could hardly think about praying, the words slip uncompleted, incoherent sentences blurted out as the moment grips your every thought.

Seeing the House for the first time is an incredible experience; at night, the lighting, the heat and humidity make the air take on an almost magical quality, and the House appears to glimmer. At that moment of first witnessing, it is said that your prayer is accepted. The approach is thus not to be rushed, and I approached with eyes closed, led by another hajji, until the House, I was told, loomed large. I tried to prepare my heart to contain within it the best prayer I could bring to mind; what did I want more than anything in the world? Forgiveness? Ease and comfort in this world and the next? Closeness to Allah? I put as many of these thoughts in my mind as possible, and disregarding language, I opened my eyes.

Two weeks passed; with each day I tried to squeeze as much time as I could to be in the mosque surrounding the House. Our routine was the following: head to the House before the morning prayer to catch the blessings of the pre-dawn, pray the morning prayer, then leave for a short rest, before returning to pray the noon and afternoon prayers, perhaps taking a moment to shop or eat then again entering for the evening and night prayers. One would think that the pre-dawn prayer was the least attended, but it was not, it was packed, people streaming in around 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. Each day, more and more pilgrims arrived. On the first day I was shocked at the numbers, but on the second day after I arrived the numbers appeared (by some qualitative estimation) to double and double again on the third. Buses were arriving all across the city, like intermittent streams that filled with water for one season of the year. Our routine might have been similar each day, filled with the same, praying, recitation and drinking holy spring water (zamazam), but it wasn't for a moment boring. This was not from some deeply monastic spirit on my part, but rather because of the blessings and sacredness of both the time and place coinciding as well as the constant joy of meeting people from such different backgrounds and countries.

The hajj rites begin proper with the journey to the valley of Mina, just outside the city limits of Mecca. As I walked together with our group,

On the first time around, the impact of being there was so great, I could hardly think about praying, the words slip uncompleted, incoherent sentences blurted out as the moment grips your every thought.





The world was represented here and I was proud as an Australian to be representing my people, though many of them may not share my faith.

many other groups were all marching in the same direction, carry flags and banners of different countries and cities. Mina is filled with square tents each placed according to the different regions the hajjis occupying them were coming from. For example, there were the Southeast Asian, Turkey, the Arab countries, the African and the combined European/Australian/North American sections. The world was represented here and I was proud as an Australian to be representing my people, though many of them may not share my faith. By nightfall, Mina was filled with hajjis; the smells and languages that could be heard demonstrated their diversity. We could hardly communicate to many of the people there, but somehow we understood each other: we had the same purpose (could there be another?).

The next morning, we set out early to Arafat. Whereas people had all day to arrive to Mina, we all had to be at Arafat by midday - it was a long walk. The first hour of walking and we were only just getting passed the road-side sellers, mostly Africans that I saw, whose colourful wares and foods were placed on the floor for us to gaze out on our way out. But here, unfortunately, many of the foods and drink bottles were lying about, discarded immediately after use by the pilgrims: the floor was thick with rubbish. This disturbed me significantly; I couldn't comprehend how a pilgrim could litter on such a holy place. Even European Muslims decided that they would participate in this discarding of litter. A floor covered with empty plastic water bottles and banana peels is quite dangerous and I saw at least one elderly woman slip and injure herself. I wondered if this was this yet another test of my patience.

After an hour, we passed out of the sellers and onto pedestrian highways and the rubbish thinned out. Cooled water was available from bubblers at regular intervals and helicopters passed overhead, checking that everything was running smoothly. My legs chaffed and walking became difficult. In ihram you can't cover your head and my thick application of perfume-free sunscreen was not good at stopping the sun beating down on my freshly shaved scalp. My group pushed on with little respite so I just had to keep up, no matter what the complaints. The alternative was to face getting completely lost at Arafat with no hope to find them among millions of pilgrims.

Finally, we approached Arafat. Throngs of people were heading to their tents to find shade, cool water and rest. We had only thirty minutes before midday; I considered my plan. The group would stay and listen to a motivating talk. But I had not come to listen to another preach but I came to hear the voice of my Lord within me and beg him in my turn. At Arafat, you combine the midday and afternoon prayers; this occurred to me as a wondrous blessing: every moment should be spent in pouring out one's heart to the Creator and not in communal prayer. Here was a time for me to be alone with my Lord. And though I was completely surrounded by literally millions of others, I saw them not, but found my small space on the little hill from which it is believed that Adam and Eve asked forgiveness. Hours passed as moments and I cannot relate what I experienced in that time, but yet I will never forget it.

After the sunset, we journeyed to Muzdalifah,

another valley close to Mina. We were in the cool of the night and it felt like I had been reborn in that gentle breeze after the heat of the day. Majnun spent years searching for his beloved Laila and it drove him mad until he was soothed by the Beloved. Such was our experience: heat, tears then coolness and mercy. Muzdalifah is the place to ask the Beloved to change your life into something better, something eternal. At Arafat, I begged for forgiveness; at Muzdalifah I asked for knowledge of and togetherness with the Beloved; I asked for insight into the reality beyond the apparent and I pledged myself to the path of inner change.

The next day, we all rose to confront an enemy that would never give up trying to dissuade us from our new pledges and we went to throw small pebbles at a large stone representing the devil. What is the devil? In Islamic tradition, the devil is the whisperer that suggests, with a word here or there, or a crazy idea deep in the subconscious. But there is another enemy, our own selves, preventing us from achieving what we might. While we symbolically drove the whisperer away, we also found that through all the heat and hardship and all the walking that we had managed to subdue our own darker sides and negative habits.

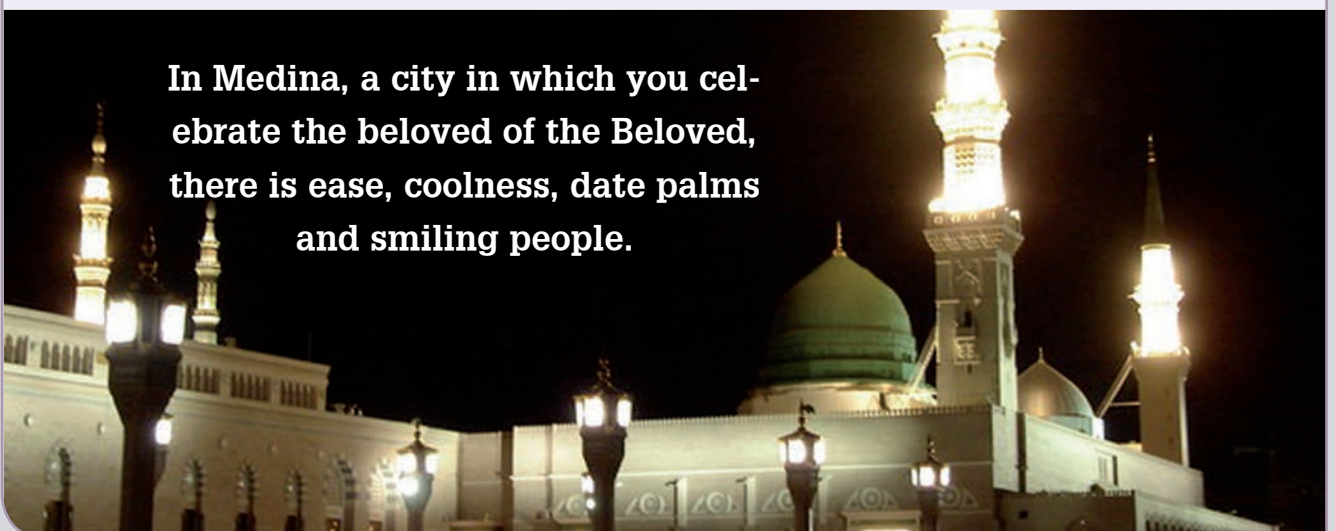
Cleansed we set out for Medina, the City of the Prophet and his final resting place. I am glad that I had performed the hajj first, because I could be in the Prophet (pbuh)'s presence in a cleaner state than I had ever been. Medina is beauty, Mecca is harshness. Why did God want his House placed in a dry city of dust and barren mountains and not in a city of oases like

Medina? That I cannot answer for sure, but I got an inkling that a trip to Mecca should not be easy, but rather rigorous, for it to be purifying, just as it had been for Majnun or for Adam and Eve.

In Medina, a city in which you celebrate the beloved of the Beloved, there is ease, coolness, date palms and smiling people. Rather than rush to see the praised Muhammad (pbuh), I washed, wore fresh clothes and perfume and took my time to meet him. The experience was amazing, for this was the man who could bare the revelation of the Qur'an, who was the most patient of men, and, though he was protected by Allah from sin, still asked His forgiveness every day. Here was a man that inspired tens of thousands in his lifetime and billions since. Not only are Muslims inspired by him, but we try to imitate his ways, his ideas and his values in every day of our lives.

For those who plan to take the journey, I pray you find what you are looking for; though be careful of the person you bring with you. Guard yourself in the holy places, beware of your manners, from the tiniest of details in your mannerisms, your interactions with others and even with what occupies your heart. A breach of etiquette in another place would not have the same impact, but in these wondrous places small mistakes can remove from you great insights. And God alone grants success. For those who helped me along the way of my journey, my heart and love goes out to you and words cannot express enough thanks, though you work on tirelessly regardless, hoping to please your Lord by serving His guests. May all who love to set out on this journey reach their destination. Amin.

In Medina, a city in which you celebrate the beloved of the Beloved, there is ease, coolness, date palms and smiling people.





INTERVIEW WITH PROF. FARUK BESER:

“There is certainly Tasattur for both genders. In Islam, no form of worship is for one gender only, but since there are differences in the genders, there must also be differences in their coverings.”

Tasattur shouldn't be showy. Because it can also have this aim and it is most likely for this reason that Allah forbade 'Tabarruj'. Tabarruj is every kind of behaviour which enables one to charm or attract attention.

Wisdom: Is there a debate in Islam regarding the Law of covering oneself (Tasattur)? What is the law of Tasattur in the Qur'ân. What is in the practice of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)? Until today in what context have Islamic scholars understood Tasattur?

Prof. Faruk Beser: Tasattur is a form of worship which was present with the first human. I say it is a form of worship because Tasattur certainly has lots of functions but first of all it is a form of worship. One may cover oneself to protect from the effects of nature or one can wear clothing as an adornment. The Qur'ân touches upon these. Certainly every form of worship has a worldly benefit. Pure forms of worship like 'Salah' (prayer) are also like this, but before anything else, a believer carries out Allah's command as if it were his own command, in other words as a form of worship.

Like philosopher Wilhelm Reich, from a positivist perspective we can say every single

Women and men who cover themselves are effectively saying: 'I accept Allah's authority, I am a person who believes in Him, look at me and know this'. They even become an advert for this belief.



organ of women and men gives off a different electrical energy and for this reason the areas which must be covered will also be different. There is some truth in this but for a believer first and foremost covering themselves is adopted and practiced as a form of worship.

Later one may exercise one's mind in order to understand the wisdom and benefits and may then be able to make some reasonable observations; and there is no drawback to this, but there is a chance that one will not come to any clear conclusion.

What is certain is that Tasattur is a form of worship which is found in all religions. In the effort of searching to find its wisdom, what cannot be ignored is that it is definitely symbolic. It is definitely a religious symbol and not a political symbol. Women and men who cover themselves are effectively saying: 'I accept Allah's authority, I am a person who believes in Him, look at me and know this'. They even become an advert for this belief. For this reason, it is necessary for one's intention to be for this. In that respect, I think that carrying the symbolism of Tasattur was originally an important aspect for both genders. There is nothing to forbid this or regard it as an innovation despite the fact that it was necessary to forbid every type of symbol and every kind of advertisement.

Wisdom: Is Tasattur only necessary for women. Is there a Tasattur for men?

Prof. Faruk Beser: There is certainly Tasattur for both genders. In Islam, no form of worship is for one gender only, but since there are differences in the genders, there must also be differences in their coverings. You may even see this with Reich psychoanalysis, as indicated above. At the level of being humans and believers both genders are equal. Therefore they are both responsible for covering themselves. However, their physical and social needs and roles are different so it is necessary for Tasattur to accord with and be appropriate to these differences. Men generally work in the tough domains of life

so their Tasattur must be suited to that kind of role. If their arms, legs, and heads are covered, they may not be able to fulfill their duties with ease; so that perhaps it may be enough for them to clothe themselves so that at least the top of their kneecaps and their stomach will be covered. However, note that this is a mere suggestion; we aren't decisively saying that this is Allah's original intention for this standard for men.

To cover this much is fardh (compulsory) for men and as long as there is no necessity it should be fulfilled. From the perspective of custom and social norms it is definitely better for them to complete their clothing. However, while one of them is compulsory, the others may be 'Sunnah' or 'Mustahab' (recommended). But Sunnahs can also become necessary sometimes. For example if from the standpoint of social norms men wandering about in a place naked from their waist up is seen as vulgar and provocative this situation can be forbidden and to do a thing forbidden by a legitimate government is also haram.

If one's clothing symbolizes other beliefs then it may also be haram. The manner of dressing oneself can also be a kind of statement of belief.

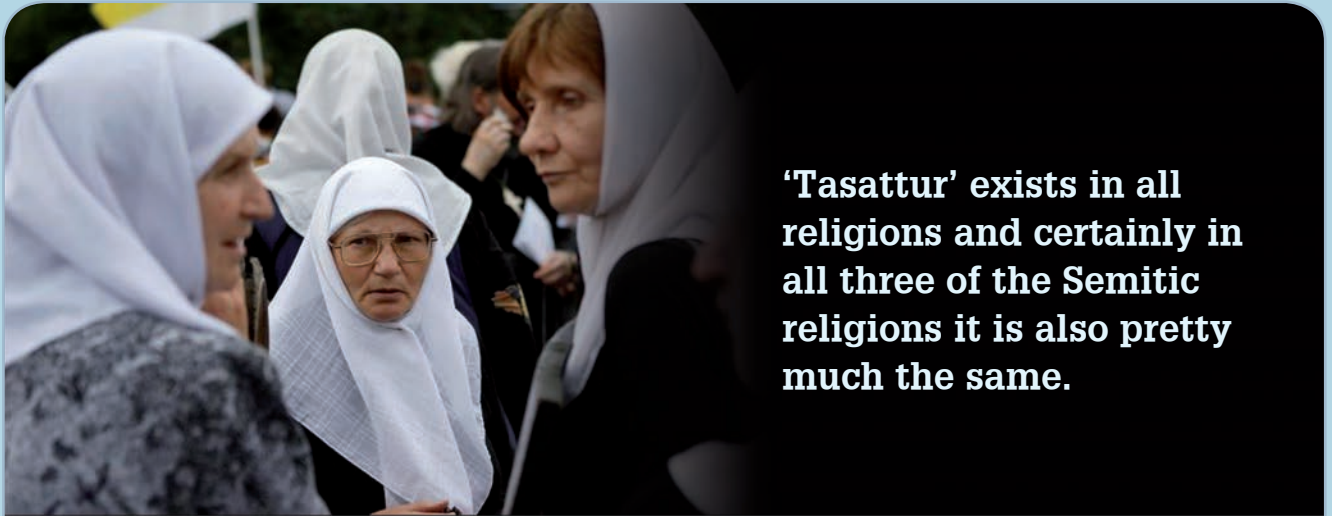
In the Qur'ân, Allah says: "Wear your adornments at every mosque". This is also a command at the level of Sunnah. Our Prophet (pbuh) said: "Wear your clothes beautifully, keep your things orderly, be among people like white peaks (i.e. taking extra care)". This is also perhaps Mustahab or Sunnah meaning that if it isn't done, that's ok, but if it is, you get extra points.

Wisdom: With Tasattur, does the law change with differences in social status? Is the responsibility for the working woman to cover herself any different?

Prof. Faruk Beser: Firstly it is necessary to take into account that in an Islamic society there would be no differentiation between women in today's sense of the 'working

Since covering oneself has not changed it means that it is not relative to time or place, and is a basic necessity of religion. What happened was that Judaism and Christianity diluted it and, for example, made it specifically for their female clergymen (i.e. nuns).





'Tasattur' exists in all religions and certainly in all three of the Semitic religions it is also pretty much the same.

women'. It is definitely not haram for women to work, and in Islam, it is necessary for everyone, man and woman, to work. There is payment for everyone for their employment. However, the Islamic society is a family centric society and so it is also necessary for there to be those who work within the family. Moreover, Islam's understanding of work is also very different from that of today. These matters can be debated further. The topic is explained at length in Imam Sarakhsi's book 'Mabsut'.

With regards to social status, there is also the case that 'Alims' (Islamic scholars) are advised to dress themselves more tidily and with more care because the profession which they represent is promoted through their character. In other words the style of clothing of people who are in a situation where they will be imitated does not only concern themselves. For this reason, Allah for example tells the women of the Prophet's household: "You are not like ordinary women".

Wisdom: Is there Tasattur in other religions? If there is, what is its meaning?

Prof. Faruk Beser: There certainly is: 'Tasattur' exists in all religions and certainly in all three of the Semitic religions it is also pretty much the same. For this it is enough to see a book published in both German and Turkish entitled 'Das Kopftuch/The headscarf' written jointly by Meral Akkent and Gaby Franger, who are writers belonging to two different religions. In the book, Tasattur and the headscarf are dealt with in three

religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These are reduced to their historical origins and illustrations of the styles of clothing and the forms of head coverings are given in the book. If you come across this book, you will see that with regards to the basic elements of this issue, it is the same in all three religions. What this mean is that it is definitely ignorant to simplistically decide that the headscarf is a Christian or a Byzantine custom, as some have assumed. Rather it shows that 'Tasattur' in general, and specifically the headscarf, is an unchanging and important element of all religions. Despite that there are lots of matters in the laws of these religions which do change. Since covering oneself has not changed it means that it is not relative to time or place, and is a basic necessity of religion. What happened was that Judaism and Christianity diluted it and, for example, made it specifically for their female clergymen (i.e. nuns, female rabbis/clerics). Similarly with Muslims, while it is already clear that those against religion are also against covering, for those who say that there is no covering despite speaking in the name of Islam are taking on a role like the people who destroyed Christianity, for example Luther.

Wisdom: Is there a specific way of covering oneself in Islam? What is the standard in this matter? (What are the issues which should be given attention with Tasattur and the Headscarf?) Are there any mistakes which you have seen in its contemporary practice?

Prof. Faruk Beser: There are different areas which must be covered for women and for men. There is privacy, and there is private space. Similarly, there is like this a place on the body, in the house and on one's property which must be either private, secret or only between the servant and their Lord. Not exposing one's sexuality/sexual characteristics is also included here. After this space was established and preserved, its manner of protection became a secondary matter and was left to custom. For example, according to the most tolerant Madhab (legal school), the Hanafi Madhab, every area of a woman apart from her hands and face is a private space. Privacy however is from one perspective Allah's public space: it is not entered without permission, and its knowledge cannot be discovered by those who don't have permission.

We can enumerate the following general conditions for women's clothing:

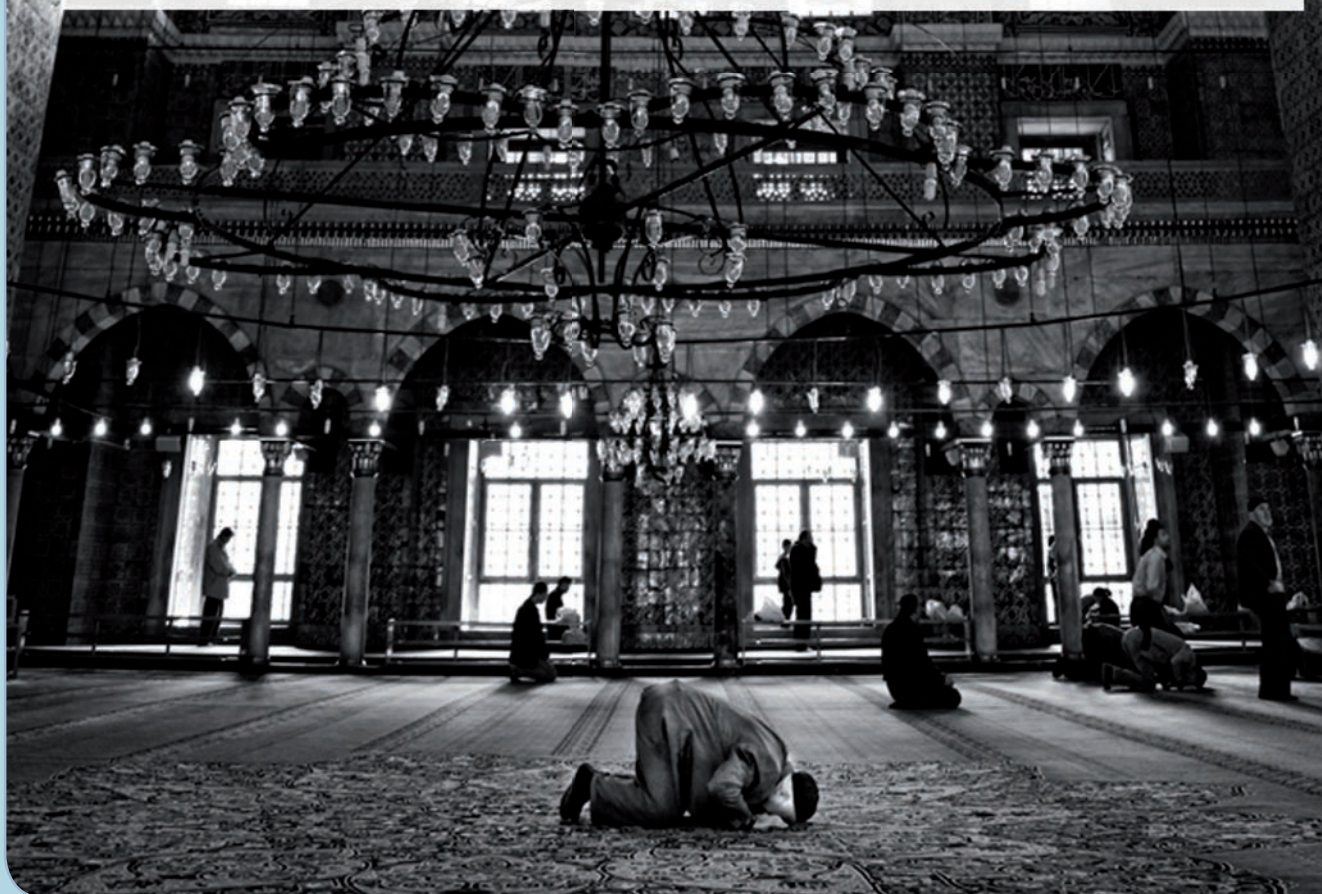
*It shouldn't be transparent, because covering means not showing. Transparency

does not allow this;

*It should not be very tight because from one perspective, covering oneself means hiding the characteristics of one's body. Whereas tight clothing which makes the outline of one's body apparent does not fulfill this function;

*It shouldn't be showy. Because Tasattur can also have this aim and it is most likely for this reason that Allah forbade 'Tabarruj'. Tabarruj is every kind of behaviour which enables one to charm or attract attention; and,

*A woman's Tasattur must be different from a man's because the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) forbade both genders from imitating one another. For women and men to be able to realize the characteristics and functions of their own genders to the utmost level, in other words to be able to offer the fruits of femininity and masculinity in their most profitable forms, is dependent upon them fully distinguishing and separating themselves.



Pearls Of Wisdom

*How amazing is the case of a believer;
there is good for him in everything, and
this characteristic is exclusively for him
alone. If he experiences something good
he is thankful and that is good for him;
and if he comes across some diversity, he is
patient and that is good for him.*

Hadith

*The spiritual warrior is he who
breaks an idol; and the idol of
each person is his Ego.*

Imam Abul Qasim al-Qushayri

*Do to me, O Allah, what
is worthy of Thee; and not
what is worthy of me.*


Saadi al-Shirazi

*Never break a Muslim's heart by
refusing what he offers you, when
you know that anything that comes
to you through him is in reality
from Allah, and he is only His
powerless and compelled means.*

Imam al Haddad

*Whoever gives advice to a
heedless man is himself in
need of advice.*

Saadi al-Shirazi



*While you are alive, your
self is like a collector of
benefits from Allah's bounties,
which come to you from
myriads of hands.*

Ibn 'Arabi

*Every drop of sweat and
every breath we take in life,
if not taken for the sake of
Allah, will lead to regret
and sorrow on the Day of
Judgment.*

Ibn Al-Qayyim

*Intelligence is the shadow of
objective truth. How can the
shadow vie with sunshine?*

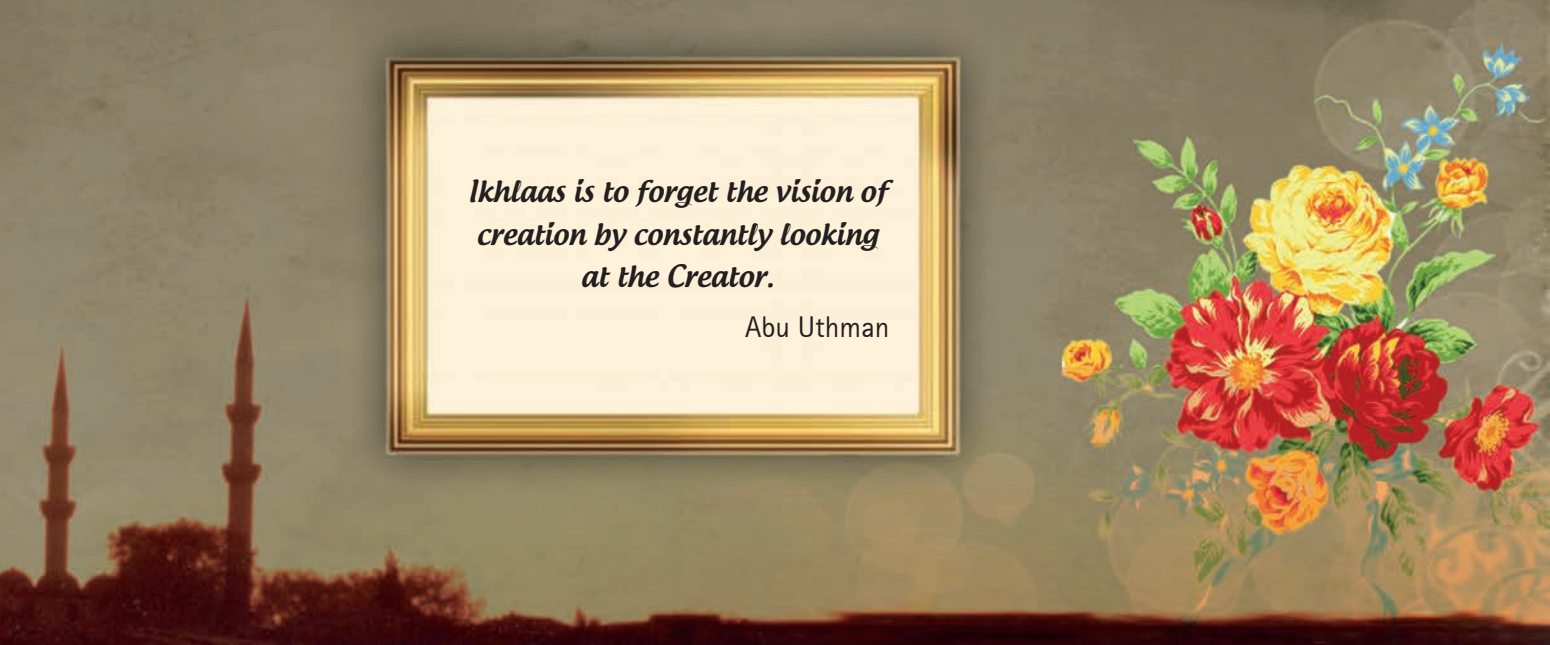
Rumi

*Truthfulness is composed
of justice and courage.*

Ibn Hazm

*Ikhlāas is to forget the vision of
creation by constantly looking
at the Creator.*

Abu Uthman





Sayyidah Hafsa

Prophet said, “Allah the Almighty has predestined a more righteous husband for your daughter than ‘Uthman, and a more honourable wife for him than your daughter!”, thereby declaring that he sought to marry Sayyidah Hafsa.

The First Years of Her Life

Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah) was the daughter of ‘Umar (ra). She was from the Adiy branch of the Quraysh Tribe and was married to the Prophet (saw) in 3 A.H. The lineage of ‘Umar (ra) merges with the lineage of Allah’s Messenger (saw) a few generations before. Her mother is Zainab bint Maz’un al-Jumahiyyah, the sister of ‘Uthman bin Maz’un. According to ‘Umar (ra), Sayyidah Hafsa was born in 605 A.D., in Mecca; five years before the advent of the Holy Prophet (saw).

Sayyidah Hafsa became a Muslim during the Meccan period, and made hijrah (migrated) to Madinah with her first husband Hunais bin Huzaafa. Hunais died in Medina, after he was wounded in the Battle of Badr. His funeral was led by the Messenger of Allah (saw).

‘Umar (ra) was very saddened to see his daughter widowed at such a young age. He felt this sadness intensify each time he would visit her and find her downcast in the remembrance of the husband she had lost, and thus, ‘Umar (ra) resolved to get her remarried. Not only was he spurred into seeking another partner for her in the attempt to alleviate her distress, it was also the custom of the Arabs

at the time to seek the marriage of one's daughters or sisters to someone virtuous as to do so was taken as an indicator that one cared for his relatives.

The Efforts of a Father

With this intention, 'Umar first turned to 'Uthman (ra) as a possible suitor for his daughter as 'Uthman too had suffered the loss of his wife Ruqayyah (r.ah), the daughter of the Prophet (saw). However, 'Uthman (ra) asked for a few days to think it over, and then politely refused his offer by saying: "I am not considering marrying again for the time being".

Troubled by this answer, 'Umar (ra) went to see Abu Bakr (ra) and made the same proposal to him. Abu Bakr (ra) also declined. 'Umar was both hurt and confused and thus resorted to speak of the matter before the Prophet (saw). In response the Holy Prophet (saw) said, "Allah the Almighty has predestined a more righteous husband for your daughter than 'Uthman, and a more honourable wife for him than your daughter!", thereby declaring that he sought to marry Sayyidah Hafsa. Extremely pleased of this request, 'Umar immediately married his daughter to the Holy Prophet (saw).

This matrimony took place in the month of Sha'bân, in the third year of hijrah (January 625, AD), with a mahr, wedding dowry of 400 dirhams.

Later on, when Abu Bakr (ra) met 'Umar (ra), in order to congratulate him, he said:

"Perhaps you were angry with me when you offered Sayyidah Hafsa to me in marriage and I declined?" 'Umar (ra) confirmed this: "Yes (honestly, I was hurt)!" Then Abu Bakr (ra) said: "Nothing prevented me from accepting your offer except that I learnt that Allah's Messenger (saw) had intended to propose to Sayyidah Hafsa and I did not want to disclose the secret of Allah's Messenger (saw), but had he (i.e. the Prophet) given her up I would surely have accepted her."

The Prophet (saw) got married to Sayyidah Hafsa bint 'Umar (ra) and Uthman (ra) got married to Ummu Kulthum bint Muhammad.

Being a Mother of the Believers

Thus Sayyidah Hafsa became one of the mothers of the faithful, and a beloved wife of Allah's Messenger (saw). With this happy event, Allah's Messenger (saw) became a relative to 'Umar (ra) and won his heart; the person whom he loved most after Abu Bakr (ra).

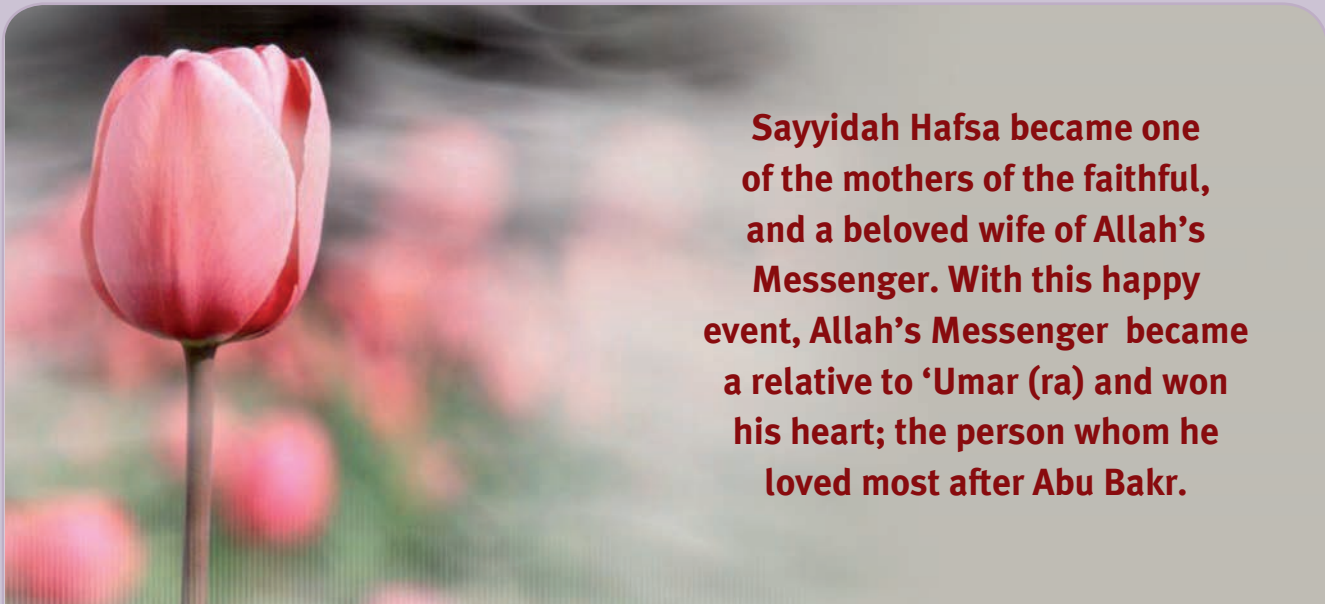
A New Home

Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah) was one of very few people who were literate. She was 22 years old when she married to the Holy Prophet (saw).

At that time, Sayyidah Sawda (r.ah) and Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) were also married to Allah's Messenger (saw), sharing his house. Sayyidah Sawda welcomed Sayyidah Hafsa,



Sayyidah Hafsa became a Muslim during the Meccan period, and made hijrah to Madinah with her first husband Hunais bin Huzaafa. Hunais died in Medina, after he was wounded in the Battle of Badr.



Sayyidah Hafsa became one of the mothers of the faithful, and a beloved wife of Allah's Messenger. With this happy event, Allah's Messenger became a relative to 'Umar (ra) and won his heart; the person whom he loved most after Abu Bakr.

just as she had received Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) with a contented heart.

Although in the first years of her marriage she was a bit distant, in time she got on very well with Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah), and even in some occasions they acted together against the other wives of Allah's Messenger (saw).

Sayyidah Hafsa had an important position besides the Holy Prophet (saw). She was a knowledgeable, cultured, strong willed and devoted wife. Compared to the other wives of the Holy Prophet (saw), along with Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah), she had a more distinguished position to be envied for. Nevertheless, she had a strong temperament, perhaps inherited from her father. Because of this, every so often 'Umar (ra) used to advise his daughter to never offend Allah's Messenger (saw).

There are several detailed accounts in the hadith books regarding this issue. One of these occurred when Umar (ra) felt uncomfortable about the way his wife had started to retort him, after they had made hijrah to Medina. Upon reprimanding his wife for her behaviour, she informed him that the wives of Allah's Messenger (saw) felt at liberty to speak back to him. Umar (ra) was enraged to hear this. He went to see his daughter, who was one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (saw), and asked her: "Do any of you stay irritated with Allah's Messenger (saw) throughout the whole night?" When her reply was "Yes", he cautioned her by saying: "She is a ruined loser (and will never have success)! Doesn't she

fear that Allah may get angry for the anger of Allah's Messenger (saw) and thus she will be ruined? Don't ask Allah's Messenger (saw) too many things, and don't retort against him in any case, and don't desert him. Demand from me whatever you like!"

On another occasion he said: "O my daughter, if you offend Allah's Messenger (saw), Allah will grant him better (wives) than you! And you will be deprived!"

These events demonstrate how Sayyidina 'Umar (ra) took care of his daughter and how worried he was that perchance she might offend the Holy Prophet (saw) and she might have to stay away from him.

The Honey Syrup

According to the written sources, one of the important events which Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah) was involved in, is the honey syrup incident. This was a conflict between Allah's Messenger (saw) and his blessed wives, which started when he visited Sayyidah Hafsa, and she offered him honey syrup.

This incident became quite complicated; and became the cause for the revelation of the first verses of Surah al-Tahrîm. Here we have an account of the event as narrated by Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah):

Allah's Messenger (saw) was fond of honey and sweet foods. It was his habit to visit his wives and stay the night with one of them after the asr prayer. One time he went

Sayyidah Hafsa had an important position besides the Holy Prophet (saw). She was a knowledgeable, cultured, strong willed and devoted wife.



to Sayyidah Hafsa, the daughter of Umar (ra) and stayed with her more than usual. I got jealous and asked the reason for that. I was told that a lady of her folk had given her a skin filled with honey as a present, and she made syrup from it and gave it to the Prophet (saw) to drink: and that was the reason for the delay. I said, "By Allah we will respond to him in such a way that it will prevent him from doing so." So I said to Sayyidah Sawda bint Zam'a "Allah's Messenger (saw) will approach you, and when he comes near you, say: 'Have you taken maghafir (a bad-smelling gum)?' He will say, 'No.' Then say to him: 'Then what is this bad smell which I smell from you?'"

In one narration Sayyidah Â'ishah (r.ah) made this explanation: "The Messenger of Allah (saw) would be very unhappy if he perceived an unpleasant odor from himself. Because of this, certainly he will say, 'Hafsa made me drink honey syrup.' Then say: Perhaps the bees of that honey had sucked the juice of the tree of Al-'Urfut.' I shall also say the same. O you, Sayyidah Safiyyah, say the same." Later Sawda (r.ah) said, "By Allah, as soon as he (the Prophet -saw-) stood at the door, I was about to say to him what you had ordered me to say because I was afraid of you." So when the Holy Prophet (saw) came near Sayyidah Sawda, she said to him, "O Allah's Messenger (saw)! Have you taken maghafir?" He said, "No." She said. "Then what is this bad smell which I detect on you?" He said, "Hafsa made me drink honey syrup." She

said, "Perhaps its bees had sucked the juice of Al-'Urfut tree." When he came to me, I also said the same, and when he went to Sayyidah Safiyyah, she also said the same. And when the Holy Prophet (saw) again went to Sayyidah Hafsa, she said, 'O Allah's Messenger (saw)! Shall I give you more of that drink?' He said, "I am not in need of it." Sayyidah Sawda said, "By Allah, we deprived him (of it)." I said to her, "Keep quiet". There are several accounts regarding this incident. According to some of these, Allah's Messenger (saw) had forbid himself from eating honey, and Allah the Almighty warned him about this.

Keeping a Secret

Another account about Sayyidah Hafsa is a secret that Allah's Messenger (saw) had revealed to her. However, Sayyidah Hafsa couldn't conceal the secret and broke it to her confidant Sayyidah Â'ishah. Because of this incident, the third verse of Surah at-Tahrim was revealed. While various theories have been put forward as to what this "secret" was, it is largely accepted that the Prophet of Allah (saw) had confided in Sayyidah Hafsa (r.ah) that he had sworn an oath never to have honey again as a result of the aforementioned event. Here are three different accounts in the written sources about what this secret was.

The first of these is about the "honey syrup incident": in which details are provided above. Allah's Messenger (saw) had made an oath not to drink honey syrup again.

The second account is about Allah's Messenger (saw) and his bondswoman Maria (r.ah) being together in Sayyidah Hafsa's house when she was not home. When Sayyidah Hafsa was hurt because of this, he told her that this would never happen again, and in fact he would never again be with Maria.

The third account is about Allah's Messenger (saw) informing her that Sayyidina Abu Bakr and Sayyidina 'Umar (ra) would be the head of state after him.

In response to this the verse of Surah at-Tahrim regarding "forbidding what Allah made lawful to him, to please his wives" were revealed, as the Prophet of Allah (saw) had forbidden for himself that which Allah has made permissible.

Although the exact nature of the secret is not clear, it is related that Allah's Messenger (saw) had divorced Sayyidah Hafsa (with talaq raji'i) probably because of her weakness in keeping a secret. Umar (ra) was extremely upset because of this, since he considered that offending Allah's Messenger (saw) would mean offending Allah. Later, Allah the Almighty ordered the Holy Prophet (saw) to take Sayyidah Hafsa back.

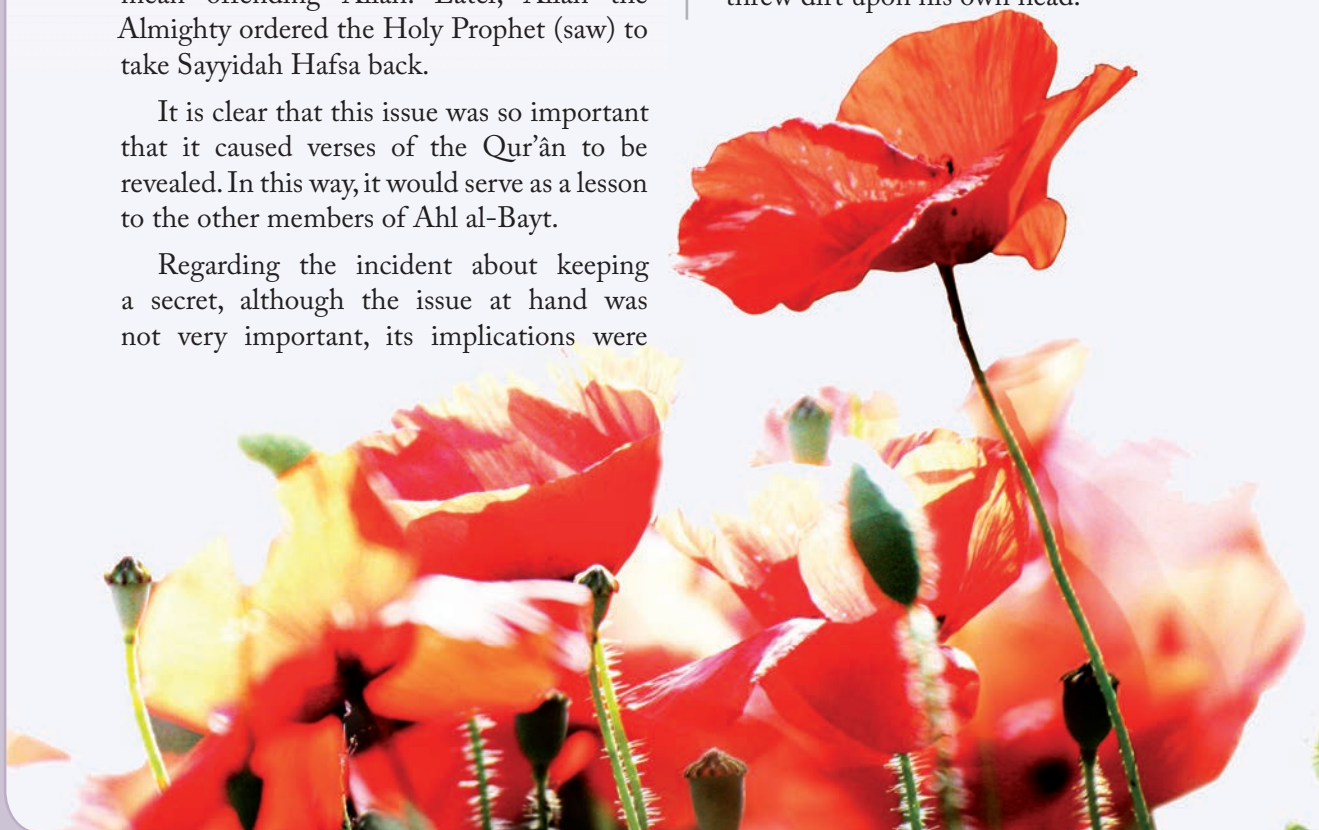
It is clear that this issue was so important that it caused verses of the Qur'an to be revealed. In this way, it would serve as a lesson to the other members of Ahl al-Bayt.

Regarding the incident about keeping a secret, although the issue at hand was not very important, its implications were

grave. The Holy Prophet (saw) was the head of the Islamic State and whatever he confided to his wife should be concealed at all costs. There was a great war taking place between the Muslims and non-Muslims, and Muslims were completely surrounded by their enemies. At the same time hypocrites were seeking opportunities to disturb the State in Madinah. Revealing any kind of confidential information before its due time could significantly harm the cause of the Holy Prophet (saw). For these reasons, the Ahl al-Bayt had to be warned regarding these delicate issues.

Sometimes Umar (ra) would reprimand Sayyidah Hafsa, because of some incidents taking place between her and Sayyidah A'ishah (r.ah) saying: "Neither yours, nor your father's position besides the Prophet (saw) is like Sayyidah A'ishah's and her father's position."

For some time Allah's Messenger (saw) had considered divorcing Sayyidah Hafsa because of her strong temperament. Umar (ra) became very upset when he heard this, and even according to some narrations, he threw dirt upon his own head.





A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM ATHEISM TO

Islam

The fundamental beliefs and rules are not to be confused with how Muslims behave all around the world. If practised correctly, Islam brings happiness, freedom, satisfaction and much more to one's life.

Wisdom: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Alice: Salam Alaykum. My name is Alice Tastemur. I'm 24 years old and I've been married for a little over 3 years. Six months ago my husband and I were blessed with the birth of our son, Hasan, who brings joy and happiness to our lives every day, Alhamdulillah. I grew up in France but returned to England to study in university. While still in university, my husband and I set up a business retailing soaps and I am now company secretary for that company.

Wisdom: Can you tell us about your religious upbringing?

Alice: Freedom to choose one's religion is of fundamental importance to my parents. So with that in mind, I grew up knowing that I could pick what

Freedom to choose one's religion is of fundamental importance to my parents. So with that in mind, I grew up knowing that I could pick what I wanted to practice and when I wanted to start practising it.

I wanted to practice and when I wanted to start practising it. I therefore decided to live my life as an atheist. This decision was mainly based on my complete disinterest in religion more than on any actual knowledge about any religions.

Wisdom: How did you decide to convert to Islam?

Alice: My husband actually introduced me to Islam. I knew little about the religion prior to meeting him. The sum total of my knowledge extended to pretty negative issues such as oppression, terrorism and aggression. So when he started to teach me about the actual religion itself, Subhanallah, the fundamental beliefs and practises made more and more sense. I came to understand that there is a reason for everything in Islam. The value that women have in the religion also very much appealed to me.

Wisdom: Have you ever encountered any problems with your acceptance of Islam?

Alice: My parents who had always made it so clear that I had a choice, initially thought that I had been brainwashed and that I was throwing my life away. They couldn't understand why I would want to make such a massive change in my life. I think they were predominantly worried that I would become a completely different person and might even choose not to see them anymore. My grandmother was also very apprehensive for me. She felt that I was choosing a life of oppression for myself.

Wisdom: What has changed in your life after your conversion?

Alice: I now feel more satisfied with my life, Alhamdulillah. Islam is a lifestyle that makes your life complete. Before encountering Islam, I wasn't sure where I would find happiness. I remember telling my father I was going to spend 10 years travelling the world after I graduated as I had convinced myself that the only way I could be happy was to keep moving from place to place.

Wisdom: Have you conveyed the message of Islam to your parents? How was their reaction?

Alice: I don't feel that I have fully conveyed the message of Islam to my parents. As my knowledge of the religion is still very much limited, I am hoping that by trying to live properly by what I know already, the beauty of Islam will portray itself to them. They seem to look at Islam in a more positive way than they originally did but it remains something that they think is not for them. I believe they still have many unanswered questions they don't want to raise.

Wisdom: Do you have any message for those who are searching for a new religion?

Alice: Islam is not a religion to be overlooked. Despite what the media would have us believe, it isn't about negativity. The fundamental beliefs and rules are not to be confused with how Muslims behave all around the world. If practised correctly, Islam brings happiness, freedom, satisfaction and much more to one's life.

When my husband started to teach me about the actual religion itself, I came to understand that there is a reason for everything in Islam. The value that women have in the religion also very much appealed to me



ALLAH

WASTEFULNESS (I)

Concerning Faith, Creed, and Worship

If a servant exceeds the limits imposed by Allah in whatever department of life, his act constitutes profligacy. All sorts of divine gifts may be spent with no profit, but only loss.

All the gifts bestowed by our Lord upon His servants are evidences of His mercy, compassion and love. These divine offerings are sent by Allah the Almighty to his servants freely: no servant pays anything for them or can undertake any effort in order to deserve them. Allah the Exalted declares in the holy Qur'ân:

“And He has made of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth (as a pure kindness). ... In this verily are portents for people who reflect”.
(Jathiyah, 45/13)

However, this free bestowal does not mean that people can use the di-vine gifts however they please, without any conditions or restrictions. In-deed, in a different verse Allah declares:

“Does humanity think that it is to be left aimless?” (Qiyamah, 75/36)

Thus when we spend the gifts given by Allah, we must take into account the divine orders and prohibitions. We must not forget that while unlawful spending leads to chastisement, even lawful spending requires an explanation. Just as we should keep away from unlawful acts, we should avoid committing profligacy (isrâf)



To serve others for Allah's sake, even in unimportant things, may be more valuable than much supererogatory prayer.

and falling into another kind of unlawful act through our misuse of the lawful things. Indeed profligacy means to treat the gifts given by Allah with disrespect by transgressing His limits for their employment. This is indeed an utterly ungrateful attitude towards the benefactions of Allah the Almighty.

Profligacy is a word normally applied to issues of the management of wealth, but it has a wider application that includes all kinds of affairs in which human beings may exceed rightful limits. Accordingly, if a servant exceeds the limits imposed by Allah in whatever department of life, his act constitutes profligacy. All sorts of divine gifts may be spent with no profit, but only loss.

‘Iyas said: “Anything that transgresses the limits commanded by Allah is extravagance.”

Because of the workings of our egos, human beings are always inclined to think that we have good excuses for our mistakes. Even criminals who have committed the worst sorts of crimes justify their crimes and wish to be excused because of various causes and motives. Both wasteful and miserly people are no different: they defend themselves with excuses, and are prone to be happy with the way they are. They are rarely free of the delusion that the madness of extravagance or the baseness of avarice constitutes true happiness. This is why the concept of profligacy, which presents itself at first sight as an empty frame, fills promptly with a picture generated by the divine commandments.

Just as profligate treatment of the material

goods that are entrusted to us is prohibited by our religion; so the profligate treatment of our spiritual goods, such as creeds, acts of worship, forms of sacred knowledge, ethics, and holy times and seasons, is also prohibited. It is very possible to be wasteful and transgress limits in such affairs. Extravagance in creed is considered to be more crucial and dangerous than the others. That is because wastefulness here results in losing our eternal happiness for the sake of temporary worldly convenience.

Our Lord has prohibited both extravagance and miserliness in the treatment of all our needs, from eating, drinking, and clothing ourselves all the way up to the highest values of our spiritual lives. He has commanded us to be moderate in everything. Thus every believer must pursue the ideal of a life that strikes the balance between the two extremes. In fact, if one does not observe the divine guidelines in using material and spiritual divine gifts, one cannot avoid falling into one or the other of these two unsound situations of extravagance and miserliness.

I would like to briefly describe some of the major acts of extravagance that may lead us to calamity in the Hereafter, and indicate the way to escape them.

Wastefulness in faith and creed

This is the gravest of all kinds of wastefulness. It damages the innate disposition toward Islam built into human nature, our intellectual and

spiritual dignity, by subjecting the mind to false beliefs, myths, superstitions, and pernicious trends of thought. To suffer this is to suffer the loss of eternal happiness.

Weakening of faith is a spiritual devastation that most often results from companionship with impious people. Our Lord warns us to be careful about falling into such a situation in the following verse:

“And when you see those who meddle with Our revelations, withdraw from them until they meddle with another topic. And if the Devil causes you to forget, sit not, after your remembrance, in the congregation of evildoers.” (An’ām, 6/68)

Indeed, close relationships with impious people lead to liking them, liking them leads to thinking like them, and thinking like them gradually weakens one’s faith until in time eternal life itself may be lost. The causes for this kind of extravagance in one’s faith are enumerated in the Qur’ân as following:

“From the Garden they will call to the guilty: What brought you to that Fire? They will answer: “We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the wretched. We used to plunge about (in vain dispute) with (other) plungers, and we denied the Day of Judgment.” (Muddaththir, 74/40-46)

Our Lord also indicates how one may avoid such a terrible end:

“O you who believe! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful.” (Tawbah, 9/119)

The power of understanding of our eyes and our hearts are among Allah’s bounties to us. To use those powers in a manner irrelevant to their purpose and thus not to see the divine signs is also a form of profligacy, since misuse lays waste to their proper function. Allah warns us about the unpleasant destiny resulting from extravagance and falsehood in the following Qur’ânic verse:

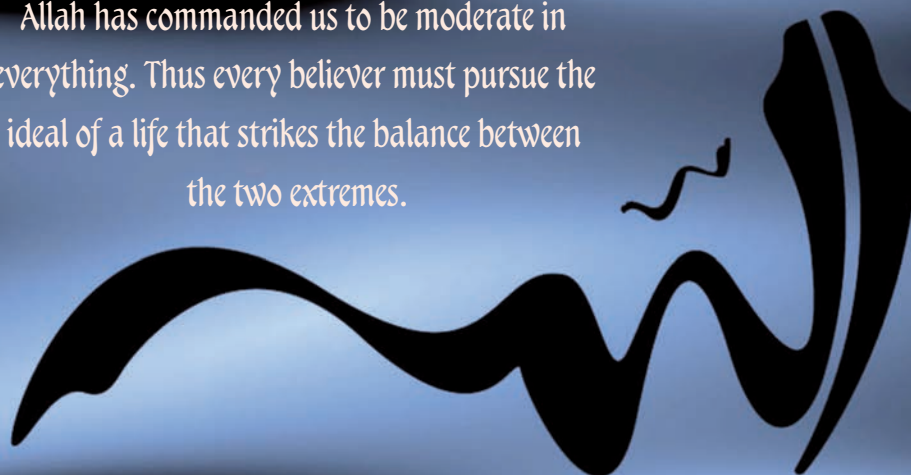
“....surely Allah does not guide whoever is profligate, a liar.” (Mu’min, 40/28)

There are also cases of creedal deviation, violations of approved boundaries in belief. One of the most important common cases of creedal deviation occurs when people visit the shrines of Allah’s Friends, and then direct their petitions to those Friends instead of to Allah. The appropriate way to visit Allah’s Friends is to examine their sound practices during their lives, to ponder their high degree in Allah’s eyes, and to ask Allah the Almighty for help out of respect for what He granted to that Friend. However, to place unconditional trust in the intercession of virtuous servants, claiming “such-and-such a virtuous servant will intervene for me and save me from punishment” is a false creed. In fact Allah declares in the Noble Qur’ân that only people whom Allah permits can intercede:

“On that day no intercession avails save (that of) him unto whom the All-Compassionate gives leave” (Tâhâ, 20/109).

It is also wrong to say that virtuous servants know everything, and read people’s minds

Allah has commanded us to be moderate in everything. Thus every believer must pursue the ideal of a life that strikes the balance between the two extremes.





Allah demands that when our foreheads touch the ground, our hearts should be filled with humility in a state of awareness, for faith becomes perfect only when mind and heart devote themselves together, cooperating with each other.

and hearts. They only know whatever Allah lets them know. Otherwise, even prophets do not know all things. Accordingly, our Prophet (pbuh) responded to certain questions he received by saying, "On this issue the one asked is not more knowledgeable than the one asking." Indeed, on the serious occasion of the slander of our mother A'ishah, Allah's Messenger did not receive a revelation clarifying the situation until a full month after the event. During this period, he could not make a decisive judgment about the matter. Another example is the case of the three Companions who, because of carelessness, missed joining the army assembled for the Tabuk campaign. Allah's Messenger received a revelation clarifying their situation only fifty days later.

ʿUthman ibn Mazʿūn passed away at the house of a certain Umul-Aʿlā in Madinah. Afterwards this woman declared, "O ʿUthmān, I bear witness that right now Allah the Exalted is treating you well!" Allah's Messenger stopped her.

"How do you know that Allah is treating him well, right now?" he asked.

The woman said, "I swear to Allah, I do not know!"

And Allah's Messenger said, "You see that ʿUthmān has died. Personally I hope that Allah shows mercy upon him. But although I am the prophet among you, I do not know what is going to happen to me or to you."

Ummu'l-Alā related, "I swear by Allah that

after that event, I never said anything about anybody (I simply hoped that my Lord would show mercy)." (Bukhārī, Tābir, 27)

Profligacy in ritual prayer

Moderation must characterize all acts of worship, even while ordinary dealings are so arranged as to form religiously beneficial customs. Indeed the way we accustom ourselves to do things usually determines the course of our behavior later on.

The first opportunity for extravagance in the performance of worship is the temptation to use more water than necessary in the course of the routine ritual ablution, or the full-body ritual ablution, because of needless misgivings.

Once the Messenger of Allah visited Sa'd while the latter was performing ritual ablution. The Prophet (pbuh) exclaimed, "What an extravagant use of water is this!"

Sa'd said, "How could extravagance pertain to ablution?"

The Prophet (pbuh) replied, "Indeed, one may waste water even while making ablution at a flowing river!" (Ibn Mājah, Tahārah, 48)

It is among the wasteful acts to neglect to pray in congregation if one has the opportunity. It is also wasteful to pray without spiritual depth, as if discharging an unpleasant obligation. Allah says, concerning those who do not feel the awe and peace of the prayer,

So woe to the worshippers who are heedless of their prayers... (Mā' ūn, 107/4-5).

The Messenger of Allah spoke about the loss of virtue in ritual prayers due to inner faults, meaning ritual prayers performed without the relevant spiritual awareness. He said, "There are those who perform the ritual prayer yet receive the reward of only half, one-third, one-fifth, one-sixth, one-seventh, one-eighth, one-ninth, or even one-tenth of its value!" (Abû Dâwûd, Salâh, 123, 124).

Allah the Almighty requires that both our minds and our hearts should be spiritually ready for worship at the time of prayer. Allah demands that when our foreheads touch the ground, our hearts should be filled with humility in a state of awareness, for faith becomes perfect only when mind and heart devote themselves together, cooperating with each other:

"Bow down in adoration, and bring yourself closer (to Allah)!" (Alaq, 96/19)

In the Qur'an, those who perform their ritual prayers properly are described:

Successful indeed are the faithful who are humble in their prayers... (Mu'minun, 23/1-2).

Another form of waste is to decrease the reward of the fast of Ramadan, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam, by bad actions such as telling lies and talking behind people's backs. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "If someone will not stop telling lies, will not stop doing business by deceiving people, then Allah will not care whether he stops eating and drinking." (Bukhârî, Sawm 8, Adab 51)

Fasting should make us better appreciate the value of the divine gifts bestowed upon us.

When we stop eating and drinking for even half a day, fasting makes us grasp how weak we are. It acquaints us with the life conditions of our brothers and sisters who suffer from poor economic conditions, and encourages our hearts to become more sensitive toward them. It should also encourage us to give alms with anticipation and humility, as if we were giving alms to Allah Himself. Indeed the Qur'an says:

"...Allah accepts the repentance of His servants and receives their gifts of charity..." (Tawbah 9/104).

The holy month of Ramadan, when fasting is obligatory, is full of light, spirituality, mercy, forgiveness, and the effects of divine favor. The Messenger of Allah urged us to benefit from the divine enlightenment and grace active during Ramadan as much as we possibly can. In the nights of Ramadan we should perform the routine prayers with full concentration, asking Allah for forgiveness, remembering Him, reflecting upon His attributes, and reciting the holy Qur'an. In the days we should continue worshipping with fullness of heart by giving alms and undertaking good deeds. At the time of breaking the fast, which is when Allah accepts the prayers of His servants, we should enjoy the peace that results from asking Allah for forgiveness, praising Him, and supplying food to our fellow Muslims for the Ramadan dinner. In the evening we should use our time wisely by pursuing proper performance of the special Ramadan prayers. If we cannot utilize this holy month properly, we will have missed receiving benefit from a sea of divine mercy and



Fasting should make us better appreciate the value of the divine gifts bestowed upon us. When we stop.

forgiveness right there next to us, and so will have simply wasted other gifts we have received.

There is profligacy in Pilgrimage when a pilgrim does not care whether he earns his living by lawful means; when he pays no attention to the rights of other people over him; when he busies himself with futile activities and engages in acts that set spiritual grace and enlightenment at a distance. All these count as wastefulness. In fact, the Messenger of Allah said of the profligate pilgrim, "When he shouts 'Labbayk!,' (The pilgrims' cry, 'O my Lord, I am at your service!') he is answered, 'You have nothing to do with that cry, or anything like it! Your earnings are unlawful, your food is unlawful, your transportation is unlawful. Go back as a sinner, without any reward! Be sad, for you will encounter things that you do not like!'" (Haythami, III, 209-210).

Profligacy appears in almsgiving and charity when one troubles the needy by reminding them of one's generosity. If a person should be infected with spiritual diseases of the heart such as hypocrisy and pride, the result will be wastefulness in giving.. Allah says in the noble Qur'an:

"Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. O you who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury...." (Baqarah, 2/263-264).

To deliver monetary alms and charity goods to people who really deserve them is extremely important. Allah commands us to do research in this regard and develop the skills "to recognize

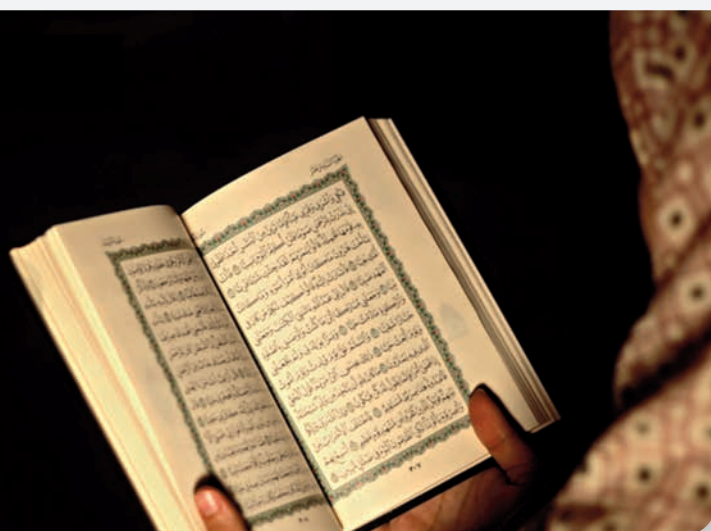
the needy by their faces." Certainly, our ability to deliver support to people to whom it is due depends on our own means of livelihood. The alms we spend and the charity we give will reveal to us, like a truthful mirror, whether our earnings were lawfully obtained. If we earn the money lawfully, it will be well spent on good and deserving people. If it is earned unlawfully, then it will be wasted on undeserving people.

There is wastefulness in Qur'an recitation if one makes no effort to recite it properly or to understand its message, and if one remains indifferent to the orders and prohibitions stated in it. Such a person is profligate regarding a great and precious treasure. Allah distinguishes those who are profligate and those who fully benefit from the light of the Qur'an in the following verse:

"We have given the Book as inheritance to such of Our servants as we have chosen. Among them are some who wrong their own souls; some who follow a middle course; and some who are, by Allah's leave, foremost in good deeds. That is the highest grace." (Fâtir, 35/32).

Just as the most privileged of human beings are the community of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), so the most elevated people of this community are those who recite the Qur'an, learn it by heart, absorb its messages, and follow the rules it provides. Some people wrong themselves: they do not recite the Qur'an and do not follow its guidance despite having had the opportunity to study. This is simply wasting a great gift. Some people follow a middle path, since they practice it at times, and leave it aside

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at times. Some others, however, by Allah's permission, excel in good deeds.

The noble Qur'ân is the language of the heavens and the earth. It is a blessing for souls and a treasure of spirituality. It is a miracle of expression dedicated to humanity. Every heart that fully absorbs it becomes a site of divine manifestation. Those who assimilate the generous Qur'ân experience unique peace of mind and happiness, for the Qur'ân is a micro cosmos embracing the whole universe in its magnificence. For the people of heart, the glorious Qur'ân is like a splendid door providing access to the depths of the world of contemplation.

In order to recite the Qur'ân properly, purity of heart is as important as cleanliness of body. There are spiritual diseases of the heart that prevent people from encountering the Qur'ân in an appropriate manner. Those who cannot receive the divine mercy, cure, and guidance in it end up in a condition of great loss.

Another issue requiring attention is the service of human beings. To serve others for Allah's sake, even in unimportant things, may be more valuable than much supererogatory prayer. The following case from the Age of Felicity explains this precisely.

One time when he was traveling, the Prophet (pbuh) encamped at a suitable place. Some of his Companions were fasting, so they fell asleep immediately, since they were quite tired. Others brought water to be used for ablution and set up tents for shelter. When the time to break the fast arrived, the Prophet (pbuh) said, "Today, those who did not fast acquired more reward (than those who fasted)." (Muslim, Siyâm, 100-101).

If a person occupies himself with secondary things and neglects earning his livelihood so that he becomes needy, this is also a kind of extravagance. Indeed, the Prophet (pbuh) stated,

"Allah the Almighty loves to see a servant who grows tired working for lawful livelihood." (Suyûtî, al-Jâmi' as-Saghir, I, 65).

Another kind of profligacy appears when people make supplications to Allah in a group. Some people will pray at extravagant length, especially when praying in public. They may even shout so as to indicate a special gift, perhaps uttering rhyming expressions. Such performances cause the community to lose interest. All this amounts to no more than wasting the essence of worship. In fact the Messenger of Allah prohibited making supplications in a screaming and shouting manner: "Do not scream when you pray to Allah. You are not addressing one who is deaf!" (Bukhârî, Jihâd, 131; Muslim, Dhikr, 44). Such immoderate petitions result in the destruction of the spirituality of pious acts.

Profligacy in worship eliminates its benefits. In a different hadith of the Prophet (pbuh), we read, "A group will emerge out of this community who will transgress the limits of purification and prayer." (Abû Dâwûd, Tahârah, 45).

Just as the most privileged of human beings are the community of the Prophet, so the most elevated people of this community are those who recite the Qur'ân, learn it by heart.

To sum up, Allah the Almighty warns us against performing ritual acts automatically, unconsciously, without seeking the enlightenment and deep engagement to be drawn from them. Allah asks our hearts to come closer to Him. They approach Him as they become filled with spirituality and illumination through a sense of divine blessings received. Allah wants our hearts to reach divine encounter.

O our Lord! May you protect us from wastefulness in faith, creeds and ritual either by neglecting them or by transgressing rightful limits! May you bestow upon us all the sublime taste and excitement acquired through perfecting our faith, and the peace and pleasure resulting from the living performance of ritual acts! Amin.

ETERNAL AFFECTION and the *Muhammedan* *Light*

The Prophet Muhammad's exceptional life was established by Allah Almighty in the most beautiful way, both spiritually and physically, and he was then blessed as a Mercy for the whole of mankind.

The following is a famous *hadith qudsi*, or saying of Allah:

"I was a hidden treasure, and I wished to be known; this is why I created the universe."

Thus we can understand that the universe and the whole of creation consist of Divine love. This is the reason why people see the world with a deep stirring in the soul, perceiving all the worldly belongings and wealth as a sign of love and affection, and why they realize that Allah Almighty has created everything; they accept this as evidence of His abilities and perfection. Rûmî explains the importance of love and affection for humans in the following lines:

"Know how pitiful is he who does not possess divine love and affection; he may even be inferior to a dog, because the dog of the Companions of the Cave ¹ searched for tamed love, and found it; he reached spiritual pleasure and those special mortals attained heaven."

It is our duty to study the life and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in order to attain this excellent temperament, faith and spiritual intuition.



The pious know that the reason for their creation is the bud of eternal affection, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh): ‘O beloved! If it was not for you I would not have created the universe.’ Complimented with the title ‘The Light of Creation’, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), has had the universe dedicated to him.

The First and Last Page of the Calendar of Prophethood

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), whose Divine light appeared before Adam, but who physically appeared after all the other Messengers, was both the first and the last in the line of Prophets. In respect of creation, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was the first, but in respect of time, he was the last Prophet. As he was the reason for the entire creation, Allah Almighty blessed him with the title ‘**Beloved**’. The Prophet Muhammad’s exceptional life was established by Allah Almighty in the most beautiful way, both spiritually and physically, and he was then blessed as a Mercy for the whole of mankind.

The manners and personality of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his behaviour towards mankind are an example for all. Allah Almighty created the Prophet Muhammad as an example of perfect character for everyone. This is why he was sent into the community as a pitiful orphan, passing through all the grades and levels of society and stages of life, becoming a head of state and Prophet; thus he reached the highest rank of authority and power. His display of excellent behavior and actions, his

intelligence, and his capabilities and power are an example for human beings at any level or rank. In fact, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent by Allah the Merciful as an example for all of mankind from the time he was appointed to the Prophethood until the Day of Judgment. We are told in the following verse:

“Truly in God’s Messenger you have an excellent example for the one who hopes for God and the Final Day and who remembers God abundantly.” [Aḥzāb 33: 21]

We can understand from this that it is our duty to study the life and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in order to attain this excellent temperament, faith and spiritual intuition. Every human must wrap themselves in his spirituality and affection in order to be able to apply their own knowledge and instincts when following his blessed example.

Before becoming a prophet, Muhammad lived a contented and dignified life, believing in the unity of Allah. In particular, during the period immediately before he was blessed with the duty of Prophethood, he would spend much of his time in worship, retreating to the Mountain of Light (Hirâ) and absorbing himself in deep contemplation.. The reason for this seclusion was the blatant perversity of his society and the sadness and affection he felt for those who were oppressed or destitute. In reality, all these trials were but a preparation by Allah Almighty to reveal the Qur’ân to mankind via the Prophet. The Qur’ân was to be our guide for life and it was



When the Prophet returned from the Mountain of Light, Hirâ, with the Divine order, it was obvious that he had reached a glorious phase that was very different from his former life.

to come to us through the holy heart of the Messenger. In the following Qur'ânic verse we learn:

“Say: “Whoever is an enemy to Jibril, who truly brought down [the] Revelation upon your heart by the Leave of God, confirming what came before it, and for guidance and news for the believers.” [Baqarah 2: 97]

With these experiences, the Prophet Muhammad's heart had reached a state of purity and a level from which he could comment upon and instruct in the revelations. The Prophet's heart had now been prepared for the Revelation; for six continuous months he had received spiritual signs and inspirations. For an average person to take up such a heavy burden would have been impossible; normal human beings are not created with this kind of capability. But for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the mysterious veil of spirituality had been removed and it was time for this gift and power of mystery to surface.

This Honored One of the Universe had combined the duties and power of all the Prophets with his actions and character. In the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) nobility and dignity, moral quality and the manifestation of Divine perfection reached their peak. Commandments were given. Instruction was provided for 'cleansing of the heart' and 'purification of the *nafs*', and with a pure heart he taught the prayers and servant-hood which were to be performed in front of Allah Almighty. By living and displaying the best of morals, the Prophet became the most perfect example of humanity.

The Essence of *Tasawwuf* (Islamic Spirituality)

The essence of *tasawwuf* is to attain a pure and healthy soul that has dedicated itself to the love for Allah; these are the cause of the Divine union of the soul. The spiritual events that happened to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) prior to receiving the Revelation, the purification of his soul and the cleansing of his ego are all a part of the grounds for *tasawwuf*.

Certainly, the Prophet Muhammad's heart and soul had attained a high spiritual level before he received the Revelation; the holy Prophet lived a life of good conduct and divinity. However, when he returned from the Mountain of Light, Hirâ, with the Divine order, it was obvious that he had reached a glorious phase that was very different from his former life.

Spiritually communicating with Allah Almighty, absorbing every speck of light from the glory of unification and the merits of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had reached the peak of faith and submission; he would stand in prayer until his feet were swollen, shedding tears in adoration while still continuing his Divine service. Even when he slept, the Prophet Muhammad's heart was always alert; he never distanced himself from Allah's remembrance or contemplation for a single moment.

With the blessing of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) attained this nature of his heart and a state of perfection; he continued to convey the message of Islam to all of mankind, aware of the Divine trust that he had been endowed with and which lifted him to the peak of all peaks. Prophet Muhammad rejected anything that would reflect on or prevent him from carrying out the Divine duty that had been bestowed upon him and he acknowledged the duty of worshipping Allah Almighty over everything else.

It is essential to begin first with praising the Lord of the Universe, the result of which is the purification of the heart from evil feelings, thoughts, and preoccupations; only then can the Qur'ân, which orders that the whole of creation take refuge in Allah alone, be a book of guidance for mankind until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his lifetime of actions are the guide for human conduct. Affection for the Prophet Muhammad is affection for Allah, obedience to him is obedience to Allah and rebellion against him is rebellion against Allah. Thus the blessed existence of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is a refuge of affection for mankind.

Tasawwuf is the unification of that which is evident and that which is hidden in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and is a blend of great affection. This is because every act of the Prophet Muhammad is a form of the essence of *tasawwuf* in that every action aims to make the heart pure, the ego (*nafs*) clean, and the soul healthy so that the human is prepared for his "Divine union" with his creator in the most excellent way.

Endnotes: 1) The Companions of the Cave were a group of young people who, fleeing oppression, entered a cave and were made by Allah to fall asleep and reawaken 100 years later. The dog mentioned here was guarding the door of the cave to keep the group safe and due to his proximity to the group, was also a recipient of the blessings of this Divine miracle.



Quiz For Children



1. In which surah of the Qur'ān have the Muslims been ordered to fast?

- a. Maidah
- b. Ahzab
- c. Kahf
- d. Baqarah

2. Which surah contains the longest ayah in the Qur'ān?

- a. Baqarah
- b. Waqiah
- c. Yunus
- d. Anfal

3. Which surah narrates the story of "The companions of the cave"?

- a. Nuh
- b. Ra'd
- c. Kahf
- d. Shams

4. Which uncle of the Prophet accepted Islam in Makkah and died in Uhud?

- a. Abbas
- b. Hamza
- c. Abu Lahab
- d. Abu Talib

5. Which surah mentions about one of the uncles of the Prophet?

- a. Nasr
- b. Fil
- c. Munafiqun
- d. Tabbat

6. Wudhu is Sunnah before Salat.

- a. True
- b. False

7. Masjeed Aqsa was built by David (pbuh).

- a. True
- b. False

8. The longest surah in the Qur'ān has 299 ayats.

- a. True
- b. False

9. The Prophet (pbuh) was born in the month Muharram.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Torah was revealed to the Prophet David.

- a. True
- b. False

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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