

APRIL 2026

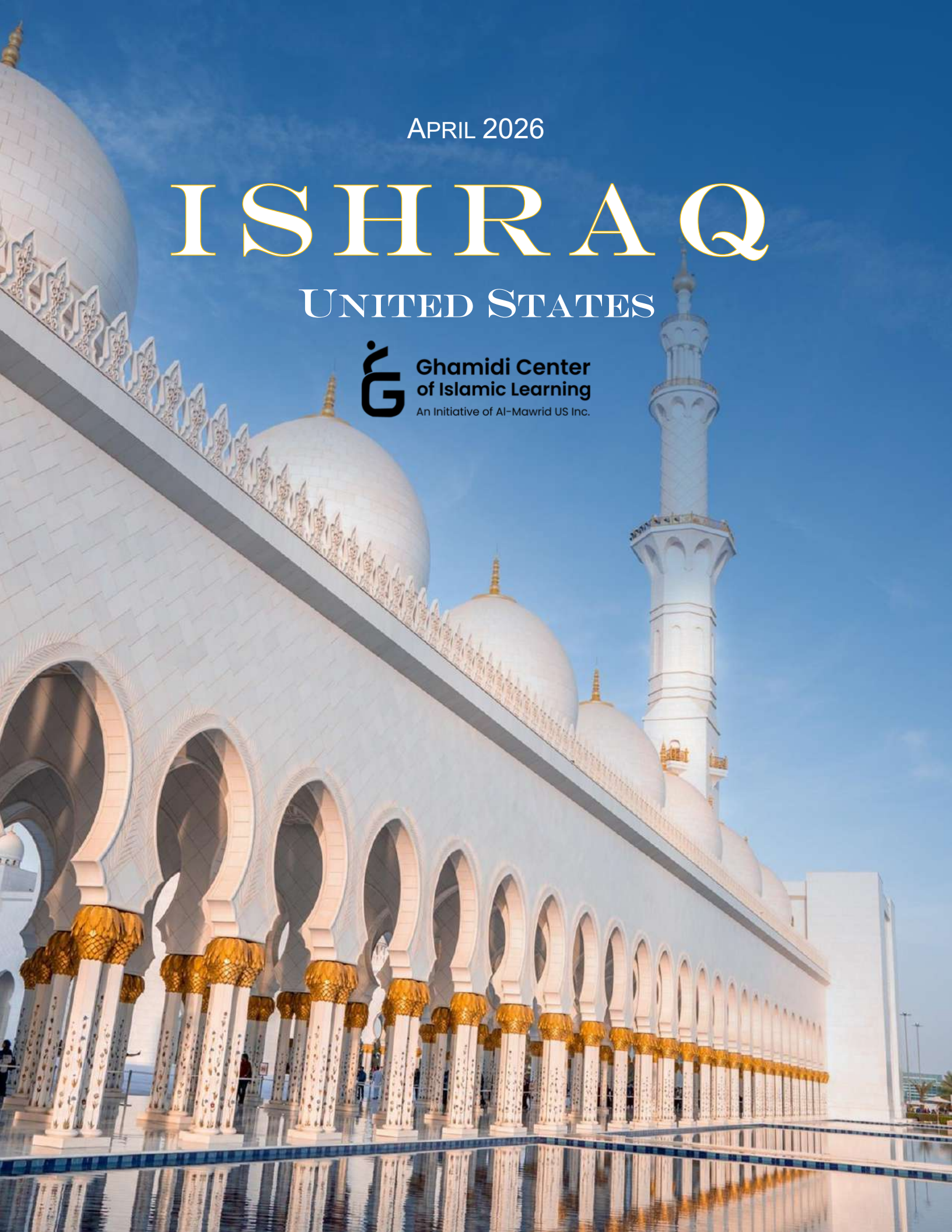
ISHRAQ

UNITED STATES



**Ghamidi Center
of Islamic Learning**

An Initiative of Al-Mawrid US Inc.



APRIL 2026

ISHRAQ

UNITED STATES

UNDER THE GUIDANCE
OF
JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI

EDITORS
MUKARAM AZIZ
ABID MEHMOOD HASHMI

DISCLAIMER

GHAMIDI CENTER OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IS AN ACADEMIC PLATFORM THAT EMBRACES DIVERSE SCHOLARLY DISCUSSIONS. WHILE WELCOMING ALL FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISCOURSE, ITS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HERE MAY NOT NECESSARILY ALIGN WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S OFFICIAL STANCE. THE PLATFORM ENCOURAGES RESPECTFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOG FOR INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE AND EXPLORATION.



**Ghamidi Center
of Islamic Learning**
An Initiative of Al-Mawrid US Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE

THE PROHIBITION OF VULGARITIES SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN	1
MARRIAGE TO UNDERAGE GIRLS: AN ERRONEOUS INFERENCE FROM THE QUR'AN MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	3
THE DECLINE OF MUSLIMS JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI	5
THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	7
TAFHEEM AL-ATHAR (UNDERSTANDING THE TRADITIONS) DR. AMMAR KHAN NASIR	8
THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION - 9 SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN	15
PHARAOH'S CORPSE AND THE STATEMENT OF THE NOBLE QUR'ĀN – 2 DR. MUHAMMAD AMIR GAZDAR	16
THE KILLING OF ABEL: A COMPARATIVE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY NAEEM AHMAD BALOCH	22
A STUDY OF THE MUSNAD AHMAD – 7 DR. AMMAR NASIR; DR MUTI SYED	27
HAYAT-E-AMIN - 31 NAEEM AHMAD BALOCH	35
ANCIENT GENEALOGIES AND TRADITIONS - 2 DR. KHURSHEED RIZWI	39
WAR AND RELIGION KHURSHEED NADEEM	43
THE POETIC TRADITION OF EASTERN ARABS MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS	45
TEACHER OR CLERGYMAN – TORCH OR EXTINGUISHER AAMIR IQBAL YAZDANI	49
SIMPLICITY DR. SHEHZAD SALEEEM	50
NEWSLETTER AL MAWRID US	51

THE PROHIBITION OF VULGARITIES

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

God has declared unlawful five matters within the sphere of morality—vulgarities (*fawāḥish*), usurpation of rights, wrongful transgression, polytheism (*shirk*), and religious innovation (*bid'ah*). In Sūrah al-A'raf, He has said:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْأَلْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَأَنْ تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Say: My Lord has only forbidden lewd acts, whether open or hidden and usurping rights and wrongful oppression and that you associate with God that for which He did not send down any sanction and that you fabricate something about God that you know not.

Among these five prohibitions, the first is vulgarities (*fawāḥish*). The term “*fawāḥish*” is the plural of “*fāḥishah*,” which denotes blatant indecency. It refers to acts such as adultery (*zinā*), homosexual acts (*ighlām*), intercourse with animals, and other similar forms of sexual deviance. The public discussion of sexual matters and the exposure of sexual organs are likewise included within its scope. All of these are actions that human nature deems reprehensible, and whose moral gravity is universally acknowledged by the collective conscience of humankind. Whether committed in private or in public, they are prohibited in every circumstance. Thus, the revered teacher has written:

... Whether sexual immorality is committed openly or in secret, it is unlawful in every case. The plural term [fawāḥish] has been used for this reason: so that it may encompass adultery, sodomy, intercourse with animals, and all crimes of this nature. Whether sexual organs are exposed before others, sexual matters are disclosed, or sexual immorality is perpetrated—the term ‘fawāḥish’ comprehends all of these. (Al-Bayān, 2/149)

Regarding *fawāḥish*, everyone knows that their immense allure becomes a cause of enticement and incitement. If a person becomes inclined toward them even once, he soon becomes their captive. Gradually, they become included among his habits, after which deliverance from them becomes impossible. For this very reason, God has forbidden even approaching them. It is said:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ

And do not go near fawāḥish, whether they be manifest or concealed. (Qur'an, 6:51)

According to Javed Ahmed Ghamidi:¹

The intent of this directive is that one must refrain from all such matters that incite sexual immorality, invite toward it, or lead one into its proximity.

Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāhī writes:

... The expression “lā taqrabū” (do not even approach) has been employed in the Qur'an to restrain people from those evils whose very shadow proves ruinous—evils that are not only harmful in themselves, but whose causes

¹Al-Bayān, 2/116.

and motives are likewise extremely perilous. They cast their snare from afar and seize a person in such a way that escape becomes exceedingly difficult. One can attain protection from such evils only by exercising full vigilance over one's gaze, speech, and thoughts; by carefully sealing every opening through which temptation might enter; and by keeping oneself far removed from places where the possibility of slipping exists. (Tadabbur-e Qur'ān 3/201)

From the very term *fawāḥish*, it is evident that it does not denote any single, specific act. Rather, it is a principled expression that applies to every act in which nakedness, obscenity, and indecency are present. In the Noble Qur'an, this term has been used for various forms of indecency, each of which constitutes a distinct offense. Thus, *fawāḥish* is not the name of a particular crime; rather, it serves as an overarching category encompassing all crimes of indecency. Some of its forms mentioned in the Qur'an and ḥadīth include:

- adultery (zinā)
- homosexual acts (ighlām)
- nakedness
- obscene speech
- incitement to adultery
- publicizing adultery
- marriage within prohibited degrees of relationship
- marriage between an unchaste man or woman and a chaste man or woman

MARRIAGE TO UNDERAGE GIRLS: AN ERRONEOUS INFERENCE FROM THE QUR'AN

Muhammad Hasan Ilyas

By citing verse 4 of *Sūrah al-Ṭalāq*, some people argue that since the Qur'an specifies the waiting period (*ʿiddah*) for women who have not menstruated, it thereby acknowledges and permits marriage to underage girls.

According to the respected teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamdi, this conclusion arises from reading the verse in isolation from its context. When the verse is considered in light of its full background, its style, and its internal coherence, it becomes evident that the issue of underage marriage is not under discussion here at all.

In order to correctly determine the intent of the verse, it is necessary to understand a few fundamental points:

1. This verse was not revealed to grant permission for marriage; rather, it sets forth the rulings of the waiting period after divorce. The address concerns women who have already been divorced, and whose waiting periods are being determined according to their differing biological states. Those who have despaired of menstruation—their waiting period is three months; those who are pregnant—their waiting period is until delivery; and those who have not menstruated—their waiting period has likewise been fixed at three months. The entire discourse, therefore, pertains to determining the waiting period, not to the permissibility of marriage.

2. In fact, the words of the verse are: “*wa-allāʾi lam yaḥidna*” (those who have not menstruated). In Arabic, “*lam*” denotes a categorical negation, that is, it completely negates the occurrence of an act. Thus, “*lam yaḥidna*” means: they have not menstruated. However, the referent of this negation must be determined from the context. If what was intended were those girls whose age has not yet reached menstruation, then not menstruating there would be an entirely natural and self-evident matter. At such an age, not menstruating is not something unusual that would require being stated specifically.

For example, if it is said: “those girls who have not yet obtained employment,” then in common understanding this refers to those girls who have reached the age and eligibility for employment, yet for some reason have not obtained employment. No one takes this sentence to mean very young girls, because at that age not obtaining employment is self-evident.

In precisely the same way, the application of “*lam yaḥidna*” becomes meaningful only where menstruation is a natural stage, yet for some reason has not occurred. That is, the discussion concerns those women who can enter the stage of the age of menstruation, not such underage girls in whom the stage of menstruation has not yet arrived at all.

3. In the verse there is another important clause: “*in irtabtum*,” i.e., “if you are in doubt.” Consider the sequence: first there is mention of women who have despaired of menstruation; then the matter of doubt; then the waiting period of three months; then mention of those who have not menstruated; and immediately thereafter the waiting period of pregnant women is stated. This entire sequence makes clear that the discourse is about menstruation, pregnancy, and the determination of lineage. Here “doubt” does not relate to age; rather, it relates to whether the womb is empty or not. If a woman’s marital relations have been established, then even in the case of not menstruating or in the state of menopause, the possibility remains that perhaps a pregnancy exists. It is to

eliminate this possibility that a three-month waiting period has been fixed, so that no doubt remains regarding lineage.

Therefore, this point is decisive: when the doubt concerns the possibility of pregnancy, then the one under discussion can only be a woman in whom the capacity for pregnancy exists. An underage girl who has not yet reached physical puberty has, in the first place, no possibility of pregnancy at all. If pregnancy is not possible, then neither does any doubt make sense, nor does any meaningfulness of the waiting period remain. From this it becomes plainly evident that the verse is not about underage girls.

4. Furthermore, the Qur'an declares marriage to be a firm covenant. It is a contract of responsibility, for which consciousness, consent, and the capacity for responsibility are necessary. The Qur'an has not fixed any age for marriage, because it leaves rational self-evidences to human beings and regards it as an accepted reality that responsibility is assigned only when a person reaches both puberty and sound judgment. That is, along with physical puberty, mental maturity is also necessary. The demand of reason and knowledge is likewise that marriage should take place only when a person is capable of understanding and fulfilling this responsibility. Accordingly, deriving the permissibility of marrying underage girls from this verse is not correct in any way. The purpose of the verse is to ensure the protection of lineage through the waiting period after divorce, not to deem underage marriage permissible.

With due regard to this very background, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi has translated this verse in Al-Bayān and has made the meaning clear. He stated:

Those of your women, who have ceased menstruating and they also who have not menstruated [in spite of reaching its age], if you have any doubt about them, their waiting period is three months. And the waiting period of pregnant women is until they deliver the child. [These are the directives of God; follow them,] and [remember that] he who fears God, He will create ease for him in his matters. This is the directive of God which He has revealed to you. And He who fears God, God will brush away his sins from him and will increase the reward [of his virtues]. (Qur'an, 65:4)

THE DECLINE OF THE MUSLIMS

Javed Ahmed Ghamidi

The Muslims remained, more or less, a great power of the world for a thousand years. In knowledge and wisdom, in strategy and politics, and in wealth and splendor, no nation could compete with them. They were ruling the whole world. This kingship God granted to them, and God Himself has taken it away from them. God's law regarding the rise and fall of nations is that, for elevation, He selects whomsoever He wills in accordance with His law of trial; but once He has selected [a people], He changes that condition only when, in terms of knowledge and morals, it casts itself down completely into abasement.

A second matter has also occurred with the Muslims. Their origin has always been Arab. They are, for the most part, from the Ishmaelites, and it is known about the Ishmaelites that they are the progeny of Abraham (PBUH). Accordingly, that divine practice also applies to them which has been stated in the Qur'an concerning the progeny of Abraham (PBUH). That practice is that if these people remain steadfast upon the truth, they will be granted leadership of the nations; and if they deviate from it, they will be removed from this office and afflicted with the punishment of humiliation and subjugation.

Thus, if the Muslims are afflicted with this punishment, it is neither some random matter, nor has it occurred as the result of others' conspiracies, as our religious and political leaders generally say. It has determined causes; it has occurred only under those. Behind it, God's law of dismissal and appointment is at work. If one attempts to understand it in its light, the causes of decline become entirely clear and come plainly into view.

These are, fundamentally, three:

First, the Muslims were made the bearers of the Divine Book. This is not merely a book; it is God's Balance (*mīzān*), revealed so that, in matters of religion, every judgment of truth and falsehood may be made by weighing it against this standard. The Muslims should present all their disagreements before it, and whatever decision is issued from its court, they should accept it without hesitation. It should be the center of their knowledge and practice. In all matters of faith and creed, and religion and *sharī'ah*, it should be the sole point of reference; every inquiry, every opinion, and every viewpoint should always be kept subordinate to it—so much so that even any statement of God's prophets should not be regarded as a judge over it; rather, it alone should be regarded as judge over everything. For many past centuries, the Muslims, unfortunately, have not been able to maintain this status of the Divine Book in their knowledge and practice. Thus, in Iqbāl's words, they have remained the very embodiment of: "*kbwār az mahjūrī-yi Qur'ān shudī*" ("You became abased through estrangement from the Qur'an").

Second, the world operates as a realm of causes. These causes are, for the most part, discovered and harnessed through human mastery of the scientific disciplines. The treasures that God has placed within the earth and the heavens can only be uncovered through such mastery. Human history testifies that, apart from the fluctuations of rise and decline, even human survival and destruction have largely depended upon proficiency in these sciences. From the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel to the remarkable advancements of the modern age, this reality is evident on every page of history.

Although Muslims did, at times, take an interest in these sciences, the intellectual energies of their learned classes remained largely absorbed in philosophy and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), despite there being no real need for such preoccupation. The questions debated within philosophy and mysticism had already been conclusively addressed

in God's Book, which was revealed as the final proof. Engagement in these disciplines consequently distanced Muslims both from the Divine Book and from the empirical sciences. Even today, in traditional seminaries, those same discussions of philosophy and mysticism continue to be repeated—discussions that exemplify what has been described as “knowledge that does not benefit.” Thus, while the world has advanced to where it has, they remain in a state of bewilderment.

Third, Muslims have exhibited grave negligence in their moral training. It is as a consequence of this very neglect that lying, dishonesty, embezzlement, breach of trust, theft, usurpation, adulteration, usury, giving short measure and weight, slander, breaking promises, preoccupation with base occult practices, declaring one another unbelievers and sinners, grave worship, polytheistic customs, obscene forms of entertainment, and similar offenses have become so widespread in their societies as to be astonishing. These were precisely the crimes of the Israelites on account of which the prophets of God pronounced judgment against them, and they were consequently deprived of God's mercy. Muslims, too, have reached a similar state. If one wishes to see a portrayal of their condition, it may be found in the pages of the Gospel, where Jesus (PBUH), presents his indictment of the Israelites—their scholars, rabbis, intellectuals, and those vested with authority and judgment. Their homes and doorways, their streets and marketplaces—all seem to proclaim: *these are Muslims, at whose condition even the Jews would feel ashamed.*

The decline of the Muslims has occurred due to these causes. If they wish to emerge from this condition of degeneration and decline, nothing can be achieved by *jihād* and fighting, nor by movements of resistance. The history of the last two hundred years, from Seringapatam to Afghanistan, bears witness to this. To emerge from it, they must remove those causes that became the reason for their decline; otherwise, this very humiliation, misery, and subjugation will always remain their destiny. God's law is impartial. They have come within its reach. When they wish to escape from it by fighting others, in reality they are fighting God, who has imposed upon them His servants of “possessors of severe might” (*ulī ba'sin shadīd*). This is God's punishment. The paths to be saved from it are not those which their religious and political leaders and the self-styled *mujāhidīn* are telling them. By walking these paths, they can neither end the influence of the great powers in their countries, nor expel the Jews and the Hindus from Palestine and Kashmir. Let them study the call of the prophets in both the Qur'an and the Bible. Whether God's messengers came in the time of the Babylonian captivity or in the era of Roman rulers, they never told their nation these paths. They would tell their nation its crimes; these people consider it their craft to search out others' crimes and to revile them. The Noble Qur'an is in our hands. Look at it from beginning to end: you will not see in it a single word of condemnation against the rulers of Babylon and Rome; rather, everywhere you will see the indictment of the Israelites. This same indictment needs, at this time, to be recited to the Muslims as well—because the promise that God had with the Israelites is the very same with the Muslims: Fulfill My covenant, and I shall fulfill My covenant with you. My mercy is waiting; but if you continue to walk upon these very paths, then I too shall walk upon the path upon which I am walking, and the lash of My punishment shall keep raining upon your backs. “So take heed, O people of insight!”

[2010]

THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

Translation and Research: Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

— 1 —

It is narrated from ‘Iyād ibn Hīmār al-Mujāshī‘ī (RA), that the God’s Messenger (PBUH) said one day in his sermon: “There will be five types of people in Hell: the weak person who has no restraint—those among you who are subordinate—who neither establishes a household nor strives for wealth and property; the treacherous person whose greed cannot remain concealed and who commits treachery even in a trivial matter; the person who deceives you morning and evening concerning your family and your property.” Thereafter, the Prophet (sws), mentioned miserliness or lying, and at the end he said: “and the one who transgresses all bounds, of evil character.” (Muslim, no. 5113)

— 2 —

It is narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr (RA) that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Whoever kills a person under covenant unjustly shall not even smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance is perceived from a distance of forty years’ journey.” (Al-Bukhārī, no. 2946)

— 3 —

It is narrated from Abū Hurayrah (RA) that the God’s Messenger (PBUH) said: “There are three people with whom God, exalted is He, will neither speak on the Day of Resurrection, nor look at them with a gaze of regard, nor purify them; and for them is a painful punishment: one who does not desist from fornication even in old age; second, one who, despite being a king, lies to people; and third, the person whom even poverty does not prevent from standing arrogantly against the truth.” (Musnad Isḥāq, no. 168)



TAFHEEM AL-ĀTHAR (UNDERSTANDING THE TRADITIONS)

Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir

Dialogues between the Persian chieftains and the Companions

(18)

(15)

عَنْ سَيْفٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ وَطَلْحَةَ وَزِيَادٍ، قَالُوا: أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ سَعْدُ بَقِيَّةَ ذَوِي الرَّأْيِ جَمِيعًا، وَحَبَسَ الثَّلَاثَةَ، فَخَرَجُوا حَتَّى أَتَوْهُ لِيُعْطُوا عَلَيْهِ اسْتِقْبَاحًا، فَقَالُوا لَهُ: إِنَّ أَمِيرَنَا يَقُولُ لَكَ: إِنَّ الْجَوَارِ يَحْفَظُ الْوَلَاةَ، وَإِنِّي أَدْعُوكَ إِلَى مَا هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَنَا وَلكَ، الْعَاقِبَةُ أَنْ تَقْبَلَ مَا دَعَاكَ اللهُ إِلَيْهِ، وَتَرْجِعَ إِلَى أَرْضِنَا، وَتَرْجِعَ إِلَى أَرْضِكَ، وَبَعْضُنَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ، إِلَّا أَنْ دَارَكُمْ لَكُمْ وَأَمْرَكُمْ فِيكُمْ، وَمَا أَصَبْتُمْ مِمَّا وَرَاءَكُمْ كَانَتْ زِيَادَةٌ لَكُمْ دُونِنَا، وَكُنَّا لَكُمْ عَوْنًا عَلَى أَحَدٍ إِنْ أَرَادَكُمْ أَوْ قَوِيَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقَى اللهُ يَا رُسْتُمُ، وَلَا يَكُونَنَّ هَلَاكُ قَوْمِكَ عَلَى يَدَيْكَ، فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَ أَنْ تَغِيْبَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَدْخُلَ فِيهِ وَتَطْرُدَ بِهِ الشَّيْطَانَ عَنْكَ

فَقَالَ: إِنِّي قَدْ كَلَّمْتُ مِنْكُمْ نَفْرًا، وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ فَهَمُوا عَنِّي رَجَوْتُ أَنْ تَكُونُوا قَدْ فَهَمْتُمْ، وَإِنَّ الْأَمْثَالَ أَوْضَحُ مِنْ كَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ، وَسَأَضْرِبُ لَكُمْ مَثَلَكُمْ تُبْصِرُوا: إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ أَهْلَ جَهْدٍ فِي الْمَعِيشَةِ، وَقَسَفَ فِي الْهَيْبَةِ، لَا تَمْتَعُونَ وَلَا تَنْتَصِفُونَ فَلَمْ نَسِئْ جَوَارَكُمْ، وَلَمْ نَدْعُ مُوَأَسَاتِكُمْ، تَفْحُمُونَ الْمَرَّةَ بَعْدَ الْمَرَّةِ، فَمِيرَكُمْ ثُمَّ بَرَدُكُمْ، وَتَأْتُونَنَا أَجْرَاءَ وَتُجَارًا فَحَسِبُ الْبَيْكُ، فَلَمَّا تَطَاعَمْتُمْ بَطْعَامِنَا، وَشَرِبْتُمْ شَرَابِنَا، وَأَطَلَكُمُ ظِلَّنَا، وَصَفَقْتُمْ لِقَوْمَكُمْ فَدَعَوْتُمُوهُمْ، ثُمَّ أَتَيْنَاكُمْ بِهِمْ، وَإِنَّمَا مَثَلُكُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ وَمَثَلُنَا كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ كَانَ لَهُ كَرْمٌ، فَرَأَى فِيهِ ثَعْلَبًا، فَقَالَ: وَمَا ثَعْلَبٌ إِفَانْطَلَقَ الثَّعْلَبُ، فَدَعَا الثَّعَالِبَ إِلَى ذَلِكَ الْكَرْمِ، فَلَمَّا اجْتَمَعْنَ عَلَيْهِ سَدَّ عَلَيْهِنَّ صَاحِبُ الْكَرْمِ الْجُحْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّ يَدْخُلْنَ مِنْهُ، فَفَتَلَهُنَّ، وَقَدْ عَلِمَتْ أَنَّ الَّذِي حَمَلَكُمْ عَلَى هَذَا الْجَرْصِ وَالطَّمَعِ وَالْجَهْدِ، فَارْجِعُوا عَنَّا عَامَكُمْ هَذَا، وَامْتَارُوا حَاجَتَكُمْ، وَلَكُمْ الْعُودُ كُلَّمَا اخْتَجْتُمْ، فَإِنِّي لَا أَشْتَهِي أَنْ أَفْتُلُكُمْ

Sayf ibn 'Umar has transmitted from Muḥammad, Ṭalḥah, and Ziyād that they said: Thereafter Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ sent the remaining people of sound judgment to the Persians, while he detained those three—namely Rib'ī ibn 'Amir, Hudhayfab ibn Muḥṣin, and al-Mughīrah ibn Shu'bah. They went out and came to Rustum in order to make clear to him the gravity of his reprehensible conduct. They said: "Our commander says to you that good neighborliness [i.e., maintaining good relations with one's neighbors] safeguards rulers, and I invite you to a matter that is better for us and for you. Well-being [for both of us] lies in your accepting this call to which God has summoned [you], and that we return to our region and you to your land, and that we maintain good relations with one another. However, your territory shall remain yours and authority shall remain with you; and whatever additional lands you acquire shall also be yours, and we shall have no involvement in them. If an enemy attacks you, or if he is powerful against you, we shall be your helpers. O Rustum, fear God, and do not, with your own hands, bring about the ruin of your people; for between you and this best offer [that we have placed before you] there is no distance beyond that you simply accept it and, through it, drive Satan away from yourself."

Rustum replied: "I have spoken with some among you; had they understood what I said, I would have hoped that you too would understand. In comparison with excessive speech, discourse by means of parables is clearer. I shall set forth for you a parable, by which you will understand the matter: You used to live a life of severe toil and deprivation of ease; you could neither protect yourselves nor take retribution from one who wronged

[you]. Yet we did not behave ill toward you in neighborliness, nor did we withdraw our support from you. Time after time you would intrude into our territory, and we would provide you with grain and send you back. You would come to us as laborers and as merchants, and we would treat you well. But when you ate our food, drank our beverages, and stayed in our shaded places, you went and recounted these things to your people and called them, and then brought them to us. Your likeness and ours is like that of a man who had a vineyard. He saw in it a fox and said, 'What is a fox!' Then that fox went and called other foxes into the vineyard. When they had all gathered, the owner of the vineyard blocked the hole through which they used to enter and killed them all. I know that what has brought you here is greed, covetousness, and your wretchedness. Therefore, return from here this year and take away the grain you need; and whenever you have need, keep coming back. I do not wish to kill you." (Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, 3/525)

Lexical Analysis

qashaf: wretchedness; destitution.

taqḥumūna: that is, to descend upon a region; to plunge into a matter without due thought.

Commentary

In the conversation with Rustam, the Arab delegation reiterated—more explicitly—the point that Nu'mān ibn Muqarrin (PBUH) had mentioned in his address at the court of Yazdegerd. Nu'mān said:

فان اجبتم الى ديننا خلفنا فيكم كتاب الله واقمناكم عليه، على ان تحكموا باحكامه، ونرجع عنكم وشأنكم وبلادكم

If you accept our religion, we shall leave with you the Book of God, and we shall establish you upon it, so that you may judge in accordance with its rulings; and we shall hand your territory over to you and depart from here. (Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, 3/499)

The intent was that, should the Persian notables accept Islam, their political autonomy would remain intact, and they would not be required to merge their kingdom into the Arab polity. In the dialogue under discussion with Rustam, the Arab delegation further clarified that, in such a case, amicable relations would be established between the Persian Empire and the Arab government; and the Arabs would not only refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the Persian kingdom and in the further territories they had conquered, but would also be prepared—wherever needed—to assist them against the enemy.

Variants

This incident has also been transmitted by Al-Kalā'ī from the narration of Sayf ibn 'Umar (Al-Iktifā', 2/462–463).

(16)

عَنْ ابْنِ الرَّقِيعِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ، قَالَ: وَقَالَ: لَمْ يَخْلُقِ اللَّهُ خَلْقًا أَوْلَعَ مِنْ دُبَابٍ وَلَا أَضَرَّ مَا خَلَكَكُمْ يَا مَعْشَرَ الْعَرَبِ، تَرُونَ الْهَلَاكَ وَيُنذِلِكُمْ فِيهِ الطَّمْعَ، وَسَأَضْرِبُ لَكُمْ مَثَلَكُمْ: إِنَّ الدُّبَابَ إِذَا رَأَى الْعَسَلَ طَارَ وَقَالَ: مَنْ يُوَصِّلُنِي إِلَيْهِ وَلَهُ دِرْهَمَانٌ؟ حَتَّى يَدْخُلَهُ، لَا يُتَّهِنُهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا عَصَاهُ، فَإِذَا دَخَلَهُ غَرِقَ وَنَشِبَ وَقَالَ: مَنْ يُخْرِجُنِي وَلَهُ أَرْبَعَةُ دَرَاهِمٍ؟ وَقَالَ أَيْضًا: إِنَّمَا مَثَلُكُمْ مَثَلُ تَعَلَّبِ دَخَلِ جُجْرًا وَهُوَ مَهْزُولٌ ضَعِيفٌ إِلَى كَرْمٍ، فَكَانَ فِيهِ يَأْكُلُ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ، فَرَأَاهُ صَاحِبُ الْكَرْمِ وَرَأَى مَا بِهِ فَرَحِمَهُ، فَلَمَّا طَالَ مَكُثُهُ فِي الْكَرْمِ وَسَمِنَ وَصَلَحَتْ حَالُهُ، وَذَهَبَ مَا كَانَ بِهِ مِنَ الْهَزَالِ أَشْبَرَ، فَجَعَلَ يَعْثُ بِالْكَرْمِ وَيُفْسِدُ أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ، فَاشْتَدَّ عَلَى صَاحِبِ الْكَرْمِ، فَقَالَ: لَا أَصْبِرُ عَلَى هَذَا مِنْ أَمْرِ هَذَا، فَأَخَذَ لَهُ خَشَبَةً وَاسْتَعَانَ عَلَيْهِ عِلْمَانَهُ، فَطَلَبُوهُ وَجَعَلَ يُرَاوِعُهُمْ فِي الْكَرْمِ، فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مُفْلِحِينَ عَنْهُ ذَهَبَ لِيُخْرِجَ مِنَ الْجُجْرِ الَّذِي دَخَلَ مِنْهُ فَنَشِبَ، اتَّسَعَ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ مَهْزُولٌ، وَضَاقَ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ سَمِينٌ، فَجَاءَهُ وَهُوَ عَلَى

تَأْتِكَ الْحَالِ صَاحِبُ الْكَرَمِ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يَضْرِبُهُ حَتَّى قَتَلَهُ، وَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مَهَازِيلُ، وَقَدْ سَمِنْتُمْ شَيْئًا مِنْ سَمَنِ، فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ تَخْرُجُونَ

وَقَالَ أَيْضًا: إِنَّ رَجُلًا وَضَعَ سَلًا وَجَعَلَ طَعَامَهُ فِيهِ، فَأَتَى الْجُرْدَانُ فَحَرَقُوا سَلَّهُ فَدَخَلُوا فِيهِ، فَأَرَادَ سَدَّهُ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ: لَا تَفْعَلْ، إِذَا يَحْرَقْنَاهُ، وَلَكِنْ انْقُبْ بِجِيَالِهِ، ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِيهَا قَصَبَةً مَجُوفَةً، فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الْجُرْدَانُ دَخَلْنَ مِنَ الْقَصَبَةِ وَحَرَجْنَ مِنْهَا، فُكَلَّمَا طَلَعَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُرْدٌ فَتَلْتُمُوهُ وَقَدْ سَدَدْتُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ، فَيَأْيَاكُمْ أَنْ تَفْتَحُمُوا الْقَصَبَةَ، فَلَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا أَحَدٌ إِلَّا قَتِيلٌ، وَمَا دَعَاكُمْ إِلَى مَا صَنَعْتُمْ وَلَا أَرَى عَدَدًا وَلَا عُدَّةً

It is narrated from Ibn Rufayl, from his father Rufayl, that Rustam said: God has not created any creature more greedy and more vexing than the fly; but, O Arabs, you are even more so than it. You see destruction with your own eyes, yet greed casts you into it. I shall set forth your example: when the fly sees honey, it flies and says, "Who is it that will take two dirhams from me and bring me to it?" Then it plunges into it, and whoever tries to stop it, it does not heed him. Then, when it falls into the honey, it drowns in it and becomes trapped, and then it says, "Who is it that will take four dirhams from me and bring me out of here?"

Rustam also said: Your example is that of a fox that was weak and thin [from hunger], and in that state entered a vineyard. Then it continued eating from it for as long as God willed. The owner of the vineyard saw it and saw its condition, so he took pity on it [and said nothing to it]. Then, when it had remained in the vineyard for a long time, and it became fat and its condition improved, and its thinness departed, it became arrogant. Now it began to ruin and destroy the grapes of the vineyard more than it ate. This matter became intensely displeasing to the owner of the vineyard, and he said, "I cannot endure this manner of conduct from it." So he took up a stick and enlisted the help of his slaves, and they began searching for it. The fox continued to evade them in the vineyard; but when it saw that they were not going to abandon its pursuit, it sought to exit through the very hole by which it had entered, but it became stuck. When it was thin, the hole was spacious; and when it became fat, the hole became constricted. In that state the owner of the vineyard arrived and kept striking it until he killed it. [O Arabs,] you too, when you came here, were thin and weak; but now you have become stout—so consider how you will depart from here!

Rustam also said: A man placed his food in a basket. The rats came, gnawed the basket, and entered it. He wished to block the hole, but people said, "Do not do that, otherwise they will make another hole. Instead, make another hole on the opposite side, directly facing it, and then insert into it a hollow bamboo tube. When the rats come, they will enter through that tube and exit through it. Whenever a rat emerges before you, kill it, while you have blocked the routes." Therefore, [O Arabs,] beware: do not attempt to plunge into that tube, for whoever comes out of it will be killed. What, after all, has induced you to this action, when you have neither numbers nor war-gear?" (Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, 3/527)

Lexical Analysis

lā yunahn'ihu: "nahnaha" means "to forbid"; to restrain.

ghayru muqli'n: "aqila'a 'an al-shay", that is, he desisted from a matter; he refrained.

Variants

This incident, on the authority of Sayf ibn 'Umar's report, has also been transmitted by al-Kalā'ī [as well] [al-Iktifā', 2/463].

(18)

عَنْ سَيْفٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ وَطَلْحَةَ بِإِسْنَادِهِمَا وَزِيَادٍ مَعَهُمَا، قَالُوا: فَتَكَلَّمَ الْقَوْمُ فَقَالُوا: أَمَا مَا ذَكَرْتُمْ مِنْ سُوءِ حَالِنَا فِيمَا مَضَى وَأَنْتِشَارِ أَمْرِنَا فَلَمَّا تَبَلَّغَ كُنْهَهُ يَمُوتُ الْمَيْتُ مِنَّا إِلَى النَّارِ، وَيَبْقَى الْبَاقِي مِنَّا فِي بُؤْسٍ، فَبَيْنَا نَحْنُ فِي أَسْوَأِ ذَلِكَ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ فِينَا رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِنَا إِلَى الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ، رَحْمَةً رَجَمَ بِهَا مَنْ أَرَادَ رَحْمَتَهُ، وَنِقْمَةً يَنْتَقِمُ بِهَا مَنْ رَدَّ كِرَامَتَهُ، فَبَدَأَ

بِنَا قَبِيلَةَ قَبِيلَةٍ، فَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدٌ أَشَدَّ عَلَيْهِ، وَلَا أَشَدَّ إِنْكَارًا لِمَا جَاءَ بِهِ، وَلَا أَجْهَدَ عَلَى قَتْلِهِ وَرَدِّ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ، ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلُونَهُمْ، حَتَّى طَابَقْنَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ كُلِّنَا، فَصَبَبْنَا لَهُ جَمِيعًا، وَهُوَ وَحْدَهُ فَرَدُّ لَيْسَ مَعَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى، فَأَعْطَى الظَّفَرَ عَلَيْنَا، فَدَخَلَ بَعْضُنَا طَوْعًا وَبَعْضُنَا كَرْهًا، ثُمَّ عَرَفْنَا جَمِيعًا الْحَقَّ وَالصِّدْقَ لِمَا أَتَانَا بِهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ الْمُعْجِزَةِ وَكَانَ مِمَّا أَتَانَا بِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا جِهَادُ الْأَدْنَى فَلَا أَدْنَى، فَسِرْنَا بِذَلِكَ فِيمَا بَيْنَنَا، نَرَى أَنَّ الَّذِي قَالَ لَنَا وَوَعَدَنَا لَا يُخْرَمُ عَنْهُ وَلَا يَنْقُضُ، حَتَّى اجْتَمَعَتِ الْعَرَبُ عَلَى هَذَا، وَكَانُوا مِنْ اخْتِلَافِ الرَّأْيِ فِيمَا لَا يُطْبِقُ الْخَلَائِقُ تَأْلِيفَهُمْ. ثُمَّ أَتَيْنَاكُمْ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّنَا، نُجَاهِدُ فِي سَبِيلِهِ، وَنَنْفُذُ لِأَمْرِهِ، وَنَنْتَجِرُ مَوْعُودَهُ، وَنَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَحُكْمِهِ، فَإِنْ أَجَبْتُمُونَا تَرَكَنَاكُمْ وَرَجَعْنَا وَخَلَفْنَا فِيكُمْ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَإِنْ أَبَيْتُمْ لَمْ يَجَلْ لَنَا إِلَّا أَنْ نُعَاطِيَكُمْ الْقِتَالَ أَوْ تَفْتَدُوا بِالْجِزْيِ، فَإِنْ فَعَلْتُمْ وَإِلَّا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَوْرَثَنَا أَرْضَكُمْ وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ. فَاقْبَلُوا نَصِيحَتَنَا، فَوَاللَّهِ لِإِسْلَامِكُمْ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنْ غَنَائِكُمْ، وَلَقِتَالِكُمْ بَعْدُ أَحَبُّ مِنْ صَلْحِكُمْ. وَأَمَّا مَا ذَكَرْتُمْ مِنْ رِثَائِنَا وَقَلْبَتِنَا فَإِنَّ آدَاتِنَا الطَّاعَةَ، وَقِتَالِنَا الصَّبْرَ وَأَمَّا مَا صَرَبْتُمْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْثَالِ فَإِنَّكُمْ صَرَبْتُمْ لِلرِّجَالِ وَالْأُمُورِ الْحَسَامِ وَلِلْجِدِّ الْهَزْلَ، وَلَكِنَّا سَنَصْرِبُ مَتْلَكُمْ: إِنَّمَا مَتْلَكُمْ مَثَلُ رَجُلٍ غَرَسَ أَرْضًا، وَاخْتَارَ لَهَا الشَّجَرَ وَالْحَبَّ، وَأَجْرَى إِلَيْهَا الْأَنْهَارَ وَرَزَيْتَهَا بِالْفُصُورِ، وَأَقَامَ فِيهَا فَلَاجِينَ، يَسْكُنُونَ فُصُورَهَا، وَيَقُومُونَ عَلَى جَنَائِهَا، فَخَلَا الْفَلَاخُونَ فِي الْفُصُورِ عَلَى مَا لَا يُجِبُّ، وَفِي الْجَنَانِ بِمِثْلِ ذَلِكَ فَأَطَالَ نَظَرَتَهُمْ، فَلَمَّا لَمْ يَسْتَحْيُوا مِنْ تَلْقَاءِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ اسْتَعْتَبَهُمْ فَكَابَرُوهُ، فَدَعَا إِلَيْهَا غَيْرَهُمْ وَأَخْرَجَهُمْ مِنْهَا، فَإِنْ دَهَبُوا عَنْهَا تَخَطَّفَهُمُ النَّاسُ، وَإِنْ أَقَامُوا فِيهَا صَارُوا حَوْلًا لِهَوْلَاءِ، يَمْلِكُونَهُمْ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ، فَيَسُومُونَهُمُ الْخَسْفَ أَبَدًا، وَاللَّهُ أَوْ لَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مَا نَقُولُ لَكَ حَقًّا، وَلَمْ يَكُنْ إِلَّا الدُّنْيَا لَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَمَّا صَرَبْنَا بِهِ مِنْ لَدِيدِ عَيْشِكُمْ، وَرَأَيْنَا مِنْ زِبْرَجِكُمْ مِنْ صَبْرٍ، وَلَقَارَ عُنَاكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلِبَكُمْ عَلَيْهِ

Sayf ibn Umar has narrated from Muhammad, Talhah, and Ziyad; they say: "The Arabs, in reply to Rustam, said: What you have mentioned of our former wretchedness and our dispersion—you have not stated its full reality. [In fact] our condition was even worse than that: whoever among us died became fuel for Hell, and whoever remained alive lived a life of severe misery. We were in this state of utmost abasement when God sent among us a Messenger from among ourselves, sent to both human beings and jinn. By sending him, God intends mercy for those who are worthy of His mercy, and He intends punishment for those who reject the honour He has bestowed. That Messenger began the call with us, and he called each tribe, one by one. In opposing him, in repudiating what he brought, and in striving to kill him and to efface his call, his own tribe was foremost; then those tribes nearest to them—until all of us became a single rank against him, and all of us together girded ourselves against him, while he was alone and none was with him except God Most High. Yet he was granted victory over us, and some of us entered his religion willingly and some unwillingly. Then, upon seeing the clear miracles and signs he brought, all of us recognized his truthfulness and his being upon the truth."

"Among what that messenger brought from our Lord was also the command that we should begin jibād with those nearest to us. Accordingly, we advanced among ourselves in conformity with that command, and we were certain that the promise he had made to us [of victory and dominance] would neither be broken nor suffer any defect—until the Arabs, all of them, united upon this religion, whereas before that they had been divided to such an extent that even all the people of the world together could not have united them. Thereafter, we have come to you by the command of our Lord. We desire to wage jibād in His path, to enforce His command, and to witness His promise being fulfilled. We call you to Islam and to its judgments. If you accept our call, we shall leave you and return, and we shall leave among you the Book of God. But if you refuse, then there is no course lawful for us except either to fight you or that you redeem yourselves by paying the jizyah. If you do not do even this, then God has made us heirs to your land, your people, and your wealth. Therefore accept our counsel. By God, your acceptance of Islam is more beloved to us than your spoils of war; and thereafter, fighting you is more beloved than making peace with you. As for what you mentioned regarding our lack of means and our small number: our equipment is our obedience, and the weapon of our fighting is patience."

“And you have set forth before us examples concerning men, and great affairs, and frivolities done under the guise of seriousness. But we, too, set forth an example for you: your example is that of a man who cultivated a land into a garden, selected for it excellent trees and seeds, caused canals to flow toward it, adorned it with palaces, and settled in it farmers who lived in those palaces and tended its gardens. Then, in the owner’s absence, the farmers began, in the palaces and in the gardens, to do such things as the owner did not like. The owner granted them ample respite; but when they did not feel shame even of their own accord, he reproached them and sought to reform them, yet they persisted in rebellion against the owner. Then the owner summoned other people and resolved to expel them from there. Now, if they leave, people will snatch them away; and if they remain there, they will remain as slaves to these new people. These will be their masters, and they will have no authority over them; rather, they will keep them in humiliation forever. And by God, if what we are saying to you were not true, and the matter were only of this world [rather than God’s command to punish you], even then we would not be prepared to abandon this comfortable and pleasant life—which has now become familiar to our mouths—and we would not endure patiently upon seeing your glitter and finery; rather, we would clash with you until we prevailed over you.” (Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī, 3/528–529)

Lexical explanation

Kunh: The literal meaning of the expression *kunh al-amr* is the correct time and proper occasion of a matter. *Lammā tablug kunhabū* would mean: You have not drawn the full picture of our wretchedness.

Fa-naṣabnā lahū: The expression *naṣaba lahū al-‘adāwah* means: to form a front against someone and to gird oneself for enmity toward him.

Ḍarīnā bihī: *Ḍarī bihī* means: to become so habituated to something that it becomes difficult to be rid of it. (In one report it is stated: “Indeed, meat has an addictive habituation like the addictive habituation of wine,” meaning that eating meat, too, is a habit like drinking wine, which does not leave one.)

Khawalan: owned property; a slave.

Zibraj: adornment; glitter and finery.

Commentary

1. That a people be granted rule and authority as a trial, and then, as a consequence of their evil conduct, it be taken from them and handed over to another people, is an established divine practice of God Most High, which has been explained repeatedly in the Noble Qur’an. For example, with reference to Pharaoh and the Israelites, this law has been mentioned as follows:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَبْلَهًا شَيْعًا يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ. وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ

Indeed, Pharaoh had adopted arrogance in the land, and he divided its inhabitants into factions, oppressing one group among them severely: he would slaughter their sons and let their women live. Surely he was among the corrupters. And We had resolved to show favour to those who had been oppressed in that land, and to make them leaders, and to make them inheritors of the land. (Qur’an, 28:4-5)

This divine practice has also been mentioned repeatedly in the scriptures of the prophets of the Israelites. Thus, when, in the time of Moses (PBUH) the Israelites were commanded to expel from Canaan the various peoples settled there, it was made clear to them that this was, from God Most High, a punishment for the sins and evil deeds of those peoples. In Deuteronomy it is stated:

The Lord your God drives out these nations before you because of their wickedness, in order to fulfil the promise He swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (9:5)

In Numbers it is stated:

The nations whom I am driving out before you have become defiled because of all these deeds, and the land too has become defiled. Therefore, I punish it for its iniquity, such that it vomits out its inhabitants. (18:24–25)

Daniel the Prophet, while mentioning those various kingdoms that were shown to him in a vision, has described the end of one kingdom in the following manner:

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. (Daniel, 8:23)

In the Gospel of Matthew, the prophecy—spoken by the Jesus (PBUH)—regarding the religious office granted to the Israelites being taken away from them has been transmitted, in the style of a parable, as follows:

Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge around it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country. And when the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers to receive his fruit. And the vinedressers seized his servants: one they beat, and one they killed, and one they stoned. Then he sent other servants, more than the first, and they treated them in the same manner. At last he sent his son to them, saying: They will show regard for my son. When the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves: This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance. And they seized him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.”

“When, therefore, the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” They said to him: “He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will lease the vineyard to other vinedressers who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” ... “Therefore I say to you: the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation that brings forth its fruits. And whoever falls on this stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will crush him.” (21:33–43)

2. In sum, the Arab envoys, in their discourse, clarified various aspects of the background and objective of the Muslims’ attacks in such a manner that the entire narrative—concerning the divine practice in the matter of government and authority, the commissioning of the Prophet (PBUH) and the establishment of the Arabs as an *ummah*, and the responsibility placed upon this *ummah* of bearing witness over mankind and of *jihād* and fighting—comes forth with great clarity. The fundamental purpose of this entire discourse was to remove the conceit, or self-deception, of the Persian chiefs: that the chain of sovereignty and power granted to them by God Most High would endure forever, and that the Arabs, as in the past, had on this occasion too attacked the Persians in order to obtain some share of the means and resources available to the Persians.

Variants

This incident, from the narrative of Sayf ibn ‘Umar, has also been reported by Al-Kalā’ī (Al-Iktifā’ 2/463–464).

[To be continued]

THE NIGHT JOURNEY AND ASCENSION (ISRA AND MIRAJ) – 9

Syed Manzoor ul Hassan

From the book Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Stance On Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension - Derived from a dialogue with Muhammad Hassan Ilyas. This book is part of '23 Objections Series'.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION

The previous pages provided a detailed description of the stance of our esteemed teacher, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on the issue. The prominent points of the discussion are:

- The events described under the title *'Isra and Mi'raj'* are not one but four different occurrences.
- These comprise the *'Isra*, the *Qāba Qawsayn*, the *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, and lastly, the *Mi'raj*.
- The first three events are referred to in the Qur'an, while the last is mentioned in the hadiths.
- The specific timings and sequences of these events are not clearly stated in the Qur'an or the hadiths.
- Of these, two happened in the realm of the dreams and the other two are based on conscious observations.
- All these events are divine in nature, specific to prophethood, and are synonymous to divine revelation.
- It makes no difference to their veracity whether these observations occurred in dreams or in a state of consciousness. The difference of sleep or wakefulness does not affect their credibility.
- Events described in the Qur'an are beyond any doubt or uncertainty, but those conveyed through hadith narratives, if reliably traced back to the Prophet (PBUH), must also be accepted unreservedly.
- No Muslim is permitted to deny these occurrences or to diminish their divine status by comparing them with ordinary human experiences.
- The texts describing these four events clearly emphasize their unique nature.
- However, some narrators in the Hadith literature have presented them as a single event, leading to scholars and commentators treating them as such in their descriptions.
- This conflation may have happened due to textual similarities, narrative overlaps, memory issues, misunderstandings, or descriptive flaws.
- Misunderstandings can be prevented by interpreting the hadith reports in the light of the Qur'an instead of the other way around.

[To be continued]

PHARAOH'S CORPSE AND THE STATEMENT OF THE NOBLE QUR'ĀN – 2

Dr. Amir Gazdar

This column, "Point of View," is devoted to the writings of various people of thought. In it, it is not necessary that the institution agree with the articles published.

A RESEARCH AND ANALYTICAL STUDY OF EXEGETICAL OPINIONS

IN THE STYLE OF QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: In view of the Arabic of the Qur'ān, and in accordance with the wording of this verse and the composition of its sentence, what, in your view, is its more correct translation and purport?

Answer: As has already been stated above, the Qur'ānic statement under discussion has occurred in Sūrah Yūnus (10), verse 92. At the time of Moses, approximately two thousand years before the revelation of the Qur'ān, while rejecting Pharaoh's repentance, at the very moment of his drowning, God Most High addressed him and spoke the words; the Noble Qur'ān has transmitted that incident in this manner: "So today We shall save only your corpse, so that you may be a sign for those behind you." In the view of this writer, this is the correct translation of this verse, the clarification of which is set forth below in the form of a few points:

1. The first point stated in the verse is: "Now We shall save only your body," meaning: now you cannot be saved from death; however, unlike the rest of your army, We shall not allow your body to be drowned in the sea. Rather, We shall save it from being submerged and cast it out of the sea. Here it should be noted that the Qur'an has not employed any verb from which one could derive the sense of preserving Pharaoh's corpse intact, safeguarding it, or protecting it from decay. Here, the wording pertains only to saving the body from drowning in the sea.

2. Secondly, in the words of the verse, *li-takūna li-man khalfaka āyatan*, the Qur'an has used a locative adverb [*ism ḡarf makān*], namely "*khalf*," which is annexed to the second-person pronoun. It conveys the meaning of "*warā'*," that is, "behind," and intrinsically bears a spatial sense, as the scholars of lexicon and grammar state; and this will further be corroborated by the statements of the exegetes cited below. Wherever this word occurs in the Qur'an with annexation to any pronoun, it occurs in precisely this sense of "*warā'*," i.e., "behind." Accordingly, in terms of Arabic usage, its correct meaning is: "so that you may be a sign for the people who are behind you." To extract from this word a temporal sense, and thereby derive the meaning of later generations and times, is, from the standpoint of Arabic, categorically incorrect.²

² Lisān al-ʿArab, Ibn Manẓūr Al-Ifrīqī, 9/82. Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah, Ibn Ājurrūm al-Ṣanhāji, p. 18: Ibn Ājurrūm said: "The ظرف المكان (adverbial of place) is: the noun of place in the accusative, with an implied 'in' [fi], such as: 'in front of' [amāma],

Therefore, the translators' rendering—"so that you may be a sign for those who come after you"—is not correct: first, because the Qur'an has not here made any claim of preserving the body for the future by protecting it from decay; and second, because no temporal adverb has been used here. Hence, a locative adverb cannot be translated as a temporal adverb.

This translation could only have been correct if, in this verse, the Qur'an—along with *nunajjika bi-badanika* [We shall save you with your body]—had also employed *wa-nubqīhi* or some other synonymous verb and construction that would be explicit in meaning the protection of the body from decay and its preservation for the future; and, moreover, if instead of the locative adverb *khalfaka*, there had been an expression such as *li-takūna li-man ya'tī min ba'dika āyatan*, just as in verse 6 of Sūrah al-Ṣaff, with respect to Jesus (PBUH), his statement is quoted: "and I am one who gives glad tidings of a messenger who will come after me, whose name will be Aḥmad"; whereas it is self-evident that the Qur'an has adopted no such expression here.

3. Thirdly, the very meaning of the final clause of the verse—namely, *li-takūna li-man khalfaka āyatan*, "so that you may be a sign for the people who are behind you"—has been stated with full explicitness by many exegetes, earlier and later, with due regard to spatial locativity. Some of them are presented below for the readers:

Imām al-Zamakhsharī wrote in his exegesis *Al-Kashshāf*: "li-man warā'aka mina al-nāsi 'alāmah," "for those behind you among the people, [as] a sign."³

Imām al-Bayḍāwī writes in his exegesis *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Ta'wīl*: "li-man warā'aka 'alāmah," "for those behind you, [as] a sign."⁴

Imām Abū al-Barakāt clarifies in *Tafsīr al-Nasafī*: "li-man warā'aka mina al-nāsi 'alāmah," "or those behind you among the people, [as] a sign."⁵

The exegete Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī wrote in *al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ fī al-Tafsīr*: "li-man warā'aka 'alāmah," "for those behind you, [as] a sign."⁶

The exegete Abū al-Su'ūd al-'Imādī writes in *Tafsīr Abī al-Su'ūd*: "li-man warā'aka 'alāmatan," "for those behind you, as a sign."⁷

Sayyid Quṭb al-Shāribī has stated in his exegesis *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur'ān*: "dhālika li-yudrika man warā'aka mina al-jamāhīr kayfa kāna maṣrūka," "so that the great multitude of your people behind you may also come to know well what your end was."⁸

'Allāmah Ṭāhīr ibn 'Āshūr writes in his exegesis *al-Taḥrīr wa-al-Tanwīr*: "wa-li-man khalfaka ay man warā'aka," "that is, for those behind you—that is, those who come after you—[as a sign]."⁹

'behind' [khalfā], 'ahead of' [quddāma], 'behind' [warā'a], 'above' [fawqa], 'below' [taḥta], 'at' ['inda], 'with' [ma'a], 'opposite' [izā], 'parallel to' [ḥidhā'a], 'facing' [tilqā'a], 'here' [hunā], 'there' [thamma], and what resembles that."

³ 2/369.

⁴ 3/123.

⁵ 2/151.

⁶ 6/103.

⁷ 4/174.

⁸ 3/1818.

⁹ 11/279.

A distinguished scholar of the language of the Qur'an and a major specialist in the Qur'anic sciences, the Iraqi professor Dr. Fāḍil Šāliḥ al-Sāmīrā'ī, has also articulated this same explanation of the verse under discussion in one of his conversations, with excellent clarity.¹⁰

4. Fourthly, among the exegetes of the Indo-Pak subcontinent, according to the present writer's survey, Maulana Shāh Rafī' al-Dīn al-Dihlawī, Maulana Shāh 'Abd al-Qādir Muḥaddith al-Dihlawī, Maulana Ashraf 'Alī Thānvī, Maulana Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Uthmānī, and Muftī Muḥammad Shafī' 'Uthmānī have likewise, in their translations and exegeses, stated this very meaning in exact accordance with the Arabic of the Qur'an.

Consider that all the aforementioned Qur'anic scholars, in explicating the wording of this verse, did not explain the word “*khalḥ*” by means of the word “*ba'd*” [after], such that the reader might err in understanding the intent of the Qur'an. Rather, with due regard to spatial locativity, they adopted the synonymous word in Arabic that could be used—namely “*warā'*,” which is fully in accordance with the Qur'anic Arabic itself.

Question: The translation of this clause in the verse has now become clear, but what is the full purport and intent of the statement: “so that you may be a sign for the people who are behind you”?

Answer: The meaning is that this Pharaoh, in his people, was regarded not only as a great and mighty king; rather, he himself claimed divinity and lordship for himself, and his followers likewise held this belief about him. He used to say to his courtiers: “I know of no deity for you other than myself.” Likewise, he had said to Moses (PBUH): “If you take any deity other than me, I shall surely imprison you.” Thus, the low and the high among his people—ministers and priests—could not imagine that such a “mighty god,” who had gone forth in majesty and splendor with his entire army in pursuit of Moses (PBUH) and the Israelites, would meet this end and perish in such disgrace. It is self-evident that Pharaoh's entire nation would be waiting behind for his return and the return of the whole army. On account of their false notions, it was possible that they would fabricate interpretations and concoct stories about the death of their god: that Pharaoh cannot be destroyed; he will surely return; he can neither be overcome nor fail in his mission. Therefore, God saved his corpse from drowning and, by casting it out of the sea, caused this very nation to witness the destruction and admonitory end of their false deity in such a manner that, from the entire army, only Pharaoh's dead body was brought out and placed before their eyes on the seashore—so that they might obtain an empirical proof that their notions about Pharaoh were false, and that they might take heed from this manifest sign of God's punishment, and acknowledge that their deity was false and that the true deity is God alone, and that He alone is dominant; and that God's call and His promises were true; and what the end of enmity toward His messenger ultimately is. In this way, they would be compelled—without any interpretive evasions—to admit that Pharaoh had no status beyond that of an ordinary human being. Thus, their false deity reached his end in disgrace, and the false conception of his followers regarding him was utterly shattered. The explanation of the verse under discussion is, in substance, the same as that which 'Allāmah Ibn 'Āshūr has also set forth in his exegesis in an excellent manner.¹¹¹²¹³

Moreover, Imām al-Rāzī writes in his exegesis *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* under this verse that the people behind Pharaoh—who held a belief in his divinity—had not witnessed his drowning with their own eyes. Hence, upon hearing the report, they denied his destruction and thought that death could not befall a “god” like him.

¹⁰ See: Dr. Fāḍil al-Sāmīrā'ī's discussion in his program “Lamsah Bayāniyyah” on YouTube at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tos00C4sbxM>

¹¹ Al-Qaṣaṣ 28:38.

¹² Al-Shu'arā' 26:29.

¹³ Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr, Ṭāhīr ibn 'Āshūr, 11/279.

Therefore, God, manifesting His perfect power, brought his body out of the sea in a sound and intact state, so that this nation might witness his destruction with their own eyes and thereby attain certainty.¹⁴

Imām al-Rāzī has also mentioned another aspect of God’s sign in bringing Pharaoh’s body out of the sea: when God drowned Pharaoh and his entire army in the sea, He did not cast out anyone from its depths except Pharaoh’s corpse. In particular, the occurrence of this strange matter with Pharaoh’s body was itself a manifest sign and proof of God’s perfect power and of the truthfulness of the prophethood of Moses (PBUH).¹⁵

Moreover, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid writes in explaining this verse:

“Indeed, the disgraceful destruction of such a rebellious king is among those great signs of God by which the end-result of obstinacy, injustice, and defiance in the face of truth becomes entirely manifest. Accordingly, it was God’s will that He show people such a sign and thereby establish it in such a manner that no room for doubt or denial would remain for them. Thus, by God’s command, Pharaoh’s dead body was cast up upon the seashore—something witnessed by his own people and those who worshipped him themselves—so that such an end for Pharaoh might become, for all of them, a clear means of admonition and counsel.”¹⁶

Furthermore, Shaykh Munajjid says that there is no indication in the verse that Pharaoh’s body will remain preserved until the Day of Resurrection, as some people have imagined. This is tantamount to putting into the mouth of the Qur’an something it did not say. If God had intended to keep Pharaoh’s body remaining so that his corpse might, in later times as well, continue to be a sign of admonition for all human beings, then in that case his body would have remained known to all in the world and, as an outward sign, would have been fully evident and clearly determined for all later people who continued thereafter to hear the story of his destruction—so that this sign of God might remain manifest for all, a means of taking heed, and a proof of the truthfulness of God’s promises. If this had been God’s intent, then the question arises: why has this body of Pharaoh remained entirely hidden from the eyes of the world from the time of Moses (PBUH), such that no trace of it is found anywhere in history, nor any mention of it for centuries? As for those archaeologists who have claimed the discovery of Pharaoh’s body, that is a matter of the recent past.¹⁷

Question: In the Arabic language, just as the word “*khalf*” is used for spatial adverbiality, so too it is used as a noun for “those who come later and later generations,” as, for example, it is stated in the Qur’an: “*fa-khalafa min ba’dihim khalfun warithū al-kitāb*,” “Then after them there succeeded unworthy successors who became heirs to the Book.” Therefore, why can these meanings of the word “*khalf*” not be intended in the verse under discussion?¹⁸

Answer: From the standpoint of Arabic, it is entirely correct that the word “*khalf*,” and likewise “*khalf*” as well—which is commonly used alongside “*salaf*”—is employed in Arabic, in both these forms, for the generation and people that come after a generation. Accordingly, Ibn Manẓūr says: “*wa’l-khalf: al-qarnu ya’ī ba’da al-qarn*,” “and *al-khalf* is: the generation that comes after a generation.” If this later generation is righteous and upright, the word “*khalf*” is used for them; and if they are wicked, the word “*khalf*” is used. In the Noble Qur’an, only this

¹⁴ Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 17/298.

¹⁵ Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, 17/298.

¹⁶ See: the website “Islam Question and Answer” at this link: <Tafsīr qawlihi ta’ālā (Fa al-yawma nunajjika bi-badanika) - Islam Question and Answer>.

¹⁷ See: the website “Islam Question and Answer” at this link: <Tafsīr qawlihi ta’ālā (Fa al-yawma nunajjika bi-badanika) - Islam Question and Answer>.

¹⁸ Al-A’rāf 7:169.

latter form occurs in two places. Concerning both these words, it should also be known, from the standpoint of Arabic, that, first, these words occur as declinable and fully inflected. Second, in this case their referent is only “the later generation of a people,” as is clear in the verse mentioned in the question. Third, in both these forms of the word, the meaning of spatial adverbiality can never, in the Arabic language, be intended at all.¹⁹

Now, as for the verse under discussion—“*fa’l-yawma nunajjika bi-badanika li-takūna li-man khalfaka āyah*”—then, in it, in light of the above question, several aspects merit consideration and reflection, as follows:

First, that in this verse none of the declinable and fully inflected words “*khalf*” or “*khalfah*” has been used, such that the meaning of “the generation that comes after a generation” could be intended here.

Second, that the word occurring in the present verse is “*khalfah*,” not “*khalf*.” And in Arabic the meaning of “a generation that comes after a generation” cannot at all be intended by this word; rather, it comes only in the meaning of spatial adverbiality. Concerning this word, it is transmitted in *Lisān al-‘Arab* from Ibn Sīdah: “*wa-idhā kānat zarfan lam tazal naṣban ‘alā ḥālibā*,” (when it is an adverb, it remains in the accusative state in its condition). Along with this, Ibn Sīdah has presented, as an example, a verse from Āyat al-Kursī in Sūrah al-Baqarah: “*ya’lamu mā bayna aydihim wa-mā khalfahum*,” (He knows whatever is before them and whatever is behind them).²⁰

In addition to the lexicographers, the scholars of grammar also regard this noun—fixed in the accusative—as being used only for the adverb of place.²²

Moreover, in the construction of annexation, as in the present verse, wherever the word “*khalfah*” occurs throughout the entire Noble Qur’an, it occurs only in the meaning of spatial adverbiality. For example, in Sūrah Ḥā Mīm al-Sajdah it is stated: “*lā ya’tibi al-bāṭilu min bayni yadayhi wa-lā min khalfih*,” (Falsehood cannot come to it from before it, nor from behind it).²³

Furthermore, if the preposition “*min*” comes before this word, it affects its inflection; however, even in that case no change occurs in its meaning of spatial adverbiality, as in the Noble Qur’an where a statement of Iblīs has been quoted: “*thumma la-ātiyannahum min bayni aydihim wa-min khalfihim wa-‘an aymānihim wa-‘an shamā’ilibihim*,” (Then I shall surely come upon them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left).²⁴

In this verse as well, observe that, despite becoming declinable due to the preceding preposition, this word cannot be taken in any sense other than that of spatial adverbiality.

Third, that in the verse under discussion, the people for whom God Most High has declared Pharaoh’s body to be a sign—the referent of those people has already been mentioned by the relative pronoun “*man*” in the words of the verse “*li-takūna li-man khalfaka āyah*,” and immediately after it is the construction “*khalfaka*,” which clarifies the spatial positioning of those people for whom God Most High has made this sign.

Accordingly, it becomes plainly clear from this that the word “*khalfah*” here cannot at all be taken in the meaning of “later generations,” because, first, after the occurrence of the relative pronoun “*man*,” since the referent of

¹⁹ Lisān al-‘Arab, Ibn Manẓūr al-Ifriqī, 9/84.

²⁰ Surah Al-Baqarah 2:255.

²¹ Lisān al-‘Arab, Ibn Manẓūr al-Ifriqī, 9/82.

²² Matn al-Ājurrūmiyyah, Ibn Ājurrūm al-Ṣanhājī, p. 18.

²³ Ḥā Mīm al-Sajdah 41:42.

²⁴ Al-A’rāf 7:17.

those who receive the sign has become clear, therefore no second referent can, in the language of the Qur'an, be stated in this manner immediately after it. The composition of the sentence does not accept this in any way. Thus, taking the meaning of "later generations" for the word "*khalfā*" in this verse is, self-evidently, not possible. These meanings could only have been taken if, hypothetically, the words of the verse had been as follows: "*li-takūna li-khalaḥfika āyah.*" Second, the meaning of "later generations" also cannot be intended for the reason that here the word "*khalfā*" has not occurred as declinable and fully inflected and without annexation such that its meanings could be for "later generations"; rather, here it has occurred in precisely that form and construction that is specific to the meaning of spatial adverbiality. Accordingly, in the light of the above-mentioned opinions of the scholars of lexicon and grammar, and the evidences of the Noble Qur'an, its meaning can only be that of spatial adverbiality—namely: "so that the people of yours who are present behind you, you may become for them a sign of admonition."

Fourth, that the declinable noun "*khalf*" occurs in the Noble Qur'an in two places, with the same expression, as the subject of the verb "*khalaḥfa*," in this manner: "*fa-khalaḥfa min ba'dihim khalfun.*" Whereas, in the verse under discussion, it is not the word "*khalf*," but the accusative-fixed word "*khalfā*" that has come—and that too with annexation to the second-person pronoun of address. And this word can neither be used for those who come later, nor has any such verb occurred before it in the verse of which this word could, in any way, be the subject. Accordingly, it should be understood that the word "*khalf*" in the verse mentioned in the question bears no correspondence, in any respect, with the word "*khalfā*" in the verse under discussion such that a meaning could be extracted from it like that which we intend, for example, in the expression "*salaf wa-khalaḥf.*"²⁵

The final point to submit is that, if—hypothetically—in the verse under discussion God Most High had explicitly stated such words as: "We have made Pharaoh's body a sign for later generations," then in that case a weighty objection would also arise: at the time of this event of Pharaoh's destruction, the people behind him—his own people who worshipped him—were present; for them, without doubt, his body contained the greatest means of admonition. Without including this people, why would God Most High say that He has kept this sign "for later generations"? That is, if this meaning were intended, then the explicitness of his body being a sign of admonition for Pharaoh's own people—who had themselves seen this body with their own eyes—would also be nullified in the verse; whereas it is a historical fact that there is no proof anywhere in history that later generations ever saw Pharaoh's body.

[To be continued]



²⁵ Surah Al-A'raf 7:169; Surah Maryam 19:59.

THE KILLING OF ABEL: A COMPARATIVE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

Naeem Ahmad Baloch

This column, “Point of View,” is devoted to the writings of various people of thought. In it, it is not necessary that the institution agree with the articles published.

The incident of Cain and Abel is not merely the first murder in human history; rather, it is a profound manifestation of the moral crisis within the human self and the inner motives of violence. The Qur’ān, the Old Testament, and the New Testament—all three—relate this incident, though with differences in style, priorities, and aims. The purpose of this writing is to show that all three revealed texts, through this narrative, identify a motive for crime that is generally neglected in modern criminology—namely envy and a wounded ego. This perspective presents inner morality as the fundamental source of peace and security for humanity. Furthermore, the narrative also reflects certain features of the earliest human civilization, which this study seeks to highlight.

THE QUR’ĀNIC NARRATIVE: A MORAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Qur’ān relates the incident of Cain and Abel with extreme brevity, yet with extraordinary semantic depth. According to the Qur’ān:

Recite to them the account of the two sons of Adam, in truth. When the two offered a sacrifice, it was accepted from one of them and not accepted from the other. [Then the one whose sacrifice was not accepted] said: I shall surely kill you. The other replied: God accepts only from those of His servants who are God-fearing. Even if you stretch out your hand against me to kill me, I shall not stretch out my hand against you to kill you; indeed, I fear God, Lord of the worlds. I desire that you should bear [the burden of] my sin and your sin, and thus become among the inhabitants of the Fire. Such is the recompense of the wrongdoers. Then his soul at last prompted him to kill his brother, so he killed him and became among the losers. Then God sent a crow, scratching in the earth, to show him how he might conceal the corpse of his brother. He said: Woe to me! Have I been unable even to be like this crow, so that I might conceal the corpse of my brother? So he remained among the remorseful. For that reason We prescribed for the Israelites that whoever kills a soul—without [its being in retaliation for] a soul, or [without its being for] spreading corruption in the land—it is as though he has killed all mankind; and whoever gives life to a soul, it is as though he has given life to all mankind. (Surah Al-Mā’idah 5:27–32)²⁶

²⁶Al-Bayān, 1/618–623.

Thus it becomes clear that both offered a sacrifice: one was accepted and the other was rejected. The basis of acceptance or rejection was declared to be God-consciousness (*taqwā*), not merely the outward form of the act. The rejection of the sacrifice gave rise, within Cain, to envy and anger, which ultimately culminated in murder.

Here the Qurʾān does not make the external causes of crime (wealth, women, power) its subject; rather, it highlights the inner state.

THE ROLE OF THE CROW

In the Qurʾān, the mention of the crow is a symbolic addition. From it, the following aspects are worthy of reflection for us:

- The crow teaches Cain the method of burial, upon which Cain admits that he could not even maintain the natural morality possessed by an animal. This scene, in an exceedingly eloquent manner, clarifies the reaction after the sense of crime, the beginning of civilization [burial], and the false remorse after crime. That is, the person who suppresses the voice of his conscience and becomes uncontrolled at the hands of his emotions then receives guidance not from his own people, but from outside—indeed, from crows themselves.
- Here the crow is not a metaphor for an inferior creature; rather, it is an indication of the acceptance of an external element, and it is also shown that the state of crime can even strip a human being of the capacity to think and understand.
- This aspect is also worthy of reflection: that if Cain had felt true remorse and repented, he would have presented himself before his father.
- From this, an indication is also obtained that he had fled from that first settlement of Adam. Although this aspect is not stated verbatim in the Qurʾān, no dialogue of his with Adam is related after the murder. Moreover, the Bible supports this impression.

THE OLD TESTAMENT ACCOUNT

The Old Testament (Book of Genesis 4:1–15) relates the story of Cain and Abel with comparatively greater detail, in a psychological and moral manner. Here too, both offer a sacrifice; one is accepted and the other is rejected:

Adam went in to his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain. She said: “I have acquired a man with the help of the Lord.” Then she bore his brother Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep and goats, and Cain was a tiller of the soil.

After some time, Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the produce of the land, and Abel also brought [an offering] from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat. The Lord accepted Abel and his offering, but He did not accept Cain and his offering. Thereupon Cain became exceedingly angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain: “Why have you become angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do good, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do good, sin is lying in wait at the door. Its desire is toward you, but you must master it.” And Cain spoke with his brother Abel, and when the two were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain: “Where is your brother Abel?” He said: “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” The Lord said: “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to Me from the earth. Now you are cursed from the earth, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you cultivate the land, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. You shall be a wanderer and a fugitive upon the earth.” Cain said to God: “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, today You

have driven me out from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from Your presence; and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” God said to him: “Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And God appointed a sign for Cain, so that whoever found him would not kill him. So Cain went away from the presence of God and settled in the region of Nod, to the east of Eden.

THE ACCOUNT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Here, the incident of Abel and Cain has not been restated in detail; rather, the wisdom of this incident and its moral lesson have been indicated, and the incident narrated in the Old Testament has been interpreted with great elegance. In various places, the apostles, by citing this incident, have made clear the distinction between righteousness and evil. We present all the interpretations:

An account of the firmness of faith

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, and through it testimony was borne concerning him that he was righteous. (Hebrews, 11:4)

Here, Abel’s sacrifice has been presented as firm faith. The emphasis is not upon the sacrifice, but upon the state of the heart and faith. The Qur’an has expressed it as God-consciousness (*taqwā*).

The contrast between righteousness and evil

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil [of envy] and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous. (1 John, 3:12)

Here, Cain’s envy and the shattering of his ego have been described as a sign of hatred and evil, and Abel’s God-consciousness and self-restraint as a sign of righteousness. And the conclusion drawn is that true faith and God-consciousness produce love, whereas envy leads to murder.

The continuation of Cain’s crime and the killing of prophets

Jesus (PBUH), addressing the Jewish scholars, said:

So that all the righteous [innocent] blood that has been shed on the earth may come upon you—from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah. (Matthew, 23:35)

In this, Abel has been declared the first righteous martyr in history, who was killed due to envy and a wounded ego.

The Qur’an, referring to this very statement, said:

It is for this reason that We prescribed for the Israelites that whoever kills a single human being—without [that person having killed anyone] or [without that person having caused] any corruption on the earth—it is as though he has killed all humankind; and whoever gives life to a single human being, it is as though he has given life to all humankind. (Surah Al-Mā’idah, 5:32)

Declaring Cain’s envy to be the path of misguidance

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain... (Jude, 1:11)

This statement is noteworthy with reference to the killing of prophets. Here, by “the way of Cain” is meant: self-serving religiosity, envy, rejecting God’s will, outward religion, and inward rebellion. For Cain, instead of

submitting before the divine command, disobeyed. Likewise, instead of believing in the prophets, the Israelites adopted rebellion and killed them like Cain. Here, their crimes have been identified.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION WITH THE QURAN

In the New Testament, the interpretation of this incident that has been transmitted from Jesus (PBUH) is highly meaningful and bears an astonishing resemblance to the Qur'anic account. In it, Cain is a character marked by outward religiosity, self-interest, envy, hatred, and rebellion; whereas Abel is one who affirms the values of pure faith, righteousness, acceptance, love, and martyrdom. In the Qur'an, this very point is expressed in Cain's offering of a sacrifice without God-consciousness and, after its non-acceptance, in his threat to kill Abel; whereas Abel's statement mentioned in the Qur'an—"I fear God"—and his resolve not to raise his hand, constitute an articulation of those moral values which Jesus (PBUH) stated verbatim.

The Noble Qur'an, in Abel's statement—"I am not one to raise my hand against you"—has additionally made clear that refusing to become prey to the psychology of impatience and reaction can prevent the spread of violence, even if the oppressed must give up his life. Moreover, Abel's statement that he does not wish to go to Hell shows that if envy and anger can generate negative power, then patience, self-restraint, and a lofty ideal [i.e., avoiding Hell] can become a power capable of preventing the spread of violence.

In the text of the Old Testament, God enters into dialogue with Cain and warns him that sin is lying in wait at the door, yet mastering it lies within human choice. Jesus (PBUH) has explicated this statement. In the Bible, Cain's words after the murder—"Am I my brother's keeper?"—are the first clear example of fleeing from human social responsibility and of moral denial.

The religious conception of crime versus modern criminology

Modern criminology generally seeks the causes of crime in these external factors: Financial deprivation; the desire for power and control; and the acquisition of resources and interests.

The religious narrative makes a fundamental addition to this list, namely: envy and a wounded ego; for Cain was neither deprived, nor unemployed, nor oppressed—yet he committed murder. This reality leads to the conclusion that the root of crime also lies within the inner self, not merely in circumstances. This is, in fact, an exposition of this very Qur'anic claim:

و نَفْسٍ وَّ مَا سَوَّاهَا. فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَ تَقْوَاهَا. قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا. وَ قَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا

And the soul, and how He proportioned it; then He inspired it with its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purified the soul; and he has failed who corrupted it. (Surah Ash-Shams, 91:7-10)

This is the aspect that is not found in modern secular conceptions. It should be made clear that in the original text of the Bible and the Noble Qur'an there is no mention of any dispute over marriage or a sister; this aspect is found in later Jewish exegetical traditions, in the *Midrash*, and from there it became part of Muslim religious literature.

Symbols of the evolution of human civilization in the incident of Abel and Cain

From this incident it becomes known that the first human settlement was an advanced settlement, one that knew agriculture or pastoralism; only then could something have been offered as a sacrifice. And in the Bible it is explicit that Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer. That is, these were not humans who lived a life like animals.

It is also clear from the revealed texts that this was the settlement of the first humans, and that they were the sons of the first human, Adam. Now this question is very important: in this first human settlement, how did this civilizational development occur? Who taught them the skills of pastoralism and agriculture? This question invites us to know the realities of civilizational evolution. By it, the theory of direct creation—i.e., creation directly—comes to an end altogether.

In other places in the Noble Qur’ān, after the mention of the breathing of the spirit, it is stated that God Most High commanded Adam and Eve to dwell in a particular garden, that is, Paradise. Can it be understood that agriculture and other civilizational means were taught to Adam there, and that after leaving that garden he taught these skills to his sons?

Abel was killed; Cain fled from there and went to another place. After that, it is stated in the Bible that Seth was born as the third son, and from him the human population expanded further. With whom did Seth marry? From where did his wife come? The revealed texts are silent. The Qur’ān and the Bible do mention the birth of sons, but the question is: why is there no mention of the birth of daughters?

According to the Bible’s account: “So Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.” That is, parallel to Adam’s “first human settlement,” a new settlement was established. And this statement of the Bible:

Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. (Genesis 4:11–12)

clearly indicate that Cain did not remain in one place, and that the place to which he went was not suitable for cultivation. And he had to seek another livelihood besides farming.

According to the Bible’s account, a direct dialogue between Cain and God is described. Biblical commentators also call it a direct dialogue with God, and they also regard it as Cain’s conscience. In the case of a direct dialogue with God, we should understand the religious form of that era. Was the facility of direct guidance from God available to the early human? Or can some other interpretation of this dialogue be made?



A STUDY OF MUSNAD AHMAD - 7

Dr. Ammar Khan Nasir & Dr. Syed Muti Rahman

INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE HADITHS OF MUSNAD AHMAD AND THEIR ANSWERS

Muti Syed: When a Companion came a little late on Friday, ‘Umar (RA), in a manner of speaking, reprimanded him. He offered the excuse that he was delayed while performing *wudu’*. ‘Umar (RA) also reprimanded him for this, asking why he had not performed *ghusl* [no. 199]. Did ‘Umar (RA) consider *ghusl* obligatory? Otherwise, what could be the reason for reprimanding?

Ammar Nasir: This Companion was ‘Uthmān (RA). This is a well-known incident; it is also found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 878. ‘Umar did not consider *ghusl* obligatory, but it is among the special etiquettes of Friday, and Muslims should generally make arrangements to perform *ghusl*. Especially such persons who are also leaders should be more attentive to it. From this aspect ‘Umar (RA) said, “So, you were so occupied that you did not even take time for *ghusl*, and you have also come late to the mosque!” Here the matter is not one of juristic obligation.

Muti Syed: This report has come several times that the Prophet said that he would expel the Jews and the Christians from the Arabian Peninsula and would allow only Muslims to reside in it [no. 201]. Was this command not only for the polytheists—that they be expelled from the Arabian Peninsula?

Ammar Nasir: No. As for the polytheists, the command was that they should believe, or else fighting would be waged against them. Their leaving the Arabian Peninsula, or being expelled from it, is not an option given by the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān is not saying that they should depart from here or believe. Yes, if they themselves leave in order to avoid that, that is another matter; but the Qur’ān itself has not stated this option. In contrast to them, concerning the People of the Book, God Most High had permitted that *jizyah* may be taken from them. In this, the Prophet is stating a political preference: that they are permitted to remain by paying *jizyah*, but in view of the special status of the Arabian Peninsula, my intention is that I will not allow even the People of the Book to remain in it. It will become an area exclusively for Muslims.

Muti Syed: The Muslims at that time were at the height of their power; then what concerns for protection did they have from them? Does Islam not wish to accept another religion in this region, or can it not coexist with a pluralistic society?

Ammar Nasir: The basis of this policy is the special status of this region. Apart from it, pluralism can be accepted in other regions, but not in the Arabian Peninsula. The most sacred centers of the Muslims are here; therefore, it has been reserved specifically for the Muslims.

Muti Syed: Does “the Arabian Peninsula” mean the entire Arabia that we see on the map?

Ammar Nasir: In the reports you will find different expressions. In some, the Ḥijāz is mentioned—that he said: I shall expel them from the Ḥijāz—because the actual central region where the Two Sanctuaries are is, in any case, the Ḥijāz itself. In some reports, the expression *Jazīrat al-‘Arab* is found. Now, which expression the Prophet (PBUH) used cannot be stated definitively. It is possible that he used *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*, and it is also possible that he used the Ḥijāz. Practically, what happened was that ‘Umar (RA), in his period, focused on the Ḥijāz and the

areas near it, that Jews and Christians should not reside here. As for what is now called *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*, which includes the entire region up to Yemen, the Companions did not insist upon expulsion from it. In Najrān, Christians continued to live; later, in the time of ‘Umar (RA), some dispute arose among them, so at their own request they were transferred from here to some other region. In this way, the Jews who were exiled from Khaybar were also not expelled beyond the boundaries of *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*. In the regions of Syria there were some settlements—Taymā and Aylah and the like—where some Jews had already been living; they were sent there. The basic objective was that the central region of the Muslims, where their two sacred sites are, should not be exposed to any kind of risk. It should remain politically completely secure. There should be no non-Muslim population here.

Muti Syed: Is the same ruling for today as well—that non-Muslims will not be settled around Mecca and Medina?

Ammar Nasir: Yes; for this reason, permission is not granted in Saudi Arabia. In the Ḥijāz it is absolutely not allowed, but in some other regions they perhaps reside temporarily. In recent days, when the UAE—which is settled on one edge of *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*—permitted Hindus to build a temple there, then this discussion arose: should this restriction apply to the whole of *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*, that only Muslims will be here and non-Muslims will not be granted citizenship here? The government there has decided that we will grant it, but Javed Ahmed Ghamidi disagreed with this. He said that given the nature and sensitivity of the matter, there is room, as an *ijtihād*, to restrict this prohibition to the Ḥijāz and give a slight concession in other regions; however, it is better that it be applied to the whole of *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*.

Muti Syed: If some non-Muslims settle there, what harm is there in it, after all?

Ammar Nasir: Not in a religious sense; view it from the political aspect: if they live there, then tomorrow their numbers will also increase. In today’s democratic system, it then becomes difficult for you, politically, to maintain discrimination; you will have to grant them political rights as well. By reserving this region for the Muslims, the real objective is that there should be no presence of unbelief and polytheism here. So, given the status of this region—that only Muslims reside in it—there is a danger, in terms of outcomes, that this will be undermined. This is a ruling that is preventative in nature (*sadd al-dharī‘ah*); otherwise, disbelievers and polytheists live elsewhere in the world as well—if they live there too, it makes no difference to Islam. But an arrangement has been made that the center of monotheism and the surrounding region remain secure, and that only Muslims be in it, so that there be no presence of unbelief—and especially polytheism—there. It is from this angle that this statement has been made.

Muti Syed: In the expedition of Khaybar, regarding the martyrs, the Companions were saying that so-and-so is a martyr, and so-and-so is also a martyr; then regarding one of them the Prophet (PBUH) said that I saw him in Hell; he had stolen a cloak from the spoils of war (no. 203). But in the next report it is stated that two funeral processions passed before the Prophet (PBUH). Regarding one, some people said that he was a very good man, so the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Paradise has become obligatory for him” and regarding the other, upon hearing the Companions’ remarks, he said: “Hell has become obligatory” (no. 204). In this case, the testimony of the Companions is being accepted, whereas in the incident of Khaybar, their testimony is not considered sufficient. What is the reason for this difference?

Ammar Nasir: There is no contradiction between the two. One point is that if people bear good testimony about someone, and according to Allah’s knowledge there is nothing that contradicts it—that is, there is no deed in his actions that opposes this outward testimony—then it is acceptable. In reality, the testimony of people is not itself the cause of forgiveness; rather, if people testify positively, it is an indication that the person’s inner state is likely

sound, and from this we may infer that Allah has forgiven him. However, the ultimate reality is known only to Allah. If there exists something in a person's deeds that people are unaware of, but which is known to Allah, then Allah will judge accordingly.

Muti Syed: Regarding the prisoners at Badr, 'Umar's (RA) opinion was that they should be killed, but Abū Bakr (RA) and other Companions presented the opinion that they should be released after taking ransom. Then verses were revealed concerning this, in which the Prophet (PBUH) and the Companions were severely reproached for taking ransom from the prisoners. While mentioning this incident, 'Umar (RA) links the defeat at Uḥud with this incident of taking ransom (no. 208). The discussion is about Badr; how is it being linked with Uḥud?

Ammar Nasir: His meaning is that since releasing the prisoners of Badr and taking ransom was displeasing to God, it was said: very well—if you have taken ransom from seventy prisoners, then God will take its expiation from you in the form of your lives. Thereafter, when the battle of Uḥud occurred, God, exalted, granted martyrdom to the same number of Muslims. So 'Umar (RA) is saying that the loss of the lives of seventy Muslims was the punishment given to the Muslims for taking ransom from the seventy prisoners of Badr.

Muti Syed: Is he inferring this on his own, or did God, exalted, inform the Prophet (PBUH)?

Ammar Nasir: In this report, this point has been stated only on the authority of 'Umar (RA)—meaning, he is inferring that the loss of life at Uḥud was due to taking ransom at Badr. Perhaps, from the number seventy (70) in both incidents, he is making this inference. However, in some exegetical reports it also occurs that at the occasion of Badr, Gabriel (AS) came to the Prophet (PBUH) with a formal offer: that you should tell your Companions that if they wish they may kill the prisoners, and if they wish they may take ransom; but then, in exchange for the ransom, in the next battle the same number of Muslims will be killed. Upon this, the Companions chose taking ransom and said that in the next battle the same number among us may be martyred. Ibn Kathīr has transmitted this report, but he has also said that it is a very strange report—meaning, its content is very odd. It also seems to me that 'Umar (RA) or some other Companions were only inferring that since at Uḥud our companions were martyred in the same number, this was probably, from God, a collective expiation for taking ransom at Badr.

Muti Syed: Maulana Iṣlāhī views these verses in an entirely different way. On what basis is his disagreement?

Ammar Nasir: Yes; he interprets these verses in a completely different manner. He says that here the reprimand and rebuke were not directed at the Muslims; rather, they were directed at the polytheists. He says that permission to take the enemy as prisoners in war and to take ransom from them had already been granted earlier in Sūrah Muḥammad (47:4). So if, under that permission, the Muslims captured some prisoners at Badr and took ransom from them, then there is no justification for reproaching them for it. According to Maulana, the interpretation of the verse is that when the Prophet (PBUH) took prisoners and took ransom from them, the defeated polytheists, in order to remove their humiliation, tried to make it a means of propaganda: look, this is God's Prophet who is shedding the blood of his people so that he may take them prisoner and then take ransom from them in exchange for their freedom. In response to this, the Qur'an has vindicated the Prophet (PBUH): that it is not befitting for a prophet that he should shed blood for this purpose—that prisoners come into his hand; in reality, you are seekers of the wealth of the world. That is, the address is not to the people of faith; rather, it is to Quraysh: you are greedy for wealth—who, out of love for the world, are even denying the Messenger and have also come to wage war against him. For the moment, God has given you an opportunity to mend your ways; otherwise, had He willed, He could have sent down upon you a tremendous punishment in this very battle. That is, Maulana takes *turīdūna 'arāḍa al-dunya* (You desire the goods of the world) (al-Anfāl, 8:67) and *lamassakum fīmā akbadhtum 'adbābun 'aẓīm* (A tremendous punishment could have touched you because of what you took)

(al-Anfāl 8:68) as being addressed to Quraysh, and he takes *akbadhtum* not in the sense of taking ransom, but in the sense of “adopting a course of conduct.”

Muti Syed: What is your opinion regarding this interpretation?

Ammar Nasir: I have many objections to it. Fifteen or twenty years ago, I also stated them in an academic session of Al-Mawrid. In reality, there are two or three such matters that prevent acceptance of Maulana Iṣlāhī’s reinterpretation. One is that the sentence *turīdūna ‘arāda al-dunyā wa-llāhu yurīdu al-ākhirah* (You desire the goods of the world, whereas God intends the Hereafter)—to imagine its addressee as Quraysh is entirely implausible. This can only be said to the Muslims: that at this occasion you inclined toward worldly benefit, whereas God’s intent was the Hereafter. This is a sentence of admonition and directing attention, whose addressees can only be the Muslims; it is not an appropriate occasion to say to the disbelievers: why has your attention turned away from the Hereafter? Then, along with it, there is the next sentence: *lawlā kitābun mina llāhi sabaqa lamassakum fīmā akbadhtum ‘adhābun ‘azīm* (Had there not been a prior decree from God, a tremendous punishment would have touched you because of what you took). This too cannot be said to Quraysh in the context of Badr. For them, the battle of Badr itself was a tremendous punishment. Their front-rank leadership was laid low, and they were afflicted with a crushing defeat by which, in the eyes of the whole of Arabia, their leadership status was left badly damaged. It is for this reason that the Qur’ān calls the battle of Badr *yawm al-furqān*. Likewise, taking *akbadhtum* in the sense of “adopting a course of conduct” is also a very rare meaning. In the Qur’ān, at the very least, there is no precedent for it. The verse to which Maulana has referred for this usage does not constitute a precedent: *qad akbadhnā amranā min qablu* (al-Tawbah 9:50). Here, the verb *akbadha* has not come alone; rather, it is the whole construction *akbadhnā amranā*. The lone verb *akbadhtum* readily conveys the meaning of taking something (Tadabbur-e Qur’ān 3/511).

Muti Syed: What do you say about this argument: that permission to take prisoners and to take ransom had already been given in Sūrah Muḥammad, so how could the Muslims be reprimanded and rebuked because of it?

Ammar Nasir: Yes, this is a valid question, and it is also before other exegetes. Maulana Mawdūdī answers this question by saying that, in reality, in Sūrah Muḥammad, God granted permission to take prisoners on the condition that first the enemy be thoroughly subjected to bloodshed, and then they be taken prisoner: *ḥattā idhā atbkhantumūhum fa-shuddū al-wathāq* (until, when you have thoroughly subdued them, then bind them firmly). Maulana says that at Badr the Companions began taking the polytheists prisoner before thoroughly shedding their blood, and the motive for this was that by taking ransom from them we may improve our financial condition somewhat. So God in fact expressed displeasure at this shortcoming. In this connection, Maulana has also cited the opinion of Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh, which Ibn Hishām has transmitted in the *sīrah*. When Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh saw the Muslims seizing prisoners and tying them up, he did not like it. The Prophet (PBUH), sensing his reaction, asked him, and he said: this was our first encounter against the polytheists, so if, instead of taking prisoners, we had put all of them to the sword, that would have been better (Tafhīm al-Qur’ān 2/159).

Muti Syed: This seems a fairly reasonable and weighty explanation. What is your opinion?

Ammar Nasir: Yes, I too find this justification correct, with some slight modification. In reality, if one reflects upon the directive of Sūrah Muḥammad, it becomes clear that God, Exalted is He, has set forth a comprehensive policy concerning the entire sequence of wars that was to come with the polytheists, and has said that this policy is to be followed until the war lays down its burdens [i.e., until the polytheists’ capacity to resist is completely exhausted] (*ḥattā taḍa’a al-ḥarbu awzārahā*). In this strategy, two stages of war have been described. Regarding the first stage, it is said that the polytheists are to be subjected to extensive bloodshed and their power is to be crushed (*fa-idhā laqītumu alladhīna kafarū fa-ḍarba al-riqāb*). In this stage, God, Exalted is He, has emphasized

only striking the necks. Then, after that, in the second stage it is said that they are to be taken as prisoners of war (*ḥattā idhā atkhbantumūhum fa-shuddū al-wathāq*). That is, here the intent is not, in one and the same battle, first to shed their blood and then to take them captive; rather, two stages of the entire anticipated sequence of wars have been stated, and it has been said that in the first stage all attention should remain focused on putting the polytheists to the sword. Yes, when a substantial number of them have already been killed in the wars, then in the next stage they may also be taken captive. In the report concerning Badr to which Maulana Mawdūdī has referred, from Sa’d ibn Mu’ādh, he too is saying precisely this: that this was our first encounter with the polytheists, and in it we ought to have finished off, right there on the battlefield, all those who had come under our control; there would have been no occasion to spare anyone’s life such that the matter would reach the point of taking him captive.

Muti Syed: ‘Umar (RA) relates that the Prophet (PBUH) forbade practicing coitus interruptus (*‘azl*) without the consent of a free woman (no. 212). *‘Azl* was a method of preventing pregnancy. Does this indicate that bearing a child is the woman’s right, and that if she wishes to have a child, the husband should not prevent her?

Ammar Nasir: The commentators mention both aspects. One is that having children is the woman’s right, and if she wishes to have children, the husband should not prevent her from it unilaterally. However, this does not mean that it is only the woman’s right and that the husband has no right. It is a decision to be made by both together. If, for some reason, the husband does not wish to have a child, then obviously the wife, too, should not insist unilaterally. The second aspect the commentators mention is that, with reference to conjugal rights, it is also the woman’s right that *‘azl* not be practiced without her consent, because through it the completion of sexual pleasure does not occur.

Muti Syed: ‘Umar (RA) says that if I remain alive next year, then whatever territory is conquered, I shall distribute it among the conquerors as the Prophet (PBUH) distributed Khaybar (no. 213). We count it among ‘Umar (RA)’s very bold *ijtihādī* decisions that he did not distribute the lands of Iraq, and there was great foresight in it—what would remain for those who came later? His decision is regarded as being based on great wisdom, but in this report it seems as though he was not satisfied with his decision and wished to retract it.

Ammar Nasir: No. In my view, here the transmitter has conflated the wording of two separate reports. One report pertains to the distribution of conquered lands; in it are the words *lawlā ākbiru al-muslimīn* (no. 284). That is, ‘Umar (RA) is saying that he too would have done the same and would have distributed all the conquered lands among the combatants, were it not for the question of what those who come later would do—how would the *Bayt al-Māl* provide for their needs? In that report he is saying this. But in many other matters he also expresses some intentions with the words *la-in ‘ishtu* (if I remain alive). So it seems to me that some transmitter attached those words to the report about conquered lands. To the extent of my knowledge, there is no evidence in the reports that ‘Umar (RA) intended to reconsider that decision of his.

Muti Syed: ‘Umar (RA) said to the people in a sermon that if the crowd is large, then perform prostration upon one another’s backs. He saw some people praying outside the mosque on the road and said: Pray in the mosque (no. 217). Why is he insisting on praying in the mosque? If there is crowding, is it not better, rather than prostrating on one another’s backs, that rows be formed outside the mosque?

Ammar Nasir: In my view, perhaps he was saying this from the aspect of the virtue of the Prophet’s Mosque—that praying inside is better, even if one has to prostrate upon backs. Or it is possible that forming rows on the road caused difficulty for people.

Muti Syed: ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (RA) used to forbid clothing women as well in silk, and he would say that whoever wears it will be deprived of it in the Hereafter (no. 251). Although reports exist that the Prophet (PBUH)

permitted even men a limited amount, and as for women, there was no issue at all. ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (RA) himself is a prominent Companion. He would also have seen the practice of the Mothers of the Believers and Muslim women—so how could he be unaware of such a prominent practical matter? Or was he expressing his personal taste?

Ammar Nasir: If you look at the narratives both types of reports are present in them. In many narratives it is forbidden unconditionally; women too have been forbidden; and in some, prohibition has been stated only for men. For this reason, these narratives are counted among the examples of mutually conflicting narratives. Those Companions before whom the reports of absolute prohibition were present would exhort people in accordance with them. ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr (RA), obviously, is speaking according to his knowledge. But the majority of jurists saw both types of reports and also observed the practice of the community, so their position is that perhaps the Prophet (PBUH) initially forbade everyone, but then that ruling was abrogated and women were granted permission for it.

Muti Syed: ‘Umar (RA) met Uways al-Qaranī, and he requested from him that he supplicate for his forgiveness (no. 266). One thing is also said: that the Prophet (PBUH) told the Companions to tell him to supplicate for your forgiveness. Has anything like this come in *ḥadīth*, or has it merely become well-known among people?

Ammar Nasir: No, rather this is a well-known report that Imām Muslim has transmitted. In it, it is stated that the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned Uways by name and said that there was a disease of vitiligo on his body, but he supplicated and God, Exalted is He, removed this disease. Mentioning that his supplications are answered, he urged the Companions to have him supplicate for them (Muslim, no. 2542). This is not some strange matter—that one should ask a chosen and near servant of God to supplicate.

Muti Syed: What was so special about him that God, Exalted is He, formally informed His Prophet (PBUH) from the unseen, and he then informed the Companions that there would be such a person and that this would be his sign?

Ammar Nasir: God, Exalted is He, would have informed the Prophet (PBUH) of many things, and it is not necessary that the Prophet (PBUH) would have informed the entire community of all of them. This was one of those matters that he (PBUH) informed the Companions of. It is possible that he (PBUH) was informed about many other people as well, but regarding a righteous man who was alive, and whose meeting with the Companions was expected, he (PBUH) informed them about him.

Muti Syed: Does this not give the impression that a man from among the Successors has superiority over the Companions, and that the Companions are having him supplicate for their forgiveness?

Ammar Nasir: The matter of superiority is, from one aspect, only from God, Exalted is He. If, partially, in some respect, a Successor has superiority over a Companion, that is not something astonishing. Yes, the superiority of being a Companion is, obviously, not attained by a Successor. In one *ḥadīth* it is mentioned that on the Day of Resurrection some people will be granted such a rank by God, Exalted is He, that even the prophets and the martyrs will envy them, although those people themselves will not be prophets (Abū Dāwūd, no. 3527). So, in a partial respect, God, Exalted is He, grants some superiority even to people other than prophets and Companions.

Muti Syed: ‘Umar (RA) asked Ka‘b al-Aḥbār in Bayt al-Maqdis: Where should I perform *ṣalāh*? Ka‘b said: If you accept my opinion, then perform *ṣalāh* behind the Rock, for by doing so all of al-Quds will remain before you. But ‘Umar (RA) said: You are speaking the talk of Judaism (*dāḥayta al-yahūdiyyah*). I shall pray in the place where the Messenger of God (PBUH) prayed. Then he proceeded forward toward the direction of the *qiblah* and performed *ṣalāh* there (no. 261). Presumably, Ka‘b al-Aḥbār wanted ‘Umar (RA) to perform *ṣalāh* with both

qiblahs before him. The Rock was the Jews' *qiblah*. If 'Umar (RA) prayed behind the Rock, then he would be facing it as well and facing the Ka'bah as well—so why did he deem it the talk of Judaism? Regarding the Prophet (PBUH) too, it is mentioned in reports that when he was in Mecca he would pray in such a way that the Ka'bah was also before him and he would also be facing Bayt al-Maqdis.

Ammar Nasir: In my view, 'Umar (RA) refrained from doing so for two reasons. First, once the Muslims' own distinct *qiblah* has been appointed, then one should avoid the outward resemblance that could arise from praying toward the Jews' *qiblah*. If the reports about the Prophet's (PBUH) praying toward Bayt al-Maqdis are sound, that was an incident of the early period. At that time, the command in the law to appoint Bayt Allāh definitively as the *qiblah* had not yet come. When he (PBUH) migrated to Medina, he continued for a year and a half to turn away from *Bayt Allāh* and perform *ṣalāh* toward Bayt al-Maqdis. These were acts of an interim period. But when the law was completed and Bayt Allāh was appointed as the Muslims' *qiblah*, then after that 'Umar (RA) did not deem it appropriate that, with deliberate arrangement, *ṣalāh* be performed while keeping the Jews' *qiblah* before one. The second aspect, in my view, is that 'Umar (RA) did not want an act to be done by which Muslims might later come to assert a claim over the Jews' *qiblah*. You will have read that he also avoided praying in a Christian church for the reason that, tomorrow, Muslims might begin to assert a claim by saying that our caliph prayed here. In my view, due to this very apprehension he would have avoided it in Bayt al-Maqdis as well, and went forward to the southern side, to the corner, and performed *ṣalāh* there—where later the Muslims built Masjid 'Umar. This is what nowadays is also called al-Masjid al-Aqṣā.

Muti Syed: Nowadays there is also a very large dome over the Rock of Bayt al-Maqdis. If 'Umar (RA) avoided it, then how did the Muslims later build a dome at that place?

Ammar Nasir: This was built by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān during his period of rule, and initially the purpose was that the Rock be made a place of visitation for the adherents of the three religions. For this reason he also appointed Jewish and Christian attendants here, who used to carry out the work of cleaning and maintenance of the building. Then, gradually, this entire place remained under the Muslims' control alone. The Jews and the Christians no longer had any connection with it.

Muti Syed: 'Umar (RA) said in his sermon that when the Prophet (PBUH) was present among us, revelation would come to him and he would inform us of people's affairs. Now, after his departure, the chain of revelation has ended; therefore, you people will appear to us as you appear outwardly, and we shall hold the same opinion about you, whereas the matter of your inner states is between you and God (no. 286). Here, what reports about people is he referring to that the Prophet (PBUH) used to inform the Companions of?

Ammar Nasir: You will have seen in the reports that on some occasion the Companions, due to some outward reason, would suppose about a person that he was a bad man, but the Prophet (PBUH) would, by the knowledge of revelation, inform them that it was not so. Likewise, from someone's outward action the Companions would suppose that he was a righteous man, but the Prophet (PBUH) would, through revelation, come to know that in reality he was not so—just as you have just related an incident that people were calling a man a martyr, but the Prophet (PBUH) stated that he had stolen a cloak from the spoils of war. Thus, 'Umar (RA) is pointing to such incidents: after revelation has ceased, we now have no means of knowing people's true conditions.

Muti Syed: Concerning 'Umar (RA), it is also related that the Prophet (PBUH) said: In the earlier communities there were people with whom speech would be held though they were not prophets; if there is any such man in my community, then he is 'Umar (RA) (al-Tirmidhī, no. 3693). So was 'Umar (RA) not granted this rank? Why, then, is he categorically negating the receipt of information from the unseen?

Ammar Nasir: No; this is not a matter of revelation or of information from the unseen. In this *ḥadīth* the word is *muḥaddath*, that is, one with whom speech is held. The commentators explain it in this manner: that the matter is made understood to them, or that the correct matter is cast into their heart and they are thereby guided. This does not occur in the form of revelation that descends upon the prophets in the form of speech, or which the angels convey to them by coming face to face. That is a certain matter. What occurs with a *muḥaddath* or *mulham* is only to the extent of an inner prompting, the result of which appears in the form of correctness of judgment. He cannot say with certainty that God Most High has informed him of this, nor can he, on that basis, claim that it constitutes a binding proof. It was precisely this correctness of judgment that was granted to ‘Umar (RA), the manifestation of which would appear upon his tongue during the Prophet’s (PBUH) lifetime as well as after him. For example, it was ‘Umar (RA) who proposed the opinion that the Mothers of the Believers should be kept in *ḥijāb*. God Most High caused him to understand that the Prophet’s wives should remain in seclusion from the general body of Muslims. Then, in support of this, the rulings of *ḥijāb* were also revealed in the Noble Qur’ān. The Prophet (PBUH) expressed this in another *ḥadīth* as follows: God has caused the truth to flow upon ‘Umar’s tongue and heart (al-Tirmidhī, no. 3682).

Muti Syed: A well-known incident concerning ‘Umar (RA) is mentioned: that on one occasion, while delivering the Friday sermon, he called out to one of his army commanders: O Sāriyah, to the mountain, and that, from a distance of hundreds of miles, Sāriyah’s army heard his voice. (Kanz al-‘Ummāl, no. 35788). What was the nature of this incident?

Ammar Nasir: This is an interesting and important question. As far as I have had the opportunity to examine the historical reports related to this incident, the manner of the occurrence has been described in very different ways. In some reports it is stated that ‘Umar (RA) informed the people that he had seen in a dream at night that on that day and at that time Sāriyah’s army was in the field, and behind them was a mountain which was a safer place for them. Then he called out loudly, “O Sāriyah, to the mountain” and said that, if God willed, He would convey this voice to them through His angels. In some other reports it is stated that, while delivering the Friday sermon, he suddenly began calling out these words, and people looked on in astonishment as to what had happened to the Commander of the Faithful. Later, when he was asked, he said: I know nothing; these words simply flowed upon my tongue. Yet other reports state that when the people of Sāriyah’s army came to Medina and related the incident of the battlefield, the people informed ‘Umar (RA) that on that day you had uttered these words. In some reports it also appears that when ‘Umar (RA) was asked, he said: the scene of the battlefield came before me, and when I saw the situation I involuntarily cried out: Sāriyah, go toward the mountain.

Now, which of these forms of the occurrence is more correct can be discussed; however, its nature is in any case not that of revelation. Rather, it is an incident of the type of a vision or unveiling, in which a scene came before him or was shown to him in a dream. It is not an incident of revelation or of conveying information from the unseen in a certain manner, upon which, in the religious sense, a decision can be based.

[To be continued]



HAYAT-E- AMIN - 31

Naeem Ahmad Baloch

Maulana Iṣlāḥī held a very good opinion of Dr. Isrār Aḥmad (1932–2010). He was impressed by his religious zeal. He moved to Lahore in 1966. Prior to that, he ran his clinic in Sāhīwāl and Karachi. Maulana expressed happiness at his decision to settle permanently in Lahore. Khālid Mas‘ūd relates that the doctor met Maulana and expressed his resolve that he wished, in a formal manner, to sit before him as a student. Maulana welcomed him and invited him to begin an intellectual journey, along with other friends, in the Tadabbur-e Qur’an circle. At that time Maulana was delivering lessons on *fiqh*, but the doctor did not join the circle’s lessons. According to him, instead of that, he was interested in instruction of the Qur’an itself.

Entrusting the Monthly Mīthāq to Dr. Isrār Aḥmad

This was the period when, due to Abū Ṣāliḥ’s death, Maulana was afflicted by financial difficulties. The monthly Mīthāq was also in abeyance. When its publication remained continuously suspended for several months, the doctor expressed the desire to assume its responsibility. Thus its editorship and publication were entrusted to him. Now, on Mīthāq, in place of the editor, Dr. Isrār Ṣāḥib’s name began to be printed, because its proprietary rights had also come to belong to him, whereas Maulana Iṣlāḥī’s name would be written as its patron. The doctor wrote in this regard:

The printing of the first volume of Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān and the serial publication in Mīthāq of Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān and the benefits derived from Farāḥī was not merely on account of personal relations with Maulana Iṣlāḥī; rather, it was founded upon the profound conviction that, if the Noble Qur’ān is in the future truly to become a living book and, in reality, a source of guidance and a programme of action for humanity, then no form of this is possible except that the paths of reflection upon it be illuminated on a purely scientific method; and for this purpose, that style of Tadabbur-e-Qur’ān which Maulana Farāḥī, after a lifetime of reflection, compiled, and upon which Maulana Iṣlāḥī, in practice, laid the foundation of an academic movement as well, is exceedingly important and extremely beneficial. The present writer knows, on the basis of his personal experience, that through the study of Maulana Iṣlāḥī’s invaluable works, the reader’s direct connection with the Noble Qur’ān is established. His mind begins to feel an affinity with the Qur’ān, and within the heart a state of intimacy with it comes into being. (Mīthāq, July 1967)

Dr. Isrār accepted the responsibility for publishing Mīthāq with the awareness that Mīthāq had a past, and that, keeping regard for its past, he would publish it so that it might become a means for disseminating Farāḥī’s thought; but this could not happen. He himself writes:

During 1968–1969, in ‘Mīthāq’ (as it continued to be published) there remained, as it were, a kind of vacuum. [That is, the same condition persisted that]... it continued to be published in the manner of: they will simply write letters, even though there be no real point— as a kind of monthly periodical that was half religious, half academic, and half political. (Mīthāq, July 1976)

With reference to this period, Khālid Mas‘ūd, who was among the regular writers of Mīthāq, relates that the journal’s readers would complain to Maulana about the condition of the issue, and he would also warn Dr. Isrār for its rectification, and at times even reprimand him. Dr. Isrār would reassure Maulana that soon Mīthāq would

be published in accordance with its former tradition, but the situation did not improve. The confirmation of Khālīd Mas‘ūd statement is found in Dr. Isrār’s own writing, in which he acknowledged this:

There is no doubt that Maulana handled this delicate situation with great grace. But from time to time he had to face considerable anxiety, because the matter of words and modes of expression is, in any case, highly contentious; and sometimes Maulana himself would also strongly disagree with some idea or theory of the present writer. (Mīthāq, November 1972)

Maulana Iṣlāhī’s declaration of dissociation from Mīthāq

Perhaps Maulana’s restraint would have remained intact, but something occurred from Dr. Isrār which Maulana could never have tolerated. In mid-1972, Dr. Isrār founded the *Anjuman Khuddām al-Qur’ān*. When the proposed rules and regulations for it came to Maulana’s knowledge, he expressed severe reservations about them. In particular, consider these principles:

1. *The sole condition for affiliation with the Anjuman is financial contribution, the amount of which is a lump sum of five thousand rupees, two thousand rupees, or a lesser sum; and, in addition to this, the payment of a specified amount of monthly assistance is also required.*
2. *In the Anjuman’s meeting, the five-thousand contributors have three votes and the two-thousand contributors have two votes, whereas those who give less than this have the right to cast only one vote. ...*
3. *The life-president of the Anjuman shall be Dr Isrār Aḥmad, and he shall have the right to reject, wholly or partially, any decision of the Executive Council.*
4. *After Dr. Isrār’s death, the Anjuman will not be able to work under the leadership and guidance of any one person; rather, the Executive Council of that time will discharge this duty of guidance. The president of that time will not have the right to reject any decision of the Executive Council.*
5. *In Dr. Isrār’s presence, the entire matter of the Anjuman’s budget and expenditures will be at his discretion, and the responsibility of the Executive Council will be only supervision. And after him, authority will be transferred entirely to the Executive Council. The president of that time will not be able to be delegated this authority. (Isrār Nāmāh, Khālīd Mas‘ūd, 8–9)*

It is evident that Maulana Iṣlāhī had resigned from Jamā‘at-e-Islāmī precisely because of authoritarian powers. He had not tolerated far lesser powers than these even for a distinguished scholar like Maulana Abū al-A‘lā Mawdūdī, and an extremely affectionate friend; and here the principles Dr. Isrār laid down for himself are very interesting. How could they have been acceptable to him?

When these rules and regulations came to Maulana’s knowledge, he explained to Dr. Isrār—both with severity and with gentleness. In accordance with his particular temperament, he also remarked: “My dear, if you had named this Anjuman ‘Dr Isrār Aḥmad and Company,’ I would have had no objection; but for establishing any collectivity for religious work, adherence to the *sharī‘ah* is necessary.”

During this affair, what efforts at reform Maulana made, and what outcome emerged, can be gauged from the letters he wrote to some of his companions and students. Consider this letter written on 17 September 1972 to Dr ‘Abd al-Laṭīf Khan, who was Maulana’s physician:

With great sorrow I inform you of this tragedy: due to certain actions of Dr Isrār Aḥmad Ṣāḥib that are contrary to the sharī‘ah, I have completely severed all connection with him and with the journal ‘Mīthāq.’ You will be grieved by the details of the incident; for this reason I refrain from mentioning them. I too, and

other beloved ones better than I, tried greatly to make Dr. Isrār understand, but it is regrettable that there was no success. Naturally, this tragedy has had a very bad effect upon my health. Pray that this be the last tragedy of life. Now the strength to endure such a tragedy no longer remains.

The series of my lessons, praise be to God, continues, and now I am also beginning (again) the work of writing the commentary. Pray that this work continue until the final breath.” (Sih Māhī Tadabbur, July 1998)

It should be borne in mind that it was only after this incident that Maulana fell prey to a severe illness; mention of it is being made on the following pages. However, this letter makes it clear that the sudden death of his young son, and then this matter on the part of the Doctor Isrār, became the cause of his deteriorating health.

Consider this letter written from Lahore to Ḥakīm Shaykh Sulṭān Aḥmad on 17 September 1972:

Although, in the matter under discussion, I now have no hope of any good, yet if you see any hope of good, then do try. As far as I am concerned, I have now become completely despairing. For this reason I have conveyed that my name should be removed from the cover of the periodical and that the publication of the tafsīr should be discontinued in the periodical (Mīthāq). I think that, on my part, this will suffice for an expression of dissociation. By making any announcement in public, I do not wish to further publicize my disgrace. Accordingly, ‘Chattān’ and the like were desirous of interviewing me, but by making the excuse of ill health I have put the matter off.... Safety lies only in this: separate yourself from this fitnah in silence. Even to engage with them from any angle is not befitting of you people. In any case, the incident that was to occur has occurred. Now there is no recourse except patience. (Quarterly Tadabbur, July 1998, pp. 67–68)

The stance which Doctor Isrār Aḥmad himself adopted before the public regarding this becomes clear from the editorial written in *Mīthāq*:

*During the past two or three months, this situation has arisen with unusual intensity regarding the organizational structure of the Markazī Anjuman Khuddām al-Qur’ān. Lahore, and Maulana had to face severe anxiety because of it. The following solution to this complexity has been sought: that for the future it be made clear to the readers of *Mīthāq* that Maulana is neither accountable nor responsible with respect to the policy of *Mīthāq*. His responsibility is only to the extent of the *Tadabbur-e Qur’ān*, or else with respect to any writing that is published under his name. For further clarification and emphasis of this very point, the aforementioned words [‘patron’] are also being deleted from the cover of *Mīthāq*. (*Mīthāq*, November 1972)*

Despite all this, Maulana’s relationship with *Mīthāq* and with Doctor Isrār did not come to an absolute end: the installments of the *Tadabbur-e Qur’ān* continued to be published, and friends also remained attentive toward improving relations; and the first two volumes of *Tadabbur-e Qur’ān* were also published by the *Anjuman Khuddām al-Qur’ān* itself. But then another incident occurred.

Dr. Isrār moved beyond this association being formed under the name *Anjuman Khuddām al-Qur’ān*, and in 1975 he established a regular organization for Islamic revolution. He also named it *Tanzīm-e Islāmī*. This was the very same name under which an effort had previously been made, but its objectives and its organizational structure were entirely different, and it was a classical example of religious autocracy. Observe what Dr. Isrār was for this organization!

*Dr. Isrār Aḥmad will have the status of ‘Dā’ī ‘Umūmī’ of *Tanzīm-e Islāmī*, and, to the extent of this transitional period, without any determined *Majlis-e Shūrā* or *Majlis-e Muntazimah*, he will also run the affairs of the organization under the broader principle of ‘amruhum shūrā baynahum’. He will also be authorized to nominate a determined *Majlis-e Shūrā*, but he will possess the right of final determination.*

All powers regarding expenditure from the organization's bayt al-māl will belong to the Dā'ir 'Umūmī. For the provision of capital for da'wah-related and organizational expenditures, in connection with infāq fī sabīl Allāh each companion will strive to ensure that he pays to the organization at least around one-tenth of his total income. (Mīthāq, August 1976)

After this, Doctor Isrār also declared it necessary, for joining the organization, to pledge bay'ah to him. He also began making certain claims which could not be acceptable not only to Maulana Iṣlāhī, but to any cautious Muslim. Although there is a long list of these, here it will suffice to reproduce one excerpt by way of specimen:

I am by no means a claimant to being a religious scholar; rather, I take pride in my being 'unlettered' (ummī). As it were, in the words of the late 'Allāmah Iqbāl: I am neither a gnostic, nor a renewer, nor a muḥaddīth, nor a jurist. My entire standing is that of a humble student of the Qur'ān and a humble servant of the religion. However, from the study of the Qur'ān I have certainly come to know what is prior in the religion and what is posterior; who possesses primacy and whose rank is secondary; which things have the status of root and foundation and which have the status of branches. As it were, from this branch of the wisdom of religion, God Most High has granted me a share. (Mīthāq, November 1974)

It should be clear that here Doctor Isrār is, God forbid, declaring himself 'ummī', because in his view the Messenger of God (PBUH) also had not studied under any teacher, and he too is similarly not anyone's student.

Upon many such errors, he also wrote and sent an apology letter to Maulana Iṣlāhī. While mentioning it, Khālid Mas'ūd Sahib writes:

One of Maulana Iṣlāhī's students took him to task in the monthly 'Shams al-Islām' Bhera (District Sargodha) and exposed some of his misstatements. As a result, Doctor Isrār wrote an apology letter to Maulana Iṣlāhī, which Maulana did not accept. (Isrār Nāmāh, Khālid Mas'ūd, p. 20)

Despite this intense disapproval and heartache on Maulana's part, the publication of *Tadabbur-e Qur'ān* continued in *Mīthāq*. But the incident that severed this series was also disclosed by Dr. Isrār Aḥmad himself.

[To be continued]



ANCIENT GENEALOGIES AND TRADITIONS - 2

Dr. Khurshid Rizwi

ARAB ARIBAH

As stated above, by Arab ‘Āribah or *Muta‘arribah* are meant the tribes of Yemeni origin. A brief mention of Yemen has already passed. This southern part of the Peninsula is the burial-place of an ancient civilization. As a result of the strenuous labours of Western travellers such as Glaser, Halevy, Niebuhr, and Arnaud, a large number of ancient inscriptions have been recovered from this land, whose date reaches back to 800 BCE.²⁷ Subsequent research extended this date to 1200 BCE.²⁸ The language of these inscriptions is the ancient South Arabian, which has now become extinct, and which was entirely different from North Arabian, that is, present-day Arabic.²⁹ The script of these inscriptions is called, in Arabic terminology, *Al-Musnad*. Besides the inscriptions, the discovery of ancient coins has also shed light on Yemen’s ancient history.³⁰

From all these remains one finds traces of highly organized and civilized governments, the details of whose language, culture, and religion constitute the subject of a separate study, and are for the present outside our scope of discussion. What concerns us, more than these scholarly and archaeological investigations, are those traditions, tales, and genealogies which, in their origin, possess a semi-historical, semi-mythical character, yet have had a profound effect upon the Arabs’ collective unconscious and their literature.

According to these traditions, Qaḥṭān³¹ was the progenitor of the people of Yemen and their first king. After him, his son Ya‘rub ibn Qaḥṭān ruled for thirty-three years; and it is this person who, in the company of the Arab ‘Āribah (i.e., Bā‘idah)³², adopted the Arabic language, and thereafter the ‘Adnānī tribes of North Arabia derived it from him.³³ After that, his son or grandson ‘Abd Shams Saba’ ruled for thirty-five years. This person is regarded

²⁷ Hitti, 50–52.

²⁸ Enc. Arabic Civilization, 474; “Script”.

²⁹ This disagreement is fundamental and essential, of which the Arab scholars were aware from ancient times. Thus, the well-known statement of Abū ‘Amr ibn al-‘Alā’ is: “Neither is the language of Ḥimyar our language, nor is their dialect our dialect.” The resemblance or commonality between the two languages was only to the extent that both were Semitic.

³⁰ Hitti, 56–58. Also: Doughty, 1/188–89; Note by Barclay.

³¹ In the Bible [Book of Genesis, 10/30–25] he is called “Joktan” (Yaḥṭān).

³² Here, ‘Āribah has been used in the sense of bā‘idah [i.e., extinct]. Compare: p. 46, n. 1.

³³ Accordingly, Ḥassān ibn Thābit (may God be pleased with him), who is of Qaḥṭānī origin, says boastfully in contrast to the people of ‘Adnān: “You learned from the speech of the venerable Shaykh Ya‘rub, our forefather, and thus became eloquent and possessed of a following; whereas your condition, all of you, was that dumbness itself was your language, and you were like beasts in the wilderness.” However, in connection with the evolution of language, these notions cannot be regarded as academically reliable. These ideas appear rather to be a reflection of that ancient cultural rivalry which had long existed between the people of the South and the people of the North, and which continued into later times in the form of “Qaysī” and “Yamanī,” as well as “Azdī” and “Nizārī” or “Ma‘addī,” factional groupings. (See: Hitti, 280.)

as the founder of the famous dam, Sadd Ma'rib.³⁴ Saba' had two sons, Ḥimyar³⁵ and Kahlān.³⁶ Ḥimyar succeeded his father and became the founder of the Ḥimyarite state. The Ḥimyarite state is considered to have been divided into two classes:

1. Kings (Muluk)
2. Tubba (Tabābī'ah)

Its details are stated as follows: the descendants of Ḥimyar continued to rule Yemen in uninterrupted succession. All these people were called "kings", until the throne and crown reached Al-Ḥārith Al-Rā'ish. He is the first person who was called "Tubba". Regarding the reason for this appellation, one report is that before al-Ḥārith the Ḥimyarite state was divided into two parts: Saba', and Ḥaḍramawt. Al-Ḥārith brought both regions under his control and made them one, and all followed him. In this connection he was called Tubba³⁷, and thereafter this title became fixed for all the kings. Thus, collectively, they were called "The Tubba kings of Yemen." Some other titles of the rulers of ancient Yemen are also worthy of mention: before kings and Tabābī'ah, in the early period of Saba' there existed the concept of a religious king or priest-king, for whom the title *Mukārib* or *Mukarrib* was specific. Many kings were titled with this appellation. Their capital was Ṣirwāḥ. The pre-Islamic poet 'Alqamah says:³⁸

Who can feel secure from the vicissitudes of time after the kings of Ṣirwāḥ and Ma'rib?

³⁴ Arab transmitters such as al-Hamdānī, al-Mas'ūdī, al-Aṣḥānī, and Yāqūt have attributed the construction of the سد مأرب [Sadd Ma'rib] to Luqmān ibn 'Ād. (Nicholson, 14; Hitti, 54.) However, among the inscriptions found on the ruins of the Sadd Ma'rib, the most prominent names in the category of founders are those of the eighth-century BCE mukārib of Saba', Yatha' Amar Bayyin, and his father Samah'alī Yanūf. (See: Arḍ al-Qur'ān, 1/251; Hitti, 54.)

³⁵ By attribution to "Saba'" and "Ḥimyar," the terms "Sabaeen" and "Ḥimyarite" are also sometimes used for Yemeni civilization, language, and culture. "Saba'" is mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān as a tribe or kingdom (27:22; 34:15), from which their power and splendor, prosperity and ease, and then their being punished due to ingratitude become known. The incident that occurred to Prophet Sulaymān with their queen (Queen of Sheba) is mentioned in the Torah (1 Kings, ch. 10; 2 Chronicles, ch. 9), the Gospel (the Queen of the South: Matthew 12:24; Luke 11:31), and the Noble Qur'ān (27:20–44), but her name is not given anywhere. According to common reports, her name was Bilqīs bint Sharāḥbīl, or Bilqīs bint al-Hud-hud ibn Sharāḥbīl. Ḥamzah al-Iṣḥānī counted her among the "tabābī'at al-Yaman." She is generally considered to be the same Queen of Saba' mentioned in the Noble Qur'ān. In this context, the hudhud mentioned in the Qur'ān also assumed the form of a literary allusion.

³⁶ Al-Suhaylī wrote in al-Rawḍ al-Unuf (1/23): "wa ma'nā tubba' fī lughat al-Yaman al-malik al-matbū'; wa qāla al-Mas'ūdī: lā yuqālu li-l-malik tubba' ḥattā yaghliba al-Yaman wa-l-Shiḥr wa Ḥaḍramawt." Syed Sulaymān Nadwī's position (Arḍ al-Qur'ān, 1/287) is that the pattern "fi'l" in the singular with the meaning of "maf'ūl" is not used in the Arabic language. Moreover, according to Arabic grammatical principles, there is no reason for the definite article alif-lām not to enter upon it; therefore, seeking an Arabic derivation for it does not appear appropriate. In the Abyssinian language, "tubba'" means "capable," "tyrannical," and "possessor of power," i.e., an exact synonym of the word "sulṭān." Syed Sulaymān Nadwī prefers this meaning. However, in his view, this word should not be considered of Abyssinian origin either; rather, it should be regarded as Sabaeen and Ḥimyarite, because this word occurs even in the most ancient inscriptions. In the Noble Qur'ān, in two places (44:37; 50:14), "the people of Tubba'" are mentioned among those nations that denied the message of truth and became subject to divine punishment. But, in Nicholson's words (p. 17, fn. 3): "The words Ḥimyar and Tubba do not occur at all in the older inscriptions and very seldom even in those of a more recent date."

³⁷ See further: Arḍ al-Qur'ān, 1/241–242.

³⁸ Likewise, 1/228; according to the statement of Abū 'Ubayd: "al-'abāhilah hum alladhīna uqirru 'alā mulkihim lā yazālūna 'anhu" (Asās al-Balāghah), i.e., "the 'abāhilah are those kings who are established upon their dominion and remain secure from decline." (See also: Lisān al-'Arab, s.v. "bhl".)

After the rulers of Ṣirwāḥ and Ma'rib, who indeed is there that can remain safe from the turning of time?

At one time the rulers of Ḥaḍramawt were known by the title 'Abāhil or 'Abāhilah, and in fame and renown they were not less than the Tubba kings.³⁹

In addition, the titles "Adhwā' al-Yaman" and "Aqyāl al-Yaman" are also well known. *Adhwā'* is the plural of *Dhū*, which means "possessor and owner." Those nobles whose names begin with *Dhū* fall under *Adhwā'*, for example: "Dhū Nuwās," "Dhū Jadan," and so forth. According to some reports, Dhū al-Qarnayn is also counted among the Tabābī'ah, and is identified with the Qur'ānic Dhū al-Qarnayn.

In the administrative arrangement of the kingdom of Saba', a fort and the surrounding villages as a whole were called a *Mikhlāf*, and the chief or castellan of each *Mahfid* was called *Dhū* in relation to the name of that fort; for example: "Dhū Ghumdān," "Dhū Tha'labān," and so forth.⁴⁰

"Aqyāl" is the plural of "Qil," which is also used in Arabic. In the verse of 'Amr ibn Kulthūm:

By what will of 'Amr ibn Hind

Will your qayl become among us a resident?

For the interpretation of the word "qil", al-Zawzanī has explained it: "al-malik dūna al-malik al-a'zam," that is, "a king inferior to the supreme king."⁴¹ In ancient Yemen, too, it had this very meaning. A few forts, or "Maḥāfid," together fell under a "Mikhlāf," which should be regarded as synonymous with a "province." The governor of a Mikhlāf was called a "Qayl," who, evidently, was superior to a "Dhū" and inferior to a "Malik" or "Tubb'." However, at times the great king, too, would append before his name the title "Dhū" in relation to one of his forts; for example: the king of Saba' residing in the fort of "Raydān" became known by the name "Malik Saba' Dhū Raydān."⁴²

The fundamental sources of the Arab traditions and myths relating to the ancient history of Yemen are these: Kitāb al-Mulūk wa Akhbār al-Māḍīn⁴³ by 'Ubayd ibn Sharyah al-Jurhumī (d. 686 CE);⁴⁴ Wahb ibn Munabbih

³⁹ Arḍ al-Qur'ān, 1/245. Details of the fortresses of Yemen may be found in al-Hamdānī's "al-Iklīl." Among these fortresses, "Ghaymān" and "Ghumdān" are more widely known. Ghumdān was the fortress of Ṣan'a', which, from the standpoint of architecture, was counted among the wonders. It is said to have had twenty storeys. Each storey was ten cubits high. In its construction, hard stone, sumāq stone, and marble were used. On every side, the façade of the building was made, with stones of different colours—white, black, green, and red. The amīr's seat was on the upper storey, whose marble windows had ebony frames fitted upon them, and the roof was laid with a slab of such transparent stone that it was possible to distinguish between a kite and a crow passing above. At the four corners, one brass lion stood upright at each corner. When the wind passed through their hollows, a sound like the roaring of a lion was produced. It is said that the structure of Ghumdān remained until the early period of Islam, whereas by the time of al-Hamdānī and Yāqūt it had already assumed the form of a massive ruin. (See: Nicholson, 51, 24–25; Hitti.)

⁴⁰ Sharḥ al-Mu'allaqāt, al-Zawzanī. The Mu'allaqah of 'Amr ibn Kulthūm, verse 54.

⁴¹ Arḍ al-Qur'ān, 1/245.

⁴² "Ubayd" has also been read on the pattern of "Rashīd," and also on the pattern of "Junayd." Likewise, "Shariyah" is [read] on the pattern of "Qaryah" as well, and with gemination, on the pattern of "Bariyyah" as well. (Compare: Hitti, 227, 244; Nicholson, 13, 19, 247; al-A'lām 4/189; Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn, 6/234)

⁴³ After having remained rare for a time, this book has now been published under the title "Akhbār 'Ubayd ibn Shariyah fī Akhbār al-Yaman wa-Ash'ārihā wa-Ansābihā." (Compare: Nicholson 13; al-A'lām 4/189)

⁴⁴ Most likely this is the very book which Ibn Khallikān had seen under the title "Dhikr al-Mulūk al-Mutawwajah min Ḥimyar wa-Akhbāruhum wa-Qiṣaṣuhum wa-Qubūruhum wa-Ash'āruhum." (al-Wafayāt, 5/88, under the entry of Wahb)

(d. 732 CE), al-Tījān fī Mulūk Ḥimyar;⁴⁵ Ibn al-Ḥā'ik al-Hamdānī (d. 945 CE), al-Iklīl; Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī (d. 970 CE), Tārīkh Mulūk al-Arḍ;⁴⁶ and Nashwān ibn Sa'īd al-Ḥimyarī (d. 1178 CE), Shams al-'Ulūm,⁴⁷ and al-Qaṣīdah al-Ḥimyarīyyah, which is also known by the name “al-Nathwānīyyah.” However, a detailed tracing of these traditions lies outside our subject. We shall confine ourselves only to a brief presentation of a few such traditions which possess some importance in the background of Arabic literature.

[To be Continued]



⁴⁵ Gotwald published it under the full name “Tārīkh Sinī Mulūk al-Arḍ wa-l-Anbiyā’.” (See al-A'lām 2/277)

⁴⁶ The full name is “Shams al-'Ulūm wa-Dawā' Kalām al-'Arab min al-Kulūm.” (See Mu'jam al-Mu'allifīn, 13/86)

⁴⁷ See: al-A'lām 18/20.

WAR AND RELIGION

Khursheed Nadeem

The instrumentalization of religion in warfare is not alien to human history; the present conflict is no exception. When Benjamin Netanyahu initiated the war on 28th February, he invoked the festival of Purim. Jews celebrate this day annually with rejoicing; that year, it fell on the 2nd and 3rd of March. According to Jewish historical memory, approximately 2,500 years ago, a plot was devised in ancient Iran to massacre the Jews. This conspiracy was orchestrated by Haman, a minister of the king. The Jewish Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai together thwarted this scheme. By linking the contemporary conflict with Iran to this historical narrative, Netanyahu imbued the war with a distinctly religious coloration.

Netanyahu further likened Iran and Hamas to Amalek—a deeply religious reference. Amalek was the nation that attacked the Israelites after their exodus from Egypt, and conflict between the two endured for a long time. According to the First Book of Samuel in the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to utterly annihilate them. God is reported to have instructed King Saul: “Thus says the Lord of Hosts: I remember what Amalek did to Israel... Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey” (15:2-3). Thus, in Netanyahu’s framing, the killing of Iranians and Hamas becomes a religious obligation.

Under the leadership of Donald Trump, the United States has likewise not lagged behind in employing religion. On 5 March, Christian leaders affiliated with a particular group gathered in the Oval Office and prayed for President Trump—that God might shelter him and grant him victory. The U.S. Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth, openly regards this war as religious in nature, even to the extent of inscribing tattoos on his body—an act suggestive of religious zealotry. Moreover, according to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, over 110 complaints were received from American soldiers stationed in the Middle East, alleging that senior officers had told them they were fighting a divine war. In this narrative, President Trump is believed to have been commissioned by Christ to declare war against Iran and to prepare the ground for Armageddon, thereby ushering in the Second Coming. Armageddon, in this conception, is the final cosmic battle between truth and falsehood, culminating in the triumph of righteousness. It is to be fought under the leadership of Christ on the land of Palestine, with catastrophic human loss—billions perishing and the land inundated with blood.

Iran, too, wages this war with a religious ethos. Twelver Shi’a Muslims await their twelfth Imam, Imam Mahdi, who is believed to appear near the end of times. Prior to his advent, the world will be filled with mischief; thereafter, under his leadership, justice will prevail globally. From this perspective, current events are seen as paving the way for that final transformation. The Iranian state has effectively fused national identity with the waiting of the Mahdi. In this regard, the Iranian people appear unified in perceiving their struggle as religious—not only in the present conflict, but in previous wars as well, such as that against Saddam Hussein.

Thus, all parties, to varying degrees, are casting this conflict in religious terms. Within all three Abrahamic traditions exists the concept of a messianic figure who will appear at the end of worldly history and establish the kingdom of God. Each community awaits such a figure and interprets its struggles through this lens. Yet, none possesses a definitive program regarding the timing of this arrival. While signs are enumerated, no specific date can be determined. Nor is there consensus regarding the nature of this figure. For instance, the concept of Imam Mahdi exists among both Sunnis and Shi’a, yet the two traditions differ significantly: Shi’a doctrine holds that he has already been born and is in occultation, whereas Sunnis maintain that he will be born closer to the end times.

Similarly, the conception of Mahdi articulated by Abul Ala Maududi differs from both Sunni and Shia scholarly views. Despite these divergences, there is broad agreement that a great final confrontation between truth and falsehood will precede the Day of Judgment.

This represents the position of the majority within these religious traditions, though it does not amount to a universally binding creed; significant difference of opinion persists in its details. For example, a segment within Christianity known as “Christian Zionists” interprets this conflict as Armageddon, whereas Catholics oppose this view. When the U.S. Secretary of Defense sought to portray the war with Iran in religious terms, Pope Leo, the foremost leader of the Christian world, courageously rejected this claim, declaring the war among Iran, the United States, and Israel to be unjust, and warning against invoking the name of Christ to justify it. He cited a biblical principle: those who impose war and whose hands are stained with blood are not heard by God; rather, they are rejected. Likewise, among Muslim intellectuals, figures such as Ibn Khaldun and Allama Iqbal have regarded the concept of a messianic advent as alien to the essential foundation of Islamic thought. Throughout Muslim history, many individuals have claimed to be the Mahdi, yet the broader Muslim community has not accepted such claims.

It appears, however, that humanity at large is not inclined to designate this conflict as religious. The majority critiques President Trump and regards him as culpable—not on religious grounds, but on the basis of universal morality and rationality. Similarly, there exists near-consensus regarding Israeli excesses, again grounded in non-religious ethical reasoning. Within the Muslim world, sectarian differences between Sunni and Shi’a impedes the framing of this war as religious. In practical terms, the Muslim world remains largely disengaged, while ethnic and regional prejudices continue to shape perceptions of the conflict.

The Quran has foretold that the Jews will remain under the dominance of the followers of Christ until the Day of Judgment. This conflict has once again borne out that prediction: the world has witnessed that without American backing, Israel’s existence could be erased—if not by others, then by Iran alone. Nevertheless, should they desist from disobedience and turn in repentance, the mercy of God remains open to them as well.



THE POETIC TRADITION OF EASTERN ARABS

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas

Allama Shibli Nomani, in one of his essays, compared Arabic and Persian poetry. He posits that while Arabic poetry certainly occupies a distinct and independent position, Persian poetry is remarkable in multiple dimensions. Shibli argues that in the realms of masnavi (rhymed couplets), philosophy, Sufism, and imaginative innovation, Persian poetry is not only unique but also unmatched by Arabic poetic tradition.

To substantiate his point, he cites several examples. For instance, when an Arab poet seeks to exalt the beauty of the beloved to its utmost, he might at most liken it to a ring on the finger. In contrast, Persian poetry, with its abundant imaginative capacity, represents beauty through symbols such as monkeys, pearls, flowing streams, pistachios, buds, or particles of essence. Its treasury of similes is therefore far from impoverished.

In contemporary times, Dr. Khursheed Rizvi, an expert on Arabic language and expression, further illustrates the contrast between Urdu and Arabic poetic styles. He notes that in Urdu, expressions of intimacy are likened to being bound in the “threads” of love, whereas in Arabic, the same idea is expressed with “ropes,” emphasizing the delicacy and subtlety of Urdu versus the intensity and density of Arabic.

Several years ago, the author presented Shibli’s essay to his mentor, Dr. Mahmood Misri, who remarked that one crucial determinant of imaginative rarity is environment and material conditions. Much attention has been given to Arabic poetry of pre-civilized periods. Life in those regions was harsh, resources were limited, and human temperaments were rigid.

When Arabs migrated to the West, particularly Andalusia, they encountered a vastly different environment: landscapes adorned with greenery, flowing rivers, melodious water sounds, the charm of spring, sweet fruits, dense forests, rolling pastures, luxurious garments, thriving cities, and sophisticated political structures. Within such surroundings, poetry naturally adopted a different aesthetic hue—not only in the rarity of imagination but also in the harmony of language, idioms, and stylistic expression. Hence, while a comparison between Persian poetry and the work of Arabs in the West may be intelligible, it is inaccurate to equate it with the poetic tradition of Eastern Arabs.

Dr. Misri’s observation merits careful consideration. Limiting Arabic poetic history to its original arid context, Shibli’s assertion appears valid. However, examining the literary evolution after the Arab expansion, particularly in Andalusia, reveals that there is scarcely any aspect of imaginative richness from which Arabic poetry is deprived. Eastern Arabian literature, constrained by limited expressive forms for description, relies heavily on intensity of expression and lexical force. Arabs themselves consider their linguistic richness a point of pride, noting that a single object may have hundreds of names. Yet this is a natural consequence of the limited material culture of Eastern Bedouin life rather than a linguistic deficiency.

This is why the poetry of Eastern Arabs is largely influenced in terms of composition, rhyme, lexical choice, and phonetic cadence, yet in content it is often restricted to narratives of warfare and plunder, celebration of livestock, lamentation for the beloved, or depictions of domestic life. Viewed from this perspective, the study of Arabic poetry highlights these limitations clearly.

Two examples illustrate this contrast:

Example 1: Selected Arabic verses emphasizing generosity and largesse in Eastern Arab poetic tradition:

أبي أهد العَيْتَيْن صَعَصَعَةُ الَّذِي
متى تُخلف الجُوزَائُ وَالنَّجْمُ يُمَطِرُ

The clouds of my father's generosity are unlike those which rain only in the seasons of Jauza and Najm.

وما يك فى من عيب فإنى
جبان الكلب مهزول الفصيل

What lack is there in me that dogs bark at guests and camel calves are sacrificed while their offspring remain our wealth?

وصاعقة من نصله تنكفى بها
على أروس الأقران خمس سحاب

His fingers are not mere digits; they are five clouds that strike foes with lightning and shower friends with grace.

طويل النجاد، رفيع العماد،
كثير الرماد إذا ما شتا

Tall is his tent, lofty is his dwelling, and heaps of ashes arise from his cooking when the people hunger in cold.

إن السحاب لتستحيى إذا نظرت
إلى نداك فقاسته بما فيها

The clouds, when they witness your generosity, blush, contemplating their own limitations.

وكننت إذا كف أتك عديمة
ترجى نوالا من سحابك بلت

Empty hands are moistened by the clouds of your bounty.

فما جازه جود ولا حل دونه
ولكن يصير الجود حيث يصير

Generosity cannot be contained nor separated; it follows you perpetually.

Example 2: Verses by the renowned poet Syed Jafar al-Hilli (translated):

يا قامة الرشأ المهفهف ميلي
بظمأى منك لموضع التقبيل

O heedless gazelle, heed the lean of love! My yearning is but for one kiss of my beloved.

رشاء أطلّ دمي وفي وجناته
وبنانه أثر الدم المطلول

In your cruel absence, my heart bleeds. Observe the trace of my flowing blood on your merciless cheeks and fingers.

يا قاتلى باللحظ أول مرة
أجهز بثانية على المقتول

Do you know? Your first glance itself was fatal; yet you still rain wrath upon hearts stolen by separation.

فالظلم منك على غير مذمم
والصبر منى عنك غير جميل

Your indifference, though harsh, is still a gift; yet our patience cannot endure such neglect.

أتلو صحائف وجنتيك وأنت في
سكر الصبا لم تدر بالإنجيل

After devotion, my purpose in life is nothing but to read the pages of your countenance, yet you remain oblivious, lost in youthful charm.

أفهل نظمت لنا لنا من أدمعى
سمطين حول رضابك المعسول

Do you know? Your tears are not tears, but strands of pearls. Even diamonds are encircled by honey-like lips.

أشكو إلى عينيك من سقمى بها
شكوى عليل فى الهوى لعليل

I complain, yet not to you; it is your intoxicating eyes that drown me, unaware of my yearning.

فعليك من ليل الصدود شبابة

لكنها فى خصرك المهزول

Your disregard turns even bright days into nights; let me say, my bond with you has become as fragile as a stone heart.

لى حاجة عند البخيل بنيله

ما أصعب الحاجات عند بخيل

I am in need before the selfish miser; how arduous is the journey of love when hope persists even in the unworthy.



TEACHER OR CLERGYMAN - TORCH OR EXTINGUISHER?

Aamir Iqbal Yazdani

Epigraph

“There is in every village a torch - the Teacher: and an extinguisher - the Clergyman.” - Victor Hugo

His words resonate deeply with the Quranic vision of human responsibility. The Quran does not call us to switch off our minds, but rather to sharpen them. God honors reason as a gift and condemns its neglect.

Indeed, the worst of creatures in the sight of Allah are the deaf and dumb who do not use reason. (Quran, 8:22)

...But He will place defilement upon those who do not use reason. (Quran, 10:100)

And they will say, ‘If only we had listened or reasoned, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze.’ (Quran, 67:10)

And I had no power over you; I only invited you, and you accepted my invitation. So, do not blame me; blame yourselves. (Quran, 14:22)

A teacher enlightens; he awakens thought, encourages reflection, and nurtures growth. The clergyman, when he forgets his role, can extinguish this torch by demanding blind obedience. Yet the Quran reminds us that guidance is not compulsion, and that every individual will one day answer to God, alone:

And all of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection, alone. (Quran, 19:95)

True scholarship does not suffocate the mind—it empowers it. The believer is called to listen, reflect, and reason. To embrace faith not as an inherited shell, but as a conscious, thoughtful journey. The torch of a teacher is the flame of reason; the extinguisher of the clergyman is blind submission. Which fire will we carry into the Day we stand before God alone?

“It is a blessed book which We have revealed to you [O Prophet] so that people ponder on its verses and so that those endowed with intellect are reminded by it.” - (Quran, 38:29)



SIMPLICITY

Dr. Shehzad Saleem

One of the most challenging targets in life is to remain simple and lead a simple life. However, greed and pomposity blind us many a time and we end up doing many things that we would not like to do. The “keep it simple” rule is not that simple to follow.

If a person does not have many resources, simplicity is thrust upon him. He has no option but to lead an austere life. It is only when he has the means and resources and he still chooses to remain simple that shows character.

The benefits of simplicity are too obvious to need any explanation. However, some of the very prominent ones are detailed below.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of simplicity is that it is one of the means of a stress-free life. This is because most of the stress that we incur today arises from the rat race of becoming wealthier and outdoing each other in this dash for wealth. Becoming wealthy is not something despicable. However, when wealth becomes the only target of life, it has a very unhealthy influence on the mind. If a person is free of financial stress, his mind and heart are at peace.

Another benefit of simplicity is that it gives us time to think about the higher ideals of life. Simple living ensures that a person does get a fair amount of free time. If this time is used to contemplate what a person can do to contribute to the society and also realize a mission in life, one can imagine the intellectual growth of such a society.

Simplicity also gives us the time to think about the deprived and embark upon ways and means to fulfil their needs. It is the key to serving human beings. It teaches us that life is about thinking of others and helping them as far as possible. When the upper strata of a society decide to remain simple, it has a tremendous trickle-down effect.

Simplicity affords us the time to build relationships and spend quality time with people around us. We become more available and accessible to them. Friendship can only prosper if a friend has time to think about emotionally supporting those around him, especially his family.

A note of caution here seems in order. At times extremism in simplicity leads to ascetism and giving up the pleasures of life. This of course must be guarded against. Simplicity does not mean that one should forsake enjoyment and recreation and deny the body of its basic needs. Simplicity on the other hand means to enjoy whatever means God has blessed us with without at the same time being pre-occupied with a race of branded products and ostentatiousness.



NEWSLETTER

GHAMIDI CENTER'S RAMADAN'S TRANSMISSION

Under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, special broadcasts were arranged during the blessed month of Ramadan, in which programs were aired on various religious, moral, and educational topics. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi and his various students presented these programs. In these programs, most topics related to the month of Ramadan and, within it, the worship of fasting. Recordings of all the aired programs are available on the institution's YouTube channel.

AL-BAYĀN

During the blessed month of Ramadan, in the Ghamidi Center's Ramadan transmission, a program titled Al-Bayān was broadcast, in which the recitation of the Noble Qur'an and Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's translation of the Qur'an were presented. Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's Qur'an translation is in the voice of Shah Nawaz, whereas the recitation of the Noble Qur'an is in the voice of Mishary Rashid al-Afāsī. One episode of it continued to be broadcast daily on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel. All these episodes may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE VIRTUES AND RULINGS OF FASTS

In the month of Ramadan, on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel, a series based on lessons on *ahādīth* was broadcast under the title "The Virtues and Rulings of Fasts." In these sessions, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, along with explaining the virtues and rulings of fasting, also discussed making up missed fasts, the fast of a traveler, and various related juristic issues. The recordings of these lessons may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

AUDIO VERSION OF MAULANA MAWḌŪDĪ QUR'AN TRANSLATION

During the blessed month of Ramadan, the audio version of Syed Abū al-A'lā Mawḍūdī's well-known Qur'an translation was broadcast serially on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel. This translation has been recorded in the voice of Arshad Maḥmūd. During the month of Ramadan, the audio of the translation of one *pārah* was presented daily. Recordings of all the episodes of this Qur'an translation that were broadcast are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

LIVE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSIONS WITH THE GHAMIDI CENTER'S SCHOLARS

In the month of Ramadan, the Ghamidi Center arranged various live programs of question-and-answer with its scholars. In these sessions, participants asked religious, moral, and Ramadan-related juristic questions. Last month, two sessions in this series were held on Zoom, in which Dr. 'Ammār Khan Nasir and Dr. 'Āmir Gazdar answered people's questions. The recordings of these sessions may be viewed on the institution's YouTube channel.

RAMADAN AND THE QUR'AN: SELECTED SŪRAHS

In the month of Ramadan, the Ghamidi Center's scholar Dr. Khālid Ḍahīr has continued to present, on a daily basis, a short-duration program titled "Ramadan and the Qur'an: Selected Sūrahs." The purpose of this program was to convey to people, in an easily comprehensible manner, the blessings and beneficence of Ramadan and their message in the light of selected verses of the Noble Qur'an. All episodes of this program may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

AFKĀR-E GHAMIDI

Manzūr al-Ḥasan's weekly YouTube programme, "Afkār-e Ghamidi," is an important means of conveying Ghamidi's views to people in an accessible manner. In this program, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi's ideas are explained in simple language. Among the significant topics discussed in the sessions of March 2026 were: "What are the effects of fasting?", "What is the worship of *i'tikāf*?", and "Prominent manifestations of *taqwā*." The recordings of these programmes may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

RAMADAN: A MONTH TO BECOME A BETTER HUMAN BEING

During the special broadcasts of Ramadan organized under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, Al-Mawrid US, Muhammad Hasan Ilyas presented a special program entitled "Ramadan: A Month to Become a Better Human Being." This programme was broadcast on the institution's YouTube channel every Monday and Friday during the month of Ramadan. The purpose of this programme was to provide viewers an opportunity for moral and spiritual training by acquainting them with the true demands of religion. The recordings of these programmes are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

DIALOGUE SERIES

During the special broadcasts of Ramadan under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center, an academic dialogue was arranged under the title "Dialogue Series." In these sessions, the scholars Dr. 'Āmir Gazdar and Shamsuddin Shigri exchanged views on various topics related to Ramadan. In this connection, with reference to the major acts of worship of Ramadan, titles such as "The reality and purpose of *i'tikāf*," "Rulings of *ṣadaqat al-fiṭr*," "Juristic and legal questions related to *saḥar* and *iftār*," and "The law of the *ṣalāh* of 'Īd" were brought under discussion. The purpose of these sessions was to acquaint viewers with the true spirit of the routines of Ramadan and their legal rulings. The recordings of all sessions of this dialogue may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

ABŪ AL-QĀSIM MUḤAMMAD AḤMAD: THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF THE FINAL PROPHET

In the course of the Ghamidi Center's special broadcasts for Ramadan, arrangements were made to convey the Prophet's biography to children and young people. The title of this series was set as "Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad Aḥmad: The Story of the Life of the Final Prophet," which was presented by Naeem Ahmad Baloch. This programme was hosted by Daniyal Baloch, and throughout the month of Ramadan one episode was broadcast daily on the institution's YouTube channel. All episodes of this series may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE QUR'AN FOR RAMADAN

On the occasion of the month of Ramadan, Dr. Shehzad Saleem's special programme, "The Qur'an for Ramadan", was broadcast daily on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel. In this programme, Dr. Shehzad Saleem's presented scholarly discussion on selected passages of the Noble Qur'an. This series was presented in the English language, the purpose of which was to convey the Qur'anic message to the English-speaking audience. The recordings of all episodes of this programme are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE SECRET OF THE ARABS' PROGRESS AND THE SIGNS OF THE NEARNESS OF THE HOUR

In March 2026, during his visit to Qatar, Muhammad Hasan Ilyas had a special scholarly session recorded with Rizwan Ali, in which important topics such as "The secret of the Arabs' progress" and "The signs of the nearness of the Hour" were discussed. In this dialogue, in particular, in the light of *aḥādīth*, explanations were given of the prophecies related to the construction of lofty buildings, and the point was advanced that such reports are not meant to censure an act, but rather merely to indicate temporal conditions. On this occasion, recent changes in

the Arab world and the fruits of technology were also discussed in detail. The recording of this session may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

THE QUR'AN AND THE ENIGMA OF LIFE

A new series has been launched on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel under the title "The Qur'an and the Enigma of Life," in which Dr. Khalid Zaheer and Muhammad Bashir Ilyas have held scholarly discussions on life's fundamental and profound questions. In the session held in March 2026, an attempt was made, in the light of the Noble Qur'an, to understand topics such as the purpose of human birth, the disparities present in the world, death, and the conditions after death. The fundamental purpose of this dialogue is to provide satisfactory answers to the intellectual questions that arise in the minds of young people. The recording of this programme is available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

WEEKLY LESSONS ON THE QUR'AN AND HADITH

In March 2026, in the sessions of Ghamidi's live lessons on the Qur'an and Hadith continuing under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center, Javed Ahmed Ghamidi delivered lessons on Sūrah al-Nūr, verses 36 to 64, and Sūrah al-Furqān, verses 1 to 18; while in the ḥadīth lessons, some of the important points discussed were: "The virtue of performing *ṣalāh* in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and al-Masjid al-Nabawī," "The virtue of building a mosque and performing *ṣalāh* in it," "The Messenger of God (PBUH) announcing the House of God as the *qiblah*," and "The etiquettes of performing *ṣalāh*." These sessions of Qur'an and ḥadīth lessons may be watched on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION WITH AL-MAWRID AUSTRALIA

In March 2026, Muhammad Hasan Ilyas, Director of Research and Communication at the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, Al-Mawrid US, participated in an online session organized under the auspices of Al-Mawrid Australia. In this programme, a question-and-answer session was held with the participants of Al-Mawrid Australia, in which various scholarly and intellectual topics were discussed at length, and detailed answers were given to the questions posed by the participants. The recording of this session may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

ISTIFSĀR: WITH DR. 'AMMAR KHAN NASIR

In the March 2026 sessions of the popular question-and-answer series conducted on the Ghamidi Center's platform, "Istifsār: With Dr. 'Ammār Khan Nasir," some of the important questions brought under discussion were: "Is Ghamidi's thought inclined toward ease?", "Why did God create angels to run the system of the universe?", "Can rebellion against the state be permissible?", "In the present age, can a non-Muslim be called a *kāfir*?", and "In *fiqh*, is it necessary to follow a single *imām*?" The recordings of these sessions may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

ASK GHAMIDI

In order to obtain direct guidance from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi on religious and ethical topics, an online session is held every month under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning. The basic purpose of this session is that people may obtain, directly from Javed Ahmed Ghamidi, answers to the questions that arise in their minds. Among the important questions asked in the March 2026 session were: "What is the Sunnah?", "Is marriage to a non-Muslim a *nikāh* or *zinā*?", "If the Qur'an is clear, then why is interpretation needed?", and "What kind of *imān* does God Most High require?" Recordings of these sessions are available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH HASSAN ILYAS

In March 2026, on the well-known YouTube channel “Muslim Today”, among the important questions discussed in Muhammad Hasan Ilyas’s ongoing program “Ask Hassan Ilyas” were: “Has Islam commanded four marriages?”, “What is the reason for the end of prophethood?”, “Under verse 72 of Sūrah al-Anfāl, has *jihād* now become obligatory upon Muslims?”, and “Is it permissible to break the law in non-Muslim countries?” Recordings of this program are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ṢALĀT AL-TASBĪH

In this research paper, Dr. ‘Āmir Gazdar has undertaken a technical and evidentiary review of the report from Sayyidunā ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Abbās (RA) concerning *ṣalāt al-tasbīh*. He has clarified that all seven chains of transmission of this report found in various ḥadīth collections are, from the perspective of the science of ḥadīth, “*munkar*” or “*mawḍū‘*”, due to the presence in their *isnāds* of impugned, weak, and in some places mendacious transmitters such as Mūsā ibn ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, Ḥakam ibn Abān, and others. He has written that the severe inconsistencies found in the texts of these reports render them even more unreliable; therefore, establishing *ṣalāt al-tasbīh* on the basis of these reports is not possible. This article may be read in the March 2026 issue of Ishraq US.

LESSONS FROM THE QUR’AN

Under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center, in March 2026 a special program of Dr. Shehzad Saleem, titled “Lessons from the Qur’an”, was recorded. In this program, Dr Sahib presented selected passages of the Noble Qur’an and their message in the context of the contemporary age. The recording of this program is available on the institution’s YouTube channel.

THE GHAMIDI CENTER’S ONLINE KHANQĀH

Through the Ghamidi Center’s platform, Moiz Amjad holds a weekly training session titled “Online *Khanqāh*”, the purpose of which is the reformation of the human self and moral training. In this program, along with self-reform, participants’ questions are also answered in a satisfactory manner. Among the important topics discussed in last month’s sessions were: “Are *ṣalāh* and fasting symbolic expressions of servitude?”, “An easy method for memorizing the Noble Qur’an”, “Facing difficulty in conversing with someone”, and “How should one deal with the fear of economic failure?” Recordings of these Online *Khanqāh* sessions may be viewed on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ISLAM STUDY CIRCLE

Shehzad Saleem holds a session every month under the title “Islam Study Circle”. In it, he speaks on various religious, ethical, and social topics in the light of the Qur’an and ḥadīth. This session consists of three parts: in the first part, a topic is selected from the verses of the Noble Qur’an and explained. In the second part, selected Prophetic ḥadīths are discussed. In the third part, a passage from the Bible is taken up for discussion. At the end of the program, answers are also given to questions related to the topic. The recording of this session may be viewed on the institution’s YouTube channel.

INAUGURATION OF THE GCIL GUEST HOUSE

The Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning has inaugurated a guest house for the convenience of scholars, speakers, and guests coming from far-flung places. Located at a distance of only two minutes from the Ghamidi Center, this residence will make participation in scholarly visits and training programs easier. Interested persons may contact the institution for its details.

VARIANT READINGS

In his video series “23 Objections,” Shehzad Saleem has thus far been presenting, in the English language, a summary of all the topics that have come under discussion to date. Last month, Shehzad Saleem presented a summary of the topic “Variant Readings” discussed in the series “23 Objections.” The recordings of these programs are available on the Ghamidi Center’s YouTube channel.

ILM-O-HIKMAT

“Ilm-o-Hikmat” is a well-known program of Pakistan’s Dunya News channel, which has been on air for several years. It is recorded in Dallas and broadcast weekly. Hosting duties are carried out by Hasan Ilyas, Director of Research and Communication at the Ghamidi Center. Among the important questions discussed in the programs aired in March 2026 are: “Who are the Ishmaelites, and what are their responsibilities?”, “What is the significance, for understanding religion and for practical life, of following the Companions and their exemplary model?”, “Does punishment come upon the deniers of messengership solely because of rejecting the Messenger, or because of their rebelliousness?”, and “How do devils influence human beings?” The recordings of these programs may be viewed on the institution’s YouTube channel.

SHEHZAD SALEEM’S ONLINE PRIVATE CONSULTATIVE SESSIONS

For the resolution of social and family problems, the series of Shehzad Saleem’s online consultative sessions is continuing. In more than 30 sessions held last month, discussion took place regarding parents’ difficulties and the resolution of the psychological and educational complexities of the younger generation. These sittings are proving to be an important means for those individuals who seek sincere counsel in their private matters while remaining within the bounds of the *shari’ah* and morality.

THE FRUITS OF RAMADAN

In March 2026, Dr. Shehzad Saleem had a program recorded under the title “The Fruits of Ramadan”. In this program, at the conclusion of the month of fasting, its spiritual, moral, and formative aspects were reviewed, and emphasis was placed on how the changes attained during Ramadan may be maintained throughout the remaining months of the year. This program is in the English language, and its recording may be viewed on the institution’s YouTube channel.

