

Monthly

November 2023

ISHRAQ

United States

Four Misconceptions about Prophethood

Amin Ahsan Islāhī

//

The second reliable source of attaining purity & recognizing God is the exemplary character of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

However, the seekers of purity can benefit from the exemplary character only when they have the right kind of relationship with the Prophet (PBUH).

//

After Me!

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi

//

For a moment, I couldn't believe my ears. I gazed at his face & then at his uniform. I had encountered many uninformed people dressed as scholars, but this was the first time I met a true scholar dressed so modestly.

//

Bridging the Communication Gap

Dr. Shehzad Saleem

//

Parents should first present an example of what they want their children to become. This is perhaps the most difficult of tasks, but then what right have we to demand from our children what we ourselves do not adhere to?

//



Monthly

November 2023

ISHRAQ

United States

UNDER GUIDANCE OF
JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI

EDITOR: ABID MAHMOOD HASHMI

EDITORIAL PANEL

AJAZ-UL-HAQUE
MEHMOOD-UR-RASHID
MALIK ELLAHI
MUHAMMAD AMMAR MALIK



Table of Contents

03	The Treasure of Prophetic Teachings
04	After Me!
07	Is the Gaza Crisis a Symbol of Civilizational Predicament?
12	Splitting of the Moon IV
20	Friend
22	Misconceptions about Prophethood
25	Coherence of the Qurʾān: The Strongest Rope connector of the Muslim Ummah
28	The Religious Status of Hijab
40	Advice to Students
43	Responding to Abusive Language
48	Bridging the Communication Gap
50	The Qurʾān is univocal in its significance
54	Record-Breaking Not Allowed!
56	Newsletter

THE TREASURE OF PROPHETIC TEACHINGS

MUHAMMAD HASSAN ILYAS



Umme Kuthūm shares a teaching she received from the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him):

"One who promotes peace among people, speaks kindly, or conveys good news should not be considered a liar."

(Hadith reported in al-Tirmidhī 1857)

Abdullah bin Mas'ūd relates a valuable message from the Holy Prophet:

"It is your duty to speak the truth, for truth leads to goodness, and goodness leads to Paradise. The one who consistently speaks the truth and strives to do so is regarded as truthful by Allah. Beware of falsehood, for it leads to indecency and indecency leads to the Hell-Fire. The one who persists in falsehood is labeled as a liar by Allah."

(Hadith reported in Muslim 1857)

Abū Hurayrah (rta) narrated God's messenger saying,

"There are three signs of a hypocrite, even if they observe fasting, prayers, and claim to be a Muslim: when they speak, they speak untruths; when they make a promise, they do not keep it; and when they are entrusted with something, they betray that trust."

(Hadith reported in Masnad Ahmad 1857)

AFTER ME!

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI



"My hometown, Dawood, is a small town in the Sialkot district. However, I was actually born in a village near Pakpattan, which is in the same city and its surroundings. It was during those formative years when the mind sometimes halts in thought, and the heart occasionally forgets to beat. What we do during such moments often leaves us startled, as if:

وای دیوانگی شوق کہ ہر دم مجھ کو
آپ جانا ادھر اور آپ ہی حیراں ہونا



We're trapped in the madness of desire,
A feeling that engulfs me at every turn.



Around twenty years ago, I was a student in the 6th or 7th grade at a Madrasah located within the same city. While pursuing my Madrasa education, I had already delved into the books of Dars-e-Nizāmī, possibly up to "Kāfiah" and "Sharḥ Jāmī." The gates to the city of knowledge had been thrown wide open, and I used to visit the city's municipal library every day after the Asr prayer, eager to observe the bustling activities of the market. My house was situated on the outskirts of the library, making it a convenient daily stroll. The intoxication of learning is a remarkable phenomenon. I walked to the library tirelessly for years, never feeling fatigued.

طالبان را خستگی در راه نیست
عشق خود راہ ست و ہم خود منزل ست



Seekers have no weariness on their path,
Love is their path, and we ourselves are the destination.



One day, on my way to the library, I noticed that the security guard's eyes were fixed on me from a distance. At a young age, it was the first time my heart and mind encountered such a situation, leaving me with a mix of fear and curiosity. This scenario repeated itself over several days, and eventually, curiosity overcame my initial fear and astonishment. I desired to understand the reason behind his watchful eyes but lacked the courage to inquire. He, too, appeared to want to convey something but couldn't find the words. It reminded me of Ghalib, who found himself in a similar dilemma in his pursuit of love when he said: 'There is etiquette, and this is the dilemma, what should one do?'

ادب ہے اور یہی کشمکش تو کیا کیجے
جیا ہے اور یہی گوگو تو کیوں کر ہو



There is modesty, and this is the bewilderment,
Why should one hesitate?



Days passed in a state of confusion and bewilderment. One evening, on my way back from the library, engrossed in reading a scholarly book about the caliphate, I suddenly found the same security guard blocking my path. His face caught my attention, and I noticed water droplets from his recent ablution. His eyes gleamed with an inner light, and the beauty of devotion adorned his forehead. He asked me with warmth, 'Will you read this book? Do you read such knowledge-rich books in addition to your course materials?' I responded affirmatively. To my astonishment, he continued the conversation in Arabic, asking me how I had learned the language. For a moment, I couldn't believe my ears. I gazed at his face and then at his uniform. I encountered many uninformed people dressed as scholars, but this was the first time I met a true scholar dressed so modestly.

He instructed me to read the book I was carrying, a work by a great scholar. He promised to provide me with another book in which this work had been academically critiqued. He emphasized that in the world of knowledge, individuals don't matter; it's the strength of the argument that holds significance.

The following day, when he handed me the book, I devoured its contents. It marked the first time in my life that I truly grasped the importance of a well-structured argument. This knowledge has remained the most valuable asset in my life to this day, and I had received it from a humble security guard. Subsequently, I pursued the study of philosophy and English literature at the prominent school in Lahore.

Yet, I cannot say I learned anything more valuable there. Throughout my educational journey, I secretly wished that my classmates and teachers could have experienced what I did near that bank. Many years later, during my visit to Pakpattan last month, I encountered Wali Muhammad at the same bank's entrance. He stood exactly where I had first seen him twenty years ago. I don't know if anyone else has had the privilege of gaining knowledge from him, or if:

ہوئی معزولی انداز و ادا میرے بعد



'Someone else may become the beloved, but not in my style and manner after me.'



IS THE GAZA CRISIS A SYMBOL OF CIVILIZATIONAL PREDICAMENT?^[1]



ABDULLAH AL-AHSAN

We are all witnessing horrors of carnage that is going on in the tiny landmass called Gaza – a land squeezed between Egypt and Israel where 2.3 million people were living before the beginning of the butchery. Since 2005 when Gaza became a semi-independent entity, this is the sixth time that Israel has been conducting direct military aggression into the territory. It has led Operation Summer Rains in 2006, Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009, Operation Pillar Defense in 2012, Operation Protective Edge in 2014, and Operation Black Belt in 2019: every time declaring the total annihilation of Hamas as the objective. Will Israel succeed this time? The US administration has already declared unqualified support for Israel's war strategy against the advice of prominent intellectuals. Richard Haass, President Emeritus of the Council of Foreign Relations, has warned in a friendly advice in the Foreign Affairs that, "Hamas is as much a network, a movement, and an ideology as it is an organization. Its leadership can be killed, but the entity or something like it will survive." In a separate article a week after the October 7 Hamas attack, Marc Lynch has cautioned that, "An Invasion of Gaza Would Be a Disaster for Israel." Yet the Administration does not seem to have reflected on the overall situation. Why is this happening? Is this development unprecedented in history?

Arnold Toynbee on the possibility of the Third World War

These developments remind me of the British historian Arnold Toynbee's prediction, who is reported to have said in 1945 that, "if a new war broke out, the Americans would be the aggressor."^[2] Are we really moving to demonstrate that Toynbee was right? Little over two decades later he counted the United States as "one of the two malign imperialist powers in the postwar world; the other was the state of Israel." He justified his claim saying, "must be today the two most dangerous of the 125 sovereign states among which the land-surface of this planet is at present partitioned."^[3]

He also suggested that, "Israel's occupation of Arab territory constituted as vicious and inhuman an act as Germany's occupation of Czechoslovakia and Poland." Was Toynbee anti-Semitic? Have we even considered the question why the historian after studying twenty-one different civilizations in history developed such a negative view about Israel and the United States? One must note that Toynbee had earlier edited the reputed Survey of International Affairs for decades.

The United States and Israel

Let us remember some events during the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. As soon as the State of Israel declared its independence, President Truman recognized the new state within eleven minutes of the declaration against the advice of George Marshall, the great American hero who had initiated the famous economic reconstruction program for Europe following the Second World War. As a student of history, I must recall that Marshall was the most knowledgeable person on international affairs in the administration at the time. Marshall resigned in protest. Have we really examined why Marshall was opposed to recognizing Israel?

The current situation also reminds me of the assassination of the Swedish diplomat and the Red Cross Chief Count Bernadotte. The newly created United Nations appointed him to negotiate peace between the Israelis and Palestinians, but the Israeli paramilitary group Lehi, also known as Stern Gang, murdered him in Jerusalem on September 17, 1948. Bernadotte had the reputation of saving of more than 30,000 lives from Hitler's concentration camps. The US condemned the assassination, demanded full investigation, and sought surety to bring the perpetrators to justice. However, the whole issue died down slowly and one of Bernadotte's assassins later became Israel's prime minister. This seems to have encouraged Israel to mock international law and all international mediation efforts in conflicts with the Palestinians and other neighboring states since then.

This also reminds me of how the policy makers have ignored prominent academics John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt's valuable contribution *The Israel Lobby and the US Foreign Policy*. After failing to publish their initial findings in the US, they first published their article in *London Review of Books*. This only indicates the influence of money – the money that has corrupted our democracy.

We do not realize how much we have degenerated over the decades and now we express our horror at the murder of a six year old in the hands of an elderly man. American politicians, the mainstream media, a powerful segment of academia – all have marginalized the faculty of critical thinking. The paradox is that modern academic disciplines claim to follow Socratic Method of inquiry but in reality, they blatantly follow Sophistic relativistic philosophy. I became familiar with comparative civilizational studies at the University of Michigan under the guidance of Professor Stephen Tonsor, a practicing Catholic who had served at the Nixon Administration.

I could easily identify many divinely guided principles such as universal human dignity, equality and justice that he used to highlight in class discussions. Tonsor used to highlight Toynbee's findings about classical Greece – how aristocrats had corrupted Greece with their money and Sophistic relativity. Following Toynbee's lessons, Tonsor unsuccessfully tried to generate 'the creative minority' among conservative Republicans in his dream to save America from money politics. He clearly foresaw the corrupting influence of money in not only in politics but also in higher education.

Bankruptcy of Western Elites

The Gaza crisis has exposed bankruptcy of the American political elite. Secretary Blinken invoked his Jewish ancestry while declaring US' unconditional support for Israel following Hamas' October 7 attack. Was it a manifestation of good diplomacy? Was he then surprised when he had to wait several hours for a simple meeting in Riyadh with the Saudi Crown Prince? He is now facing a 'revolt' in the State Department. According to reports, the director of congressional and public affairs at the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, which handles arms transfers, resigned, but he seems to have been more worried about "Some of our colleagues in the region, especially among our locally employed staff, have been directly affected by the violence, including by losing loved ones and friends."

After retracting his claim of Hamas decapitating forty Israeli babies,

President Biden has now claimed that, "American leadership is what holds the world together." "American alliances are what keep us, America, safe. American values are what make us a partner that other nations want to work with," he insisted. Is he not mocking the dreams of America's founding fathers? We have witnessed mockery and lies in framing the clash of civilizations thesis, in carpet-bombing Afghanistan in 2001, in justifying the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and during the two decades of occupation of Afghanistan.

However, this is not the first time in history that we witness a decaying power is making hollow claims. Decaying powers throughout history have gone crazy in their killing spree. How terrifying is going to be this time? I am not a military expert and cannot even conceive such a scenario, but I am afraid, Israel does not seem to go a ground invasion: Israel seems to force Gazans starve to death. We are already witnessing mockery in the name of allowing some trucks of humanitarian assistance to Gaza. What will happen to more than two million Gazans when every necessary item runs out?

We have no idea what is happening to most families now, but most analysts are predicting the worse to come. If that happens, how will the rest of the world respond? President Biden is already claiming that America is holding the world together. But holding together for what? To force Gazans to starve? Arnold Toynbee prophesized America's future based on his studies of major world civilizations.

A culture of fear and intimidation dominates the atmosphere today. Is the Gaza crisis a symbol of civilizational predicament? Along with the climate crisis, the current situation has become even more complex. Are we very close to witness our civilizational collapse?

Lessons from History

My humble understanding of historical change does not endorse this pessimism. How is the current crisis different from earlier ones, however? Well, the main difference from classical Greece and now is that, while Socrates failed to motivate most youth of his time, today we witness a great awakening among the youth. They are pointing out to double standards of their leaders – not only leaders in the Western world, but in the Muslim world as well. The Gaza crisis has brought millions, not only Muslims but also many Jewish and other groups to streets opposing official positions of most countries. This did not happen in Socratic Greece.

Besides, there has been a revolutionary change in means of communication since Socrates and therefore, now it would be impossible to isolate and subjugate any determined population in this age of information. In fact, latest polls are indicating fast and significant changes of opinion in the US. Even the corporate controlled social media outlets are failing to manipulate and suppress information. More people are inclined to subscribe to critical thinking. All these are indications of the triumph of Socratic moral values. Does this mean that we will be able to avoid a civilizational collapse?

Could We Escape the Civilizational Collapse?

This is the burning question today. Can we take advantage of the two factors that differentiate us from classical Greeks? Many Muslims seem to look for a miracle – the kind of divine intervention that saved the Ka'ba from the invading army of elephants overlooking the fact that there was no believer to defend the sacred house at the time. Again, in my humble view, with the presence of two billion Muslims around the world such miracles are not going to happen. How do they overcome the impeding challenge then? Many Muslims and non-Muslim observers have come forward to express their unequivocal sympathy for the people of Gaza; they have gathered hundreds and thousands of truckloads of relief goods around the borders of Gaza, millions are demonstrating in cities around the world, yet there is no secession of bombing of Gaza. Israel is clearly trying to force Gazans starve to death. This simply means that the response is not adequate to match the challenge.

Muslim elites seem to be worried about the economic and military power of Israel and its allies. My understanding of ancient Egyptian history and Biblical history is that Pharaonic Egypt was very powerful as opposed to Moses. Today the pyramids and sphinx are standing there only as symbols of a defeated power. Muslims must look Moses as their model, not Haman or Qarun (*Biblical Korah*).



People around the world, particularly in neighboring countries must do more to save the Gazans from the Israeli onslaught. Of course, this is a difficult job, but one must remember the Qur'anic verse "Surely with hardship comes ease (94:5)." This serves the source of hope. The faster the rest of the world wakes up to take care of the oppressed, the earlier an ease will come.



- [1] An earlier version of this article was published in <https://www.juancole.com/>
[2] Arthur Herman, *The Idea of Decline in Western History*.
(NY: The Free Press, 1997), 285.
[3] *Ibid.* 286.

SPLITTING OF THE MOON IV

SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN



Common Divine Signs in Human Self and the External Universe (*anfus wa āfāq*)

The term '*āyah*' has been used multiple times in the Holy Quran to signify signs present in the human self and the external universe (*'anfus wa āfāq'*), as well as the signs related to common practices based on the power and authority of the Almighty. These signs are undoubtedly extraordinary in terms of their reality.

However, due to their general, continuous, and constant appearance, they often take the form of normal events and observations. As a result, they usually do not come as a surprise or serve as a source of contemplation for people. Nevertheless, since they are definite, clear, well-known, and undeniable, the Quran draws attention to them and invites people to acknowledge the truth based on these signs.

For instance, Allah's creation of fields swaying from the dead earth, forming man from the leaven of the soil, pairing him with his counterpart, and then establishing harmony and synchronization between the two, creating and maintaining the heavens and the earth, suspending the heavens without pillars, regulating the sun and moon according to a set pattern, shaping the earth and placing mountains on it, establishing differences in race, color, and language for recognition, creating the night for rest and the day for work, instilling fear and hope, and sending down water from the sky to bring life to the barren land are some of the types of these divine signs.

Verses 19 to 25 in Surah al-Rūm (30) serve as a place where many signs of this nature have been used for argumentation and evidence. At this point, by repeating the words '*Wa min āyatihī (and this is one of its signs),'* the divine book emphasizes these profound signs, which often go unnoticed because they have become routine observations and daily experiences for humans. The Almighty states:

"You wonder how this will happen. Do you not see that He brings the living out of the dead and the dead out of the living, and He makes the earth green after it dies? Similarly, you too will be brought forth. And from among His signs is this: He has created you from clay, and then, behold, you are human beings, spreading throughout the land. And among His signs is that He created mates for you from your own kind, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He engendered love and compassion between you.

Surely, there are signs in this for those who reflect. The creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity in your languages and colors are also among His signs. In it, there are certainly many signs for those endowed with knowledge. Likewise, your sleep during the night and day, as well as your quest for His bounty, are signs for those who listen attentively. Among His signs is also the lightning that He shows you, causing fear and hope. And He sends down water from the sky to revive the earth after it has died.

Surely, there are signs in this for those who understand.

Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and when He calls you from the earth, you will come forth at once."

To provide a clearer understanding of the signs mentioned in the above verses, here is a brief description of each sign, which will facilitate the interpretation of the term '*āyah*':

Creation and Development of Man

In the aforementioned verses, the initial sign is the creation and reproduction of man.

The Almighty states: 'And from among His signs is this also that He has created you from clay; then before long you grow into human beings and spread out [in the land].' This signifies that if people contemplates their own creation, they can easily witness that their existence originated from lifeless particles of soil. Allah transformed these inert particles into living cells, then breathed life into them, giving rise to conscious human beings.

Furthermore, this creation not only occurred once but also became a means for the appearance of hundreds, thousands, and millions of human beings.

Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī elucidates this sign, stating: 'The facts you are being invited to believe are all based on the power and wisdom of your Creator. Why do you ask for external evidence to prove His power and wisdom? The most substantial proof lies within your own creation.'

He created you from inert dust, and you evolved into living and intelligent beings, spreading throughout the earth... Think and ponder on the contrast between dry soil and a living human. The power of God has fashioned an entire world from this soil in no time! (Tadabbur-i Qur'ān, vol. 6, 84-85).

Creation of the Pair from the Human Species

The second sign is that Allah created man in the form of a couple and instilled mutual love and harmony between the two counterparts. It is expressed as follows: 'He has made your pairs from your own species so that you can find comfort in them and has created love and affection between you.' This implies that mankind was not created as single individuals but as two distinct genders, male and female. While they share similarities in their structure and essence, they possess distinct characteristics in terms of their organs and practical attributes. Despite these gender differences, their needs are interdependent, and feelings of love and kindness have been created between them. This harmony gave rise to family and society.

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi elucidates this sign, stating: 'He did not create just one type of human being; He created them as two types and endowed each with distinct features. He instilled an affinity for one another so they could find comfort in each other. Emotions of love and sympathy were engendered between them to such an extent that they are naturally drawn to one another, becoming lifelong companions who support and care for one another' (al-Bayan, vol. 4, 52).

Imam Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī interprets this verse as comprising four different signs, explaining: 'The first clear sign in it is that God has created everything in pairs in this universe, where each member of a pair complements the other in terms of their existence. This also indicates that this world is paired with the Hereafter, and it is together with the Hereafter that this world becomes meaningful. The second sign is that our creator is very merciful and affectionate.

If He has instilled the desire for a spouse in us, He has also created her from our own species and fostered emotions of love and sympathy between the two, allowing both to live as two bodies with one soul. The third sign is the great harmony in the opposing elements of this universe, showcasing an incredible accord to unite for a higher purpose. This clearly demonstrates that this universe has one creator who establishes this harmony among opposing elements. The fourth sign is for those who believe that this universe has evolved spontaneously.

If it evolved as such, how can this harmony exist among opposing elements? This is unequivocal evidence of a powerful and wise being governing the entire system based on His wisdom and sagacity' (Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, Tadabbur-i Qur'ān, vol. 6, 85).

The Creation of the Heavens and the Earth

The creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity in human languages and colors are also described as signs of Allah. The words used are 'khalaq al-samāwāti-waal-arḍa.' This implies that the creation of the earth and the heavens is another one of His signs.

There are certainly many signs in this for those endowed with knowledge. This means that, just like the creation of man, the creation of the universe is also a significant sign for recognizing Allah. When a person reflects on their physical existence and gazes at the vast heavens, they are overwhelmed. They realize that the depths of the earth and the expanses of the sky surpass their understanding.

Imām Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes regarding the sign of the heavens and the earth: 'If people contemplate, they will clearly see unity amidst diversity in this universe. On one side, there is the boundless expanse of the heavens, and on the other side, there is the planet earth. While they are far apart, the profound connection between them is such that no sensible person can believe that both have separate creators and are governed by distinct forces.'

On the contrary, the harmony between them strongly suggests that a single powerful and wise creator governs both, aligning them towards a common goal' (Tadabbur-i Qur'ān, vol. 6, 86).

Differences in Human Languages and Colors

The variation in human dialects, colors, and races is another great sign of Allah. This diversity serves both for recognition and introduction, as well as for different forms of tests and trials. Mawlānā Abul Ala Maududī, the author of Tafhīm al-Quran, provides a clear explanation of the sign of differences in language and color, stating: 'Though your vocal cords, the structure of the mouth, tongue, and brain are similar, people in different regions of the world speak various languages. Even in regions where the same language is spoken, different dialects exist from city to city and town to town.'

Furthermore, individuals have distinct accents, pronunciations, and speech styles. Similarly, while the semen and physical structure are identical, the colors of human beings differ significantly, even among siblings of the same parents. This verse highlights only two aspects, but if one observes, they will discover infinite variety worldwide.

Countless differences are found in the species of humans, animals, plants, and other entities, despite the fundamental uniformity in their individual elements. No two members of the same species are exactly alike.

Even two leaves on a tree exhibit variation. This demonstrates that the world is not a factory with automated machines producing things in mass production, each bearing its own unique species label. Instead, a Master-Artist is at work, giving individual attention to everything and creating each with unique design, embellishments, proportions, and qualities, making each thing uniquely exceptional. His inventive genius continuously generates new models, and His creative power avoids replicating the same design.

Anyone who observes this remarkable phenomenon can never entertain the foolish misconception that the Creator of the universe has ceased to act after its creation. On the contrary, it provides clear evidence that He is perpetually engaged in His creative activities, giving individual attention to each element of His creation' (Tafhīm al-Quran, v 3, 746-7).

Rotation of Day and Night

The alternation of day and night is also considered a divine sign. The exchange between night and day is an ordinary occurrence, but it reveals the extraordinary knowledge, wisdom, and sovereignty of the Lord.

Allah, in His wisdom, understands that His creation requires mental, spiritual, and physical comfort. Without this comfort, individuals cannot fulfill their responsibilities over an extended period.

Additionally, a uniform and unchanging environment diminishes the enjoyment of life's activities. This pattern of human creation necessitates that the dwelling place designed for humans aligns with these requirements. Therefore, if the Creator is all-knowing and all-wise, He is fully aware of His creation's needs and arranges for their fulfillment with perfection. This necessity and the means to meet it substantiate that humans and the universe did not come into existence

randomly but were intentionally created by a knowledgeable and wise being. The respected teacher, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, explains this verse as follows: 'It is stated that if individuals reflect on how their Creator has distributed the need for sleep and rest for a human body and the struggle for livelihood between night and day, they will understand that He has harmonized and aligned them with the environment with great care and mercy.

Doesn't this phenomenon unmistakably point to the existence of a merciful and benevolent Lord? Can anyone claim that all of this has occurred by chance or that multiple gods govern it? Can one even fathom that the creator of this universe would allow it to end without a purpose? A brief contemplation reveals that this message serves as a rebuke for the addressees; they hear but fail to understand. Instead, they attack it while remaining blind and deaf' (al-Bayān, vol 4, 54-5).

In Surah Yunus (10), this sign is described as an indication of the universe's ultimate conclusion. The Almighty states:

'Surely, in the alternation of day and night and whatever God has created in the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who fear' (Q 10:6).

This implies that the rotation of day and night is a sign that the universe is heading towards a final outcome; it is not purposeless. Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī writes: 'The words "indeed, in the alternation of day and night and in the creatures of the heavens and the earth, there are signs for those who fear" further emphasize that the phenomena mentioned have a grand purpose. Moreover, they depict the great system of providence present in the alternating natures of night and day: day offers opportunities to earn a livelihood, while night provides rest and sleep.

Whoever contemplates this system inevitably concludes that opposing elements can work towards a common purpose with astonishing harmony when they believe that the entire universe is governed by the will of a powerful being. Additionally, this also indicates that the one who has established this elaborate system of sustenance and provision and is administering it with precision will not leave humanity without accountability. Instead, a day will inevitably come when those who have recognized the responsibilities imposed by this providence will be rewarded, while those who have remained indifferent will be cast into Hell. This is the exact conclusion reached upon reflecting on all the components and seemingly conflicting elements of the universe. It guides people to the concept of reward and punishment in the hereafter' (Tadabbur-i Qur'ān, vol. 4, 26).

Thunderstorms and Rain in the Clouds

The various manifestations of the sky are also reflections of the signs of Allah. Thunder and lightning signify the arrival of rain. This rain becomes a source of mercy for one region and brings a storm of punishment to another. In this way, it serves as a symbol of hope and optimism and fear simultaneously. Thus, it is the very same thing that can be a form of reward and a source of punishment for whomever Allah wills. The learned scholar Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes:

“ That is, by its very existence [He] teaches them that favors and torments, all are in God's hands, and He has the full power to reward and punish people and can change any of His favors into torment and any torment into favor.

(Al-Bayan, vol. 4, 55)



This is the nature of rain. It brings mercy and forgiveness, and it can also be a source of anger and wrath. It is up to Allah to decide when He commands it to irrigate the fields and orchards and when He orders it to wash away standing crops.

In these verses, the words used to describe rain are: "Then He brings life to the land from it after it dies." Explaining this portion of the verse, Maulana al-Maududi writes: This points, on the one hand, to the life Hereafter, and on the other, proves that God exists, and there is only One God who is controlling the earth and the heavens. Innumerable creatures of the earth live on the products that come from the earth. These products depend on the productivity of the earth, which, in turn, depends on the rain, whether it directly falls on the earth or its water gathers on the surface of the earth, or takes the form of underground water channels, springs, or wells, or freezes on the mountains and then flows down in the form of rivers. The rain itself depends on the heat of the sun, the change of seasons, atmospheric temperature changes, the circulation of the winds, and on lightning, which causes the rain to fall and mixes a kind of natural manure in the rainwater. The establishment of harmony and proportion between these various factors, their usefulness in serving a variety of purposes, and their sustained harmony over millions of years cannot be a product of mere chance. This phenomenon points to the will, plan, and wisdom of a Creator and Designer. It serves as proof that the Creator and Lord of the earth, the sun, the water, the heat, and coolness is One and only One." (Tafhīm al-Quran vol. 3, 748-9).

Existence and Continuity of Heavens and Earth

The existence and continuity of the heavens and the earth are also among the divine signs. They exist and operate according to the command of God. He will bring them to an end whenever He wills. If He commands mankind to leave the earth, they will not be able to disobey Him; they will automatically obey His command. The heavens will not be able to prevent the Lord's call from reaching mankind, nor will the earth be able to hinder their exit from within.

Commenting on the expression "taqūmu al-samā' bi amrihī" (the heavens and the earth subsist by His command), Ghamidi writes:

"No reasoning is required for this because if they are able to hear, then the stars, the sun, the moon, and their earth, which move in this unfathomable universe, speak out to them that they are intact because of the being who can keep them intact and are moving by the force of a mover." (al-Bayan, vol. 4, 55).

Explaining the second part of the verse, Ghamidi writes:

"There will be no need to call again. An amazing manifestation and grand manner of God's power and wisdom can be witnessed by them in the existence and sustenance of the heavens and the earth. This is enough to tell them that if He calls out only once, it is not possible that the earth defies His order or the heavens have the audacity to even slightly deviate from it." (al-Bayan, vol. 4, 55-6).

Summarizing the discussion of the signs in Surah al-Rūm, the Almighty says that everything in the heavens and the earth is subservient to God's command. Nothing can happen without His permission.

The signs of His attributes are present in almost everything to inform mankind that He alone is the initiator of every creation and He alone can recreate them. The signs of His attributes are present in almost everything to inform mankind that He alone is the initiator of every creation and He alone can recreate them. Therefore, humans should not seek to escape from the realm of His power.

He is the most powerful and the wisest. He says:

“Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him; all are obedient to Him alone. It is He Who brings the Creation into being; then it is He Who will create it again, and this is easier for Him. The highest attribute in the heavens and the earth is His, and He alone is Mighty and Wise. (Q 30:26-7)



Commenting on the above verses, Iṣlāḥī writes:

"It is stated that it is He who initiates creation, and it is He who will recreate, and this recreation is easier for them if people just think. The implication is that when the addressees of this verse accept that it is He who has created them, why do they regard His recreating them as improbable? Is the first task more difficult or repeating it?... It is said that it is He who is worthy of all noble attributes found in the heavens and the earth. No one else shares these attributes with Him. After this, two of His attributes are specially referred to: العزيز (dominant) and الحكيم (wise). He is dominant over everything and is exalted, and all His works are based on wisdom. The implication is that no task is difficult for Him. Nothing except His wisdom intervenes in His intention. There is no one in the whole universe who is a peer to His attributes. It self-evidently emanates from this that when there is no one who can match Him in His attributes, no one should be regarded as His match in the obligations that humans owe to Him." (Tadabbur-I Quran vol. 6, 89).

FRIEND

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI



خوشایہ وقت کہ پھولوں نے پیرہن بدلا
چمن میں ماہ سے اتری ہے رات کی مہماں



Joyous is the moment when flowers change their garments,
In the garden, the moon arrives as the night's honored guest.



مری نگاہ کتابوں کے ڈھیر سے اٹھی
کہ اس ہجومِ خموشاں میں کچھ نہیں پنہاں



I look up from my piles of books,
In this tranquil gathering, nothing remains concealed.



مرے ندیم، کئی بار آخرِ شب میں
مرے چراغ کی لو میں بنی تری تصویر



My dearest, countless times in the late hours of the night,
By the lamplight's glow, your image appears so clear.



کنارِ آب چناروں میں ڈوب کر ابھری
خیالِ خواب میں خوابِ خیال کی تعبیر



Immersed by water's edge and maple tree's shade,
In the realm of dreams, the dreams themselves to fade.



ندیمِ شوق، ادھر نو برس سے شام و سحر
رہ حیات میں کانٹوں کی جستجو میں ہوں



O companion of desire, for nine long years,
I've journeyed, day and night, through life's thorny fears.



یہ وہ سفر ہے کہ تو اس سے بے خبر تو نہیں
ترے سوا میں زمانے میں کس سے عرض کروں



This voyage, if you don't comprehend, my dear,
To whom else in this world, besides you, should I steer?



یہ دور اہلِ محبت کو سازگار نہیں
ترا خیال بھی اب تو وفا شعار نہیں



This age isn't harmonious with the love-stricken heart,
Even thoughts of you no longer play their faithful part.



MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT PROPHETHOOD

AMĪN AḤSAN IṢLĀHĪ



The second reliable source of attaining purity and recognizing God is the exemplary character of the Holy Prophet. However, the seeker of purity can benefit from the exemplary character only when they have the right kind of relationship with the Prophet (PBUH). To establish this relationship, it's necessary to understand the status of Prophethood and the nature of our association with the Prophet (PBUH). This question has arisen due to disagreements among Muslims regarding this matter since the time of the Companions and the Followers.

These differences significantly impact the goal of attaining knowledge and purification associated with the personality of the Prophet (PBUH). Thus, we would like to briefly clarify these differing viewpoints and then elaborate on the type of attachment we should have with the Prophet (PBUH) for the purpose of recognizing Allah, understanding the relevant commitments, and identifying the struggle necessary to foster this connection.

Many misconceptions have emerged regarding our relationship with the Prophet (PBUH), but we won't delve into all of them. Instead, we'll highlight four primary misconceptions within our four major groups:

1. There is a group among us who, God forbid, believe that the status of the Prophet between God and His servants is no different from that of a trustworthy servant or a responsible postman. In their perspective, the Prophet's (PBUH) task was limited to delivering the Book that Allah intended for His servants. Once this duty was fulfilled, the role of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) concluded. They determine the nature of their relationship with the Prophet (PBUH) based on this concept. It's evident that for those who diminish the status of Prophethood in this way, the Prophet (PBUH) holds no special significance in terms of recognizing God.

When the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is not seen as special, there is little reason for a unique association with him. In their view, since the responsibility of the Prophet was limited to delivering God's message, his absence doesn't create a gap.

This conception of Prophethood is fundamentally incorrect. The status of a prophet is not restricted to a mere postman or messenger. Instead, a prophet is also a teacher, a purifier, a mentor, and a guiding light. Most importantly, he is a guide whose obedience is compulsory. Furthermore, along with all his attributes, he is directly under the supervision of God concerning his duties of education and guidance, protecting him from all the dangers of ignorance and error. A prophet's duty isn't limited to delivering the Book of God to His servants but also includes explaining the book's secrets and complexities to his followers, practically demonstrating how to follow the divine book, and preparing a group of people who follow the teachings of the book through his education and training. Moreover, he has to highlight the book's implications in their individual and collective lives. In all these tasks, the prophet's own actions and words are considered as teachings of the divine book and Prophethood. Considering this concept of Prophethood, it becomes evident that our relationship with the Prophet (PBUH) is unlike any other, and without an understanding of these relationships, one cannot access the blessings and benefits sent to us by God through the Prophet.

2. Another group that misunderstands the status of Prophethood is that of sophists. They have established separate boundaries between Shari'ah and Sufism and between explicit and hidden knowledge. They wrongly disconnect these two branches of knowledge, suggesting that the Prophet educated the general populace through explicit knowledge (Shari'ah), while imparting hidden knowledge only to a specific group as a secret. This hidden knowledge subsequently spread among different Sufi groups, becoming guardians of the secret. In the earlier part of this book, we've highlighted the shortcomings of this idea and the misconceptions it generates about the Prophet's status and its impact on recognizing God.

This belief, although flawed, at least acknowledges the Prophet as the primary source of both Shari'ah and hidden knowledge. They don't limit the Prophet to one source of knowledge and someone else to the other. On the contrary, some Sufists perceive Prophethood and Sainthood (Walayat) as two parallel positions, with one serving as the source of Shari'ah knowledge and the other as the source of hidden knowledge. According to them, these two positions are separate and permanent, naturally fostering rivalry and conflict. As a result, they continue to oppose each other, with Sufists considering Shari'ah followers as external and lacking insight, and Shari'ah followers viewing Sufists as ignorant and misguided.

This arrogance and bias have led some Sufists to regard Shari'ah as less significant than a blade of grass when compared to Sufism. From the perspective of recognizing God, the status they ascribe to Shaykh Moḥayy-ud-Dīn Ibn Arabi surpasses that of any divine prophet (God forbid).

Clearly, if one holds a negative view of Prophethood's status, they cannot achieve even a fraction of God's recognition, regardless of their inner spiritual experiences. Only the Prophets serve as the main source of knowledge about God. Since our Prophet (PBUH) is the seal of Prophets and the bearer of the final and perfect Shari'ah, he holds the positions of Khātam al-Awliyā' (seal of Saints) and Khātam al-Ārifīn (seal of Gnostics). The recognition he attained of God cannot be replicated by anyone else, and the treasure of knowledge contained within his Shari'ah is unmatched by anything else.

3. There's also a group among us that regards the Prophet (PBUH) as nothing more than a revered historical figure. While they join the nation in calling him a Messenger, they fail to grasp that what the Prophet (PBUH) has said on any matter constitutes the ultimate authority. The success, both worldly and eternal, of every individual depends on complete submission to his guidance. In their view, the Prophet's teachings were suitable for a specific time and environment, and adhering to them in this age of knowledge and enlightenment is not only wise but necessary. Now, if some of the Prophet's teachings are worthy of being accepted, they are either those that align with their desires or those that remain relevant in the present. Apart from these, they are hesitant to accept anything else wholeheartedly due to their weakness and timidity.

4. For a significant number of people, the Holy Prophet is merely a symbol of blind devotion. They express their devotion at various times but distance themselves from the responsibilities of the Prophet's teachings. They don't consider the Prophet's purpose in the world, his teachings, the responsibilities he left for the ummah, and what needs to be done to fulfill those responsibilities. Instead of addressing these questions and fulfilling the requirements, they believe that expressing devotion to the Holy Prophet, even if it contradicts his teachings, is sufficient according to their own notions. Some ignorant religious leaders have exploited this devotion, using it as a way to avoid fulfilling the actual obligations of the Shari'ah and seeking personal fame. They elevated the Prophet to a position resembling God and fabricated ways of expressing devotion and love that violate the Shari'ah. In doing so, they eroded beliefs that open the doors to recognizing God in the name of the Prophet and devotion to him, and they undermined actions and moral values that could strengthen this recognition. The person sent to guide humanity toward God was used by unscrupulous individuals to divert people from God's path and lead them into ignorance.

COHERENCE OF THE QURĀN: THE STRONGEST ROPE CONNECTOR OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH

FAWAD AHMAD



That the inimitability (i'jaz) of the Qur'an becomes evident to a reader requires a complete understanding of the intended meaning and impact of the Book.

This understanding can only be achieved by recognizing the unique form and coherence of the Qur'anic text. We won't delve into the specifics of this magnificent text here.

Nevertheless, according to Ḥamīd Uddīn Farāhī, the coherence within the Qur'an is the key to unlocking the treasure of mysteries and wonders it holds.

Regrettably, within the entire scholarly tradition of Muslims, many have not given due consideration to the coherence in the Qur'an when determining its meanings. According to Imam Farāhī, this coherence conceals a wealth of wonders and mysteries, most of which remain undiscovered. The neglect of coherence in interpreting the Qur'anic text, treating it as a collection of isolated verses, has led to unnecessary differences among Muslims.

Consequently, divisions among scholars have deepened, and over time, followers of each perspective have established distinct traditions. Prejudices associated with each tradition have emerged, further dividing the Ummah into numerous sects due to the absence of a shared criterion like the coherence in the Qur'an to settle these differences.

Hence, every scholar regards their own understanding of the Qur'an as the intended message of God. The coherence in the Qur'an functions as the yardstick for interpreting and commenting on it. It serves as the means to establish the genuine intended meaning of the Holy Qur'an.

The coherence in the Qur'an eliminates the need to rely on external sources to determine the true meaning of the divine book. Instead, the Qur'an, through its coherence, makes its message unequivocal.

Consequently, the Qur'an is not subject to any specific human interpretation. When the authoritative status of the coherence of the Qur'an to resolve differences was disregarded, human understanding gained supremacy, initially through consensus and subsequently through the scholarly traditions of specific schools of thought.

Consensus holds a significant position in determining the true meaning of the Qur'an. According to Imam Ghazālī, consensus should be the primary reference for every mujtahid. To him, consensus stands at the forefront of the main sources of religious guidance in Islam.

The original concept of consensus was altered over time. Originally, consensus referred to the transmission of an event (waqī'ah) by a large number of people (jamm-e ghafīr) to the next generation. Importantly, the term "jamm-e-ghafīr" encompasses not just scholars and jurists but also ordinary people.

Moreover, the defining term in this context is "waqī'ah," referring to an event, not an interpretation or understanding of an event. This process grants the event authority and makes it a source of knowledge for the subsequent generation.

It is inaccurate to claim that consensus pertains to a particular agreed-upon interpretation by a specific group in a particular era and to consider it definitive for all time, thus subjecting the Book of God to that human interpretation.

Incorporating the coherence in the Qur'an means that the Qur'an itself possesses the ultimate authority in interpreting the divine text, and all other sources of knowledge are subservient to it. Imam Farāhī, in his *Nizām al-Qur'an*, asserts that he derived the concept of coherence in the Qur'an from the Qur'anic text itself, rather than relying on external sources.

Neglecting the coherence in the Qur'an allows each juristic school to exist independently, devoid of a standard or criterion to evaluate their fundamental principles. Thus, there is no common legal theory serving as a benchmark. Each juristic school stands on its own principles, which differ from those of other legal schools. Consequently, to assess the validity of a legal school's rulings, we must evaluate their principles and their compatibility. There is no method for validating the principles of a juristic school from the original source, the Holy Qur'an.

This failure is a result of the neglect of the coherence in the Qur'an,

causing every juristic school to establish its fundamental principles based on its own interpretations.

The inevitable outcome is the absence of a standard to judge the validity of the principles of different legal schools. This is why a comprehensive comparison of legislative presumptions across different religions is unattainable. Instead, these principles can only be reviewed within the context of each specific legal tradition.

When we subject the Qur'an to human understanding, we mean formulating specific principles during its interpretation without considering the textual context, the situation in which it was revealed, and the audience. These are the natural principles for understanding any book. For instance, interpreting the Qur'an based on Hadith or deeming consensus as reliable. Consequently, each school of thought becomes an entirely independent entity because there is no decisive criterion to mediate differences between various schools of thought.

Even after considering the coherence in the Qur'an, there is still room for the emergence of different schools of thought. However, we possess a decisive criterion in cases of disagreement. We can confidently say that these are established principles and they have not been applied in a particular case. Unlike human understanding, the coherence in the Qur'an represents the understanding of the Book whose significance cannot be denied. It serves as the strong and unbreakable bond (Habl al-matīn). In the compilation of *Nizām al-Qur'an*, Imam Farāhī argues that the main cause of differences in interpretation is the neglect of the coherence in the Qur'an. Had the coherence been explicit, and interpreters considered the central theme of the surah, differences in interpreting the Qur'anic text would have been minimized.

Instead, all interpreters would have united under the same banner and spoken with one voice:



'It is a good tree whose roots are firm and branches reach the sky.



THE RELIGIOUS STATUS OF HIJAB

AAYAN ZUBERI



In essence, traditional scholars draw the ruling for the obligation of the Hijab from the following verses of the Quran,

“O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way, it is more likely that they will be recognized 'as virtuous' and not be harassed. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (33:59)“...and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils all over their chests and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband’s fathers, or their sons, or their husband’s sons, or their brothers or their brother’s sons, or their sister’s sons, or their women.” (24:31)

The five Sunni schools of thought took these verses to mean that in front of males whom a woman can marry a woman has to cover the following.

According to the school of Imam Abū Hanīfah, as stated by Imam al Haskafi, “The Awrah (i.e. nakedness, parts which must be covered) for a free woman is her full body including her descending hair according to the correct opinion, except face, hands, and feet.”[1] Though Imam al Qudūrī believed that only the face and hands may not be covered. [2] However, Imam ibn Abidīn said that, “(A young woman will be prevented from exposing her face), not because it is part of Awrah, rather (for the fear of temptation)”[3].

According to the school of Imam Malik, the awrah is everything except the face and the hands up to the wrists. This is also the dominant opinion of the Shafi school. Imam al-Nawawi writes, “As for the *awrah* of a free woman, it is her entire body except for her face and palms (i.e. hands up to the wrists)[4]. These according to the two schools must be covered if there is fear of temptation. The Hanbali school and Zahiri school are also of the same opinion despite some disagreement. Dr. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili in his renowned Fiqh Al Islami states, “(According to the Hanbalis), the awrah of a mature free woman is her entire body excluding her face and palms, based upon the preferred opinion according to a group of scholars.”[5].

Imam ibn Hazm writes,



The *awrah* of a woman is her entire body except only the face and palms.[6]



However, despite this relative agreement regarding the *awrah* of a free woman, they do not agree upon the *awrah* of slave women. Thus, there is no consensus regarding the *awrah* of a woman. Al Quduri al Hanafi writes, "Whatever is nakedness for a man, that is [also] nakedness for a slave woman, as well as her belly and her back. Anything else of her body is not nakedness." [7] It is worth noting that this is also very similar to the opinion of the Shafites, who opine, "the 'nakedness (*awra*)' of female slaves is the same as that of free males, which consists of the area between the navel and the knees." [8]. Therefore, according to two major schools of law the *awrah* of a slave woman is more or less the same as that of a free male.

Imam Malik disagreed and said the breasts should also be a part of the *awrah* of a slave woman. Al Hattab writes, "Malik was asked: Do you dislike a servant-girl to go out bare-chested? Malik said: Yes, and I would punish her for that." [9].

However, the Hanbalites and Zahirites disagreed with this entire distinction. The Kuwaiti Encyclopedia of Fiqh states, "The Hanbali scholars said the *awrah* of a slave-girl is like the nakedness of a free woman. It is not permissible to look at her other than what is allowed to see in regards to a free woman." [10]. Imam ibn Hazm writes, "The *awrah* of a woman is her entire body except only the face and palms. The free man and male servant, the free woman and maidservant are the same in this respect; there is no difference... As for differentiating between the free woman and maidservant, then the religion of Allah Almighty is one, creation and nature are one. All of that in respect to free women and maidservants is the same unless there is an explicit text to distinguish between them in any way such that it can be applied." [11].

However, despite this, even Imam ibn Taymiyyah al Hanbali states, "Maidservants, in the time of the companions, used to walk in the streets with their heads uncovered" [12]. He says that the reason for this was that "they were serving men who had no ill intention" [13]. The question I pose to this is, why didn't free women take off their hijabs then?

Therefore, there is no consensus regarding the *awrah* of a woman. The reason for such a difference in opinion is the fact that these scholars did not give much attention to the Quran and instead relied on jurisprudential opinions.

Had the verses quoted earlier been the only verse relating to this matter, there would have been no debate, however, that is not the case.

In our opinion verse 33:59 is used as the prime source for the obligation of the Hijab, its context begins from, the following verses of Surah Ahzab from verse 57 and ends at verse 62. The Quran says, ***“Surely those who offend Allah and His Messenger are condemned by Allah in this world and the Hereafter. And He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.” (33:57) “As for those who abuse believing men and women unjustifiably, they will definitely bear the guilt of slander and blatant sin.” (33:58) “O Prophet! Ask your wives, daughters, and believing women to draw their cloaks over their bodies. In this way, it is more likely that they will be recognized ‘as virtuous’ and not be harassed. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (33:59) “If the hypocrites, and those with sickness in their hearts, and rumor-mongers in Medina do not desist, We will certainly incite you ‘O Prophet’ against them, and then they will not be your neighbors there any longer.”(33:60) “They deserve to be condemned. If they were to persist, they would get themselves seized and killed relentlessly wherever they are found!” (33:61) “That was Allah’s way with those ‘hypocrites’ who have gone before. And you will find no change in Allah’s way.” (33:62)***

From the reading of all of these verses, it becomes evident that verse 59 was revealed in a particular circumstance.

The circumstance is that there are people who offend God by offending His Messenger (33:57), the offense is in the form of abusing Muslim men and women and in particular slandering Muslim women (33:58), regarding this situation, we are not the first people in history to say this, Suddi (an early authority on tafsir) said, "The mischief-mongers among the people of Madinah would come out on the streets at dusk and stalk the women of the Ansar. The houses of the people of Madinah [in those days] were very small in size and at nightfall the women would go out on these streets [making their way to the fields] to relieve themselves. These evil people would tease these women. If they saw a woman wearing a cloak they would consider her a free woman [and not a slave] and would abstain [from any evil activity] and if they saw a woman not wearing a cloak [in the way prescribed by the Qur'an] they would pounce on her by saying that she is a slave woman." [14] Mujahid said, "These women would wear cloaks [in the way prescribed by the Qur'an] so that it be known that they are free women and the mischief-mongers would not then harm or tease them." [15]

Therefore, it was to derail the efforts of the scandal-mongers and harassers that the Prophet was instructed to command his wives, his daughters, and the believing women to wear cloaks when going outside so that they may be recognized as believing and noble women and no man can say that he

mistook the woman for his slave girl and therefore approached her in a vulgar fashion (33:59), the identities of the perpetrators have also been alluded to, saying that they are the hypocrites (33:60), a verdict for the execution of the hypocrites has been given if they do not desist from scandal-mongering and harassment (33:61), Allah then declares that this has always been His way with the hypocrites among the followers of the prophets (33:62).

From the above verses and their explanation, it is clear that this command to take cloaks over their entire bodies, to cover everything was purely situational and a response to a crisis.

To the claim that the Mothers of the Believers (wives of the Prophet) used to observe the veil and cloak, this is indeed true. However, they did so, because of a special commandment of modesty given to them because of being married to the Prophet (peace be upon him),

The Quran says,

“Wives of the Prophet! For any of you guilty of blatant vulgarity, there is a twofold punishment for her and this is an easy proposition for God.” (33:30) “And those of you who will remain obedient to God and His messenger and do righteous deeds, We shall give them their two-fold reward and We have prepared an honorable sustenance for them.” (33:31) “Wives of the Prophet! You are not like common women. If you fear God, do not adopt a soft tone [with these people] so that he who has an ailment in his heart should have any false hope and speak to them in the conventional way.” (33:32) “Abide still in your homes and do not display your finery as was done in the previous age of jāhiliyyah. And attend to your prayers, keep paying zakāh, and be diligent in the obedience of God and His Messenger. Women of this House! God only wants to cleanse you from [the] filth [these hypocrites want to besmear you with] and to fully purify you.” (33:33) “...[These hypocrites are not desisting from their pranks. So,] believers from now on, do not go into the houses of the Prophet except if you are allowed to come for some meal. Even then you should not wait for its preparation. However, when you are called, enter [at that time]; then when you have eaten, disperse and do not sit conversing about. This bothers the Messenger but he is lenient to you and God is not lenient to anyone in saying the truth. And when you have to ask something from the wives of the Prophet, ask from behind the curtain. This is purer for your hearts and for their hearts too. It is not permissible for you to hurt God’s Messenger nor is it permissible for you to ever marry his wives after him.” (33:53) “This is very grave in God’s sight. Whether you reveal something or conceal it, it is equal for God because God is aware of everything.” (33:54)

“It shall be no sin for the Prophet’s wives to come before their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers’ sons, their sisters’ sons, their women of acquaintance, or their slave-women. [O Women of the Household of the Prophet!] Keep fearing God; Indeed, God observes all things.” (33:55)

From the aforementioned verse, it becomes clear that the Wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were commanded to wear the veil, as they were the Mothers of The Believers, to protect the Noble household of The Prophet (peace be upon him) from hypocrites as well as because marriage with the wives of The Prophet (peace be upon him) from this point forth was made illegal for every Muslim man except The Prophet (peace be upon him). It was to ensure that no other man should be attracted to them and they should not be attracted to any other man. Hence, they were commanded to wear the veil and to communicate with men other than their immediate relatives from behind a screen.

This is what has been addressed in the following hadith of Umm e Salamah; "Umm Salamah reported, While we were with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, Ibn Maktum was permitted to enter. He entered and that was after the command to veil. The Prophet said, "Veil yourselves from him." I said, "O Messenger of Allah, is he not blind? He cannot see or recognize us." The Prophet said, "Are you blind such that you cannot see him?" [Al Tirmidhi, Jami, 2778]

Furthermore, the authentic narrations from the hadith collections affirm the Hijab and veil being a symbol of the Ummul Mu'minin;

"Narrated Anas: The Prophet (ﷺ) stayed for three days between Khaybar and Medina, and there he consummated his marriage to Safiyya bint Huyai. I invited the Muslims to the wedding banquet in which neither meat nor bread was offered. He ordered for leather dining sheets to be spread, and dates, dried yogurt, and butter were laid on them, and that was the Prophet's wedding banquet.

The Muslims wondered, "Is she (Saffiyya) considered his wife or his slave girl?" Then they said, "If he orders her to veil herself, she will be one of the mothers of the Believers; but if he does not order her to veil herself, she will be a slave girl. So, when the Prophet (ﷺ) proceeded from there, he spared her space behind him (on his she-camel) and put a screening veil between her and the people." [16]

Narrated `Umar: I said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! Good and bad persons enter upon you, so I suggest that you order the mothers of the Believers (i.e. your wives) to observe veils." Then Allah revealed the Verses of Al-Hijab." [17]

Narrated Anas: I know (about) the Hijab (the order of veiling of women) more than anybody else. Ubai bin Ka'b used to ask me about it. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) became the bridegroom of Zainab bint Jahsh whom he married at Medina. After the sun had risen high in the sky, the Prophet (ﷺ) invited the people to a meal. Allah's Apostle remained sitting and some people remained sitting with him after the other guests had left. Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) got up and went away, and I too, followed him till he reached the door of `Aisha's room. Then he thought that the people must have left the place by then, so he returned and I also returned with him. Behold, the people were still sitting at their places. So, he went back again for the second time, and I went along with him too. When we reached the door of `Aisha's room, he returned and I also returned with him to see that the people had left. Thereupon the Prophet (ﷺ) hung a curtain between me and him and the Verse regarding the order for Hijab was revealed." [18]

Ibn Juraij said, " `Ata informed us that when Ibn Hisham forbade women to perform Tawaf with men he said to him, 'How do you forbid them while the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to perform Tawaf with the men?' I said, 'Was this before decreeing of the use of the veil or after it?' `Ata took an oath and said, 'I saw it after the order of veil.' I said, 'How did they mix with the men?' `Ata said, 'The women never mixed with the men [19], and `A'ishah used to perform Tawaf separately and never mixed with men. Once it happened that `A'ishah was performing the Tawaf and a woman said to her, 'O Mother of believers! Let us touch the Black stone.' `A'ishah said to her, 'Go yourself [20],' and she refused to do so. The wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to come out at night, in disguise and used to perform Tawaf with men [21]. But whenever they intended to enter the Ka`bah, they would stay outside till the men had gone out. I and `Ubaid bin `Umair used to visit `A'ishah while she was residing at JaufThabir."

I asked, "What was her veil?" `Ata said, "She was wearing an old Turkish veil, and that was the only thing (veil) which was screened between us and her. I saw a pink cover on her." [22]

These narrations make it abundantly clear that permanent veiling was a symbol of the Mothers of the Believers. Furthermore, the narrations regarding the veiling of ordinary women have been classed as weak, due to deficiencies in their chains, by Sheikh Nasiruddin Al-Albani.

To those who think this veiling is "unjust", the Mothers of Believers were allowed to leave or spend a life of difficulty yet of obedience to God and His messenger (peace be upon him) in Surah Ahzab itself,

"O Prophet! Say to your wives, "If you desire the life of this world and its luxury, then come, I will give you a 'suitable' compensation 'for divorce' and let you go graciously." (33:28)

***But if you desire Allah and His Messenger and the 'everlasting' Home of the Hereafter, then Surely Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good."* (33:29)**

The following narratives have been used by many to state that the opinion we have formed regarding the Hijab is flawed,

The first narrative is as follows: It was narrated that Ibn 'Umar said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: 'Whoever drags his garment out of pride, Allah will not look at him.' Umm Salamah said: 'O Messenger of Allah, what should women do with their hems?' He said: 'Let it down a handspan.' She said: 'But then their feet will show.' He said: 'Let it down a forearm's length, but no more than that.'" [23] It is evident from this narrative, that Umm e Salamah is referring to women who already observed the Hijab because of their social class. Had it been a commandment of religion it would have been stated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) without Umm e Salamah even asking. The style of the narration shows that.

The second narrative is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Woman is 'awrah, and if she goes out, the Shaytān raises his hopes (of misguiding her). She is never closer to Allah than when she stays in her house." [24] All this narrative proves is that women staying at home is recommended, this hadith can be seen in harmony with this narration, "Ibn 'Umar reported the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying; "Do not prevent your women from visiting the mosque, but their houses are better for them (for praying)." [25]

The third narrative is, "Narrated Aisha, Ummul Mu'minin: Asma, daughter of AbuBakr, entered upon the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wearing thin clothes. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned his attention from her. He said: O Asma', when a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it does not suit her that she displays her parts of the body except this and this, and he pointed to his face and hands." [26] This hadith is weak. The chain of this hadith is, "Abu Dawood from al Waleed from Saeed ibn Bashir from Qatadah from Khalid ibn Duraik from Aisha."

Firstly, Abu Dawud himself says regarding the man who's narrating from Syeda Ayesha, "Khalid bin Duraik did not meet Aisha." [27] Secondly Qatadah is a mudallis [28] and this narration has his an'ana. Thirdly, Saeed bin Bashir al Azdi has been classed as weak by Imam Nasai [29]. Ibn Hibban records that he makes a lot of mistakes because of his bad memory and narrates from Qatadah that which has no corroboration [30] (this hadith is an example of this phenomenon). Lastly, Yahya ibn Ma'in regards Al Azdi to be, "laysa bi shay" [31]. Thus Hafiz Zubair Ali classed this hadith as weak [32].

After the passing of the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is evident from the following narrative that the Hijab became a symbol of free women not just the Mothers of the believers. Anas narrated, "Umar saw one of our maidservants wearing a veil and he flogged her. Umar said: Do not resemble free women." [33] It is clear from this that veiling or the Hijab had become symbolic of upper-class women in the times of Sahaba, thus Umar had a slave woman flogged as she was engaging in deception. Considering Syedna Umar's reaction it's clear the deception she was engaging in was intended by her to cause some sort of harm. As Syedna Umar's personality was such that The Prophet (peace be upon him) said regarding him, "O son of Khattab, by the one in whose hand is my soul, whenever Satan sees you taking a path, then he will take another path." [34]. Even after the Prophet's (peace be upon him) passing, it is the opinion of Qabisah ibn Jabir, who said, "I haven't seen anyone more knowledgeable about the book of Allah and His religion, nor anyone more upholding of the limits imposed by Allah, nor anyone more feared and respected in the breasts of men than 'Umar ibn Al-Khattaab." [35]

This writer has greatly elaborated upon why hijab is not stipulated by Islam for ordinary women in normal situations, what does Islam mandate for ordinary women? The verses of Surah Nur (verses 30-31) tell us the etiquette for social interaction,

"[O Prophet!] Tell those who believe in you to restrain their eyes and guard their private parts [if there are women present in these houses]. This is a purer way for them. Undoubtedly, God is well aware of whatever they do." (24:30) "And tell believing women to restrain their eyes also and to guard their private parts and to display of their embellishments [36] only those which are normally revealed [37] and for this they should draw their coverings over their chest and necklines. And they should not reveal their embellishments to anyone except their husbands or their fathers or their husbands' fathers or their sons or their husbands' sons or their brothers or their brothers' sons or their sisters' sons or their women of acquaintance or their slaves or the subservient male servants who do not feel attraction for women or those children who as yet have no awareness of the hidden aspects of women. They should not walk by stamping their feet on the ground so that attention is drawn to their hidden ornaments. Believers! All of you turn to God in repentance [on the sins committed until now] that you may prosper." (24:31)

Imam Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes regarding these verses, "To protect the society from moral misconduct and to safeguard the sanctity of personal relationships, the above verses outline the norms and etiquette of gender interaction. They are stated in Surah Nur with the warning that these norms of social interaction and communal contact must be adhered to in order to maintain the purity of heart and are the most appropriate set of principles in this matter.

If people follow these norms, they will obtain the great blessings and favors they entail. However, to obtain these, they must follow these norms while regarding the Almighty to be all-embracing in knowledge and always remain aware of the fact that the Almighty is not only aware of their deeds but also the intentions and motives behind them.”[38]

He further writes in another treatise, “These norms are: ..In both types of visited places, if women are present then the divine directive is that both men and women present should restrain their gazes. If there is modesty in the gazes, and men and women refrain from feasting their eyes on the physical attributes of one another and ogling each other, then no doubt the purport of the directive stands fulfilled because the purpose of this directive is not to desist from seeing at all or to constantly stare at the floor while interacting with one another. It means to guard one’s gaze from taking undue liberty and to refrain from staring at one another. iv. One must properly protect one’s sexual organs on such occasions of interaction. This means that neither should these organs have any inclination for others nor should they be exposed to others. In fact, on occasions of gender intermingling, body parts that need to be covered must be covered even more carefully. The primary way to achieve this end is to wear decent clothes. Men and women should wear clothes which not only the ornaments worn but also the sexual organs. Moreover, on such occasions, care should be taken that a person does not expose his sexual organs.

Women in particular must not display any of their embellishments except before their mahram relatives and attendants. However, exempted from this are embellishments adorned on limbs which are generally never covered: ie, make-up and the ornaments worn on the hand, the face, and the feet. Barring the make-up and ornaments worn in these places, women must hide the embellishments worn in all other places. So much so, they should not walk by striking their feet in a manner that draws attention to any hidden ornaments they may be wearing.

Since the chest of women is a means of sexual attraction, and there also may be jewelry worn on the neck, they are directed to cover their chests with a cloak. This directive of covering the chest and the neckline does not pertain to old women who are no longer of marriageable age on the condition that their intention is not to show off their ornaments. However, what is more pleasing in the sight of Allah is that even in this age they are careful and not dispense with this garment in the presence of men. This is more seemly.”[39]

Islam mandates and obligates its followers to modesty and the guarding of their private parts. This guarding has two aspects, literal and metaphorical, the private parts must be protected by being chaste and not indulging in immorality by

avoiding such situations and the private parts along with their surrounding areas must be covered, so that they may be well protected. This covering, which is the awrah for men, extends from the navel to the knees. For women, their awrah extends from the neckline to the knees. However when they wear adornments and dress up hiding their beautification and embellishments[40] except for that which is visible on a normal basis[41], is obligatory, so that they may not incur any sexual tension from the unrelated males they are meeting. The Quran itself says, that women may reveal their embellishments to their husbands and their immediate male relatives with whom marriage is forbidden, women (who are not attracted to their gender), and their slaves (women and men who are not attracted to women anymore).

Both genders are recommended to cover themselves completely. They should also not wear clothes which expose the explicit and exact shape of their awrahs; rather, even if they are wearing what the world considers to be 'western' shirts and pants they should be loose and leave ambiguity regarding that which they have covered. Women must take this precaution regarding both their lower and upper garments, men are to take this precaution regarding lower garments.

Prayer is a solemn and dignified matter. Thus, during prayer, if one has the amount of pure clothes required to cover the entire body (except the hands, face, and feet), then they should. Regarding this, it has been narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "None of you should offer prayer in a single garment that does not cover the shoulders." [42] Furthermore, The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman who menstruates (i.e., an adult woman) except with a head cover." [43]

I have to the best of my ability tried to iterate and articulate the understanding of the Quran that I have chosen to follow out of sincerity. I by no means am against Hijab or Parda, nor do I view it as a means of oppression. I struggle to approve of post-modernist sentiments regarding their declaration that modesty is arbitrary and that there is no guideline for what should be covered.

The Quran says,

"A time has been appointed for each nation. Then once its time ends, even for a moment it can neither be pushed back nor moved forward." (7:34)... "God does not change His dealing with a nation unless it itself does not change its attitude. And when God intends to punish a nation, no one can avert it nor can anyone be their helper against God." (13:11)... "They should not go about hastening the punishment. In reality,] there is not a city that We shall not destroy before the Day of Judgement or not inflict with a severe punishment. This is written in the register of God." (17:58).

Thus, it is evident that morally bankrupt societies do not maintain their dominance, they come crashing down because of God's punishment, this established practice of God has been witnessed throughout human history.



References:

- [1] Al Haskafi, Durr al-Mukhtar, vol.1, 405.
- [2] Al Quduri, Al Mukhtasar, 63.
- [3] Ibn Abideen, Radd al Muhtar, vol. 1, 406.
- [4] An Nawawi, Al Majmu Sharh al Muhazzab, vol.4, 190.
- [5] Az Zuhaili, Fiqh al Islami, vol.7, 753.
- [6] Ibn Hazm, Al Muhallabil Athar, vol. 2, 241.
- [7] Al Quduri, Mukhtasar, 65.
- [8] <https://seekersguidance.org/answers/modesty/why-did-slave-women-during-the-time-of-the-prophet-not-cover-their-hair-even-during-prayer/>
- [9] Al Hattab, Mawahib al Jaleel, vol. 1, 501.
- [10] Al Mawsuat al Fiqhiyah al Kuwaitiyah, vol. 31, 49.
- [11] Ibn Hazm, Al Muhallabil Athar, vol. 2, 241.
- [12] It is worth mentioning that Ibn Taymiyyah's opinion was similar to Malik's. Ibn Taymiyyah writes, "The default position is that the nakedness of a maidservant is like a free woman, just as the nakedness of a male servant is like a free man. When she takes on an occupation and duties, her prohibitions are reduced in comparison to a free woman, as a concession to her in showing only what needs to be shown... As for the back and chest, it remains in the default position" (Ibn Taymiyyah, Sharh al Umdah, vol.1, 275). However, to my knowledge, there is no textual evidence for Ibn Taymiyyah's opinion regarding the rules of awrah being relaxed for slave women. Rather scholars were having trouble trying to reconcile the differences in opinion by using this ta'weel, whereas they should have referred back to The Quran and re-evaluated their opinions in light of what The Quran said.
- [13] Ibn Taymiyyah, Al Majmu al Fatawa, vol. 15, 418.
- [14] Dr. Saleem, Islam and Women: Misconceptions and Misperceptions, 56.
- [15] Ibid, 57.
- [16] Al Bukhari, Al Jami as Sahih, (no. 5085)
- [17] Ibid. (no. 4790)
- [18] Ibid. (no. 5466)
- [19] This was so that the sanctity of worship rituals may be preserved.

[20] Had Hijab been for all women Syeda Ayesha would not have asked her to go herself, rather she would have forbidden the lady in question from going.

[21] Only the mothers of the believers took such stringent precautions, no other woman did so, despite being companions of The Prophet (peace be upon him).

[22] Al Bukhari, Al Jami as Sahih, (no. 1618).

[23] Al Nasai, Sunan al Sughra, (no. 5336).

[24] Ibn Khuzaymah, Al Jami as Sahih, (no. 1592)

[25] Abu Dawud, Sunan, (no. 567).

[26] Ibid. (no. 4104).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Al Dhahabi, Tazkirah al Huffaz, vol.1, 123.

[29] Al Nasai, Al Duafa, 52.

[30] Ibn Hibban, Al Marjuhin, vol. 1, 319.

[31] Al Uqaili, Al Duafa al Kabir, vol. 2, 100.

[32] Zayi, Anwar us Sahifa, 146.

[33] Ibn Abi Shaybah, Musannaf, vol. 6, 236.

[34] Al Bukhari, Al Jami as Sahih, (no. 5735).

[35] Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Fada'il al Sahaba (no. 472).

[36] According to Imam Zamakhshari and Mufti Shafi Usmani, The term "embellishments" refers to external beautification, Ustaz Imam agrees with this assessment.

[37] This refers to, makeup worn on the face, earrings, rings, etc. For details see Al-Bayan; tafsir Surah Nur by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi.

[38] Al Ghamidi, Islam; A Comprehensive Introduction, 429.

[39] Ibid, 123.

[40] Including hiding their clothes, if the clothes in question are formal, in the words of Ghamidi, "jewelry, makeup and party outfits which women especially wear on occasions of dressing-up (should be covered)." (Tafsir al-Bayan, Surah Nur para. 16, note 45).

[41] Thus, embellishments and beautification done on the face, hands, and feet do not have to be covered. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi writes, "The actual words used for this are: *جَرَّتِ الْعَادَةُ وَالْجِبِلَّةُ عَلَي طُهُورِهِ وَ الْأَصْلُ فِيهِ*. Their correct meaning is: *إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا*. *إِلَّا مَا الظُّهُورُ إِلَّا مَا*, as pointed out by al-Zamakhsharī, (Al-Kashshāf, vol. 3, 236). It means the embellishments of the body parts which a person does not cover generally and instinctively and they are always left bare. These include hands, feet, face, etc. The reason for this is that according to syntactical consideration, it is: *الظاهر منها*. It cannot be taken in the meaning of *أن يظهر منها شيء* as has been done by some scholars." (Ibid. note 46).

[42] Al Bukhari, Al Jami as Sahih, (no. 359).

[43] Ibn Majah, Sunan, (no. 655).

ADVICE TO STUDENTS

JAVED AHMAD GHAMIDI



[During his recent visit to Malaysia, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi paid a visit to the International Islamic University and had an interactive session with students. During the session, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi responded to questions from the audience regarding education, research, and social issues. The participants asked the learned scholar to share his advice for students to which Ghamidi pointed out three basic points every student must be familiar with while accomplishing his studies. Here is a summary of the pieces of advice for students willing to know.]

The first point is that whether one is an ordinary person, a scholar, or a student, everyone should strive to maintain a spirit to seek knowledge. Both the commoner and the scholar should tread the same path. The moment an individual starts believing he has gained sufficient knowledge he practically closes the door of knowledge for him.

When we learn to embrace differences, it is crucial to understand that embracing doesn't imply unconditional acceptance; acceptance is an entirely separate matter.

Let's welcome disagreement because it signifies that someone is critiquing what I am saying. This indicates that a new truth may become apparent to me.

Our teacher, Mawlānā Amīn Aḥsan Iṣlāḥī, used to articulate a profound phrase. He would say: When I open the Quran in the morning and encounter a verse of extreme difficulty, I tell myself, 'Today is the day!' It implies that the verse holds the promise of a revelation, a discovery, or a clearer truth.

We should respond in a similar manner to a divergent opinion. Unfortunately, Muslims no longer take difficulties with that spirit and ultimately deprive themselves of the opportunity to learn something new. Whether religious or non-religious, teachers or students, or those with a secular mindset, everyone finds it challenging to engage in a civilized conversation. Their discussions on any political, social, historical, or economic issue reveal their strong emotional attachment to preconceived theories, making it difficult to comprehend what has transpired, as if something has been taken away from them.

Hence, we must learn to welcome knowledge in every aspect. When we study and meet new teachers, engaging in a conversation with a good teacher feels like encountering something entirely new. To embrace this, one must be prepared.

I consistently ask my students one question: 'What criticism have you read about so-and-so?' This signifies that I am not interested in whether someone agrees with me or not. A real student is the one who is familiar with the criticism of his point of view. As mentioned earlier, welcoming criticism is synonymous with welcoming knowledge. Reading work of the critics will either confirm the correctness of our perspective, instilling greater confidence, or lead to new information. In our pursuit of this, expressing gratitude to the individual, writing them a letter of thanks,

and perhaps shaking their hand is acknowledging that they have opened up a new world for us.

Regrettably, a major reason for our decline is the absence of a critical atmosphere.

It's essential to understand that criticism is not condemnation. While we teach our students the art of debate, we often neglect instructing them on conducting critical analysis or assessment. The primary step in a critical analysis is to present the other person's position as they themselves have expressed it. Our criticism is deemed excellent only when we accurately present the other person's position, and if they are present, they might acknowledge that we have captured it perfectly.

Generally, what happens is that we first organize the other person's position in our minds, start criticizing it, initiate an argument, and engage in polemics. This often leads to futile bickering. Therefore, by criticism, we mean adopting a critical perspective, analyzing it, and finally determining its validity. It is not mandatory to accept it, but we must handle it thoughtfully and respectfully.

In this criticism, we might be predisposed to the notion that the other person lacks good manners and plans to belittle our knowledge. We need to disregard such thoughts and lower our gaze from frivolous matters.

Lowering the gaze, as instructed by Allah, is not just about women; it encompasses everything and prohibits indulging in useless things. The Quran expresses this by stating, 'They turn away from ill speech' (Quran 23:3).

Therefore, we should set aside trivial matters and concentrate on understanding the true nature of the criticism directed towards us.

The second key point is that we should develop a strong commitment to truth within ourselves. Patriotism, enthusiasm, bigotry, and honor are considered integral to our national and emotional identity. Upholding truth and righteousness requires instilling a sense of commitment within. Being committed to truth means standing firm even if the entire world opposes you. Pursuing truth should not involve harming others. Instead, we should value truth so that when it becomes apparent, we fulfill its rights.

This commitment should be present in all aspects of life. The Quran emphasizes that faith demands standing up for justice. In Surah al-Nisā' (4) and Al-Mā'idah (5), the Quran instructs us to be unwavering in justice in various situations, including dealings with parents, enemies, and others. This is a form of testimony. While people typically associate testimony with after death, the Quran asserts that testimony begins here.

Therefore, we should integrate these principles into our daily lives, living by the values of justice. The truth should be so important to us that even if others disbelieve, reject, or ignore it, and even if they cause harm, we remain unaffected, trusting the fact that life and death are in the hands of God.

The third and last thing to consider is that when we talk to others, we should use the language of knowledge. Many times, we rely on emotional language, which can quickly ignite a person's emotions, leading to diversion from reality and rational argumentation. So, it's crucial to communicate in the language of knowledge. Unlike emotional language, the language of knowledge doesn't label individuals; it holds its own sanctity. As someone starts using the language of knowledge, they naturally adopt it. It's unclear why emotions get involved in the conversation.

RESPONDING TO ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

SYED MANZOOR UL HASSAN



بیاں ہے یہ مسند میں قصہ تمام
کہ بزمِ پیمبرِ سبھی ایک شام



In that sacred gathering on this blessed throne,
The Prophet's assembly shone brightly, like a gemstone.



صحابہ تھے مجلس میں حاضر سبھی
نمایاں تھا سب میں رفیقِ نبی



The companions gathered there, each one,
Radiant in the presence of the Prophet, the chosen one.



اچانک کھڑا ہو گیا ایک شخص
صحابہ کی جانب مڑا ایک شخص



Suddenly, a man stood up, it is told,
Turned toward the companions, his actions bold.



مخاطب ہوا وہ ابو بکر سے
جھکڑنے لگا پیکرِ صبر سے

“

He addressed Abu Bakr, his voice was stern,
Engaging in an argument with no concern.

”

پیغمبرؐ کی مجلس میں وہ بدزباں
لگا دینے بو بکر کو گالیاں

“

In the Prophet's assembly, he spoke with disdain,
Hurled insults at Abu Bakr, causing pain.

”

یہ سن کر نبیؐ کا رفیق سفر
گلستانِ امت کا پہلا شجر

“

Hearing this, the Prophet's noble companion,
The first tree of the Garden of the Ummah, took no action.

”

سر اپا متانت تھا، خاموش تھا
نہ غصے میں تھا اور نہ پُرجوش تھا

“

He remained patient and silent, not enraged,
No anger or fury, his heart engaged.

”

ابو بکر دامن بچاتے رہے
نبیؐ دیکھ کر مسکراتے رہے

“

Abu Bakr protected his dignity and grace,
While the Prophet watched with a smiling face.

”

بہت دیر تک بھی وہ جب نہ ٹلا
تو صدیقِ اکبر کو طیش آگیا

“

For a long while, the man persisted in his dispute,
Abu Bakr could not remain resolute.

”

انہوں نے بھی غصے کو ظاہر کیا
جواب اُس کی تلخی کا کچھ دے دیا

“

He too expressed his anger indeed,
Responded with a bit of its bitterness, they decreed.

”

پیمبرؐ جو پہلے تو مسرور تھے
اچانک فسردہ و نالاں ہوئے

“

The Prophet, once joyful, so bright,
Sudden sorrow made his heart take flight.

”

نبیؐ جب فسردہ و نالاں ہوئے
ابوبکرؓ بے حد پریشاں ہوئے

“

When the Prophet, in sorrow, did sigh,
Abu Bakr, deeply troubled, questioned why.

”

ابوبکرؓ نے پھر بصد احترام
پیمبرؐ سے پوچھا یہ بعد از سلام

“

Abu Bakr, with great respect, did inquire,
After the greetings, he sought to acquire.

”

بھلا مجھ سے سرزد ہوئی کیا خطا
کہ ناخوش ہیں مجھ سے رسولِ خدا؟

“

What sin did I commit, pray, tell me, oh guide?
That the Messenger of God from me turns aside?

”

میں خاموش تھا، آپ مسرور تھے
!میں بولا تو رنجیدہ خاطر ہوئے

“

I was silent while you were in delight,
I spoke and you felt contrite," Abu Bakr declared outright.

”

ابوبکر کی سن کے یہ التجا
:نبیؐ نے بڑے پیار سے یہ کہا

“

Hearing his humble plea, with love and care
The Prophet said,

”

تو خاموش جب تک رہا میرے دوست!
!فرشتہ ترے ساتھ تھا میرے دوست

“

You remained silent, my dear, all the while,
An angel was by your side, with a gentle smile.

”

وہ تیرے لیے تھا سراپا سلام
اور اُس کے لیے تھا سزا کا پیام

“

For you, it was a gesture of endless grace,
But for him, it carried a message of punishment's embrace.

”

مگر جب دیا تو نے اُس کو جواب
تو رخصت ہوا سب سلام و ثواب



But when you answered, and he turned away,
The chain of greetings and rewards did decay.



دعاؤں کا پھر سلسلہ رک گیا
مناجاتِ دل کا شجر جھک گیا



The series of prayers and supplications ceased,
The tree of heart's devotion bowed and decreased.



ہوئے سن کے بوبکر بے حد ملول
کیا اپنی لغزش کو دل سے قبول



Hearing this, Abu Bakr was deeply moved,
His own mistake and the Prophet's words he approved.



کہا بہ حضور رسالت مآب
نہ دوں گا کبھی گالیوں کا جواب



He said, before the Messenger, repentant and low,
I will never respond to insults, you should know.



سدا صبر و برداشت دکھلاؤں گا
نبیؐ کا میں اخلاق اپناؤں گا



"I will always show patience and forbearance,
In the Prophet's character, I'll find guidance."



BRIDGING THE COMMUNICATION GAP

DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM



The current era is witnessing a yawning communication gap between parents and children in general. In fact, with each passing year, this gap is increasing mainly because of the wrong attitude adopted by the parents. In this regard, parents need to first analyze their own mistakes that have led to this communication gap with the new generation. Remedial measures must begin with them. Some of the reasons which have led to this gap for which we parents are to blame are as follows.

- 1.** Today we are witnessing a global culture in which one value reigns supreme: freedom and liberty in every sphere of life. It is the zeitgeist of current times. The greatest effect of this is that the new generation feels more empowered and more independent at an earlier age in their childhood than we did. More often than not parents do not realize this.
- 2.** In spite of some improvement, parents still impose their views on their children without realizing that when they become adults, parents should not force them to accept their views. Two very prominent areas in this regard (discussed ahead separately) are the selection of careers and spouses for their children. Parents think that their children are bound by their religion to obey them in these spheres as well. This, it may be humbly submitted, is incorrect. Islam in no way condones this. It is perhaps the feudal and patriarchal culture of third-world Muslim countries which does.
- 3.** The extent of QUALITY time that parents should give to the younger generation has been drastically reduced. It is understandable where one or both parents work to make ends meet. But there are parents who have all the time in the world for their own priorities but very little for their children. Even in the case of the former, efforts must still be made to synthesize this time as much as possible.

4. Parents should realize that teaching religious directives in the current global culture must be based on sound reasoning (which most parents are unfortunately not equipped with). For example, young adults generally ask: Why should I fast? Is it not like depriving our body of essential energy that I need for my studies? Why should I believe in God when there is so much oppression and injustice in this world? Why are Muslims so blood thirsty and militant-minded? Why are Muslim men allowed to marry four wives while women are not? What is wrong with dating and sleep-overs? The list is unending. Parents must know the answers to these questions. And not just answers: convincing answers!

5. Parents must develop friendship with their children by talking to them in their areas of interest. For example, if our son is interested in football and we do not know the ABC of football, how about educating ourselves on this sport? If our daughter wants to learn the guitar, how about finding out more about the top guitarists in the business and exchanging views with her. This friendship is extremely important for bonding. The other important role it plays is that parents can gradually find themselves in a position to point out and correct mistakes of their children. They won't mind accepting criticism from a friend.

6. The best way to earn respect of the children is to follow a life based on ethical and moral principles in which one does not waver. Parents should first present an example of what they want their children to become. This is perhaps the most difficult of tasks, but then what right have we to demand from our children what we ourselves do not adhere to?

THE QUR'ĀN IS UNIVOCAL IN ITS SIGNIFICANCE

قطعي الدلالة



JAVED AHMED GHAMIDI

The Qur'ān is univocal, with each word or phrase having only one possible meaning (*qaṭ'i ad dalālah*). Therefore, when its addressees refuse to accept any of its claims, it asserts with absolute authority, "This alone is the truth (*al ḥaq*) from your Lord; therefore, you should not be in any doubt" [1]. If they persist in denial, it challenges them to a *mubāhala* (invocation of God's curse) by declaring that it is "the knowledge (*al 'ilm*)" [2] that has come from your Lord. In comparison to it, everything else is merely falsehood, fabrication, conjecture, or speculation. When measured against the truth (*ḥaq*), conjecture (*ẓan*) holds no value: "conjecture can never replace the truth" [3].

The Qur'ān maintains its revered status even today because both the words and their meanings have been passed down to us through the continuous transmission of *tawātur*. The point of contention among scholars of the Qur'ān is not the meanings of the words themselves; rather, it lies in the selection of a particular meaning from a range of possible meanings within a given context. These meanings have been meticulously recorded in various texts. Scholars, jurists, literary experts, and exegetes (*mufassirūn*) have expounded upon them extensively. They have been studied, taught, and comprehended within Muslim schools, religious centers, and literary circles. This tradition has been preserved without interruption since the time of prophethood, and the perpetual transmission (*tawātur*) ensures its unbroken continuity. The same holds true for the grammar and expressions used in the Qur'ān; these too have been transmitted, taught, and learned through this unbroken chain of tradition. Although exceedingly rare exceptions might exist, this perpetuation lends an exceptional degree of certainty to the matter.

Consequently, even today, we can assert with the utmost confidence that by following the guidance of the Qur'ān's words, one will be reliably led to their intended meaning in the given context.

Certain challenges arise in grasping the reporting and transmission of language, as well as the intricate relationship between words and their meanings. In our book (*Mīzān*) (English translation: Islam - A Comprehensive Introduction), we have addressed some of these issues in the preamble, while others hardly warrant any commentary. When we place these challenges alongside the realities of life and the universe, it becomes evident that the ideas of the Sophists are now relegated to history. Similarly, this contemporary neo-sophism will soon become a thing of the past, and there is little merit in investing time in refuting or rejecting it.

Likewise, it is not worthwhile to entertain the claims of certain inexperienced writers who assert that general (*ām*) terms cannot possess univocal significance. They argue that since many verses in the Qur'ān rely on such general terms, the Qur'ān itself cannot be univocal in its meaning. Experts can readily discern the naivety and impracticality of this argument, as those who put it forward seem oblivious to the distinction between the lexical definition of words and their contextual usage.

Nonetheless, there is one objection deserving of careful consideration. Some scholars argue that there exists a significant variance in people's interpretations of the majority of verses in the Qur'ān, thereby rendering it equivocal (a word or phrase with the potential for multiple meanings or connotations simultaneously). According to this viewpoint, a text can only be deemed univocal in its significance when there is a unanimous consensus on its interpretations.

It is indeed true that an equivocal text cannot possess a univocal significance. However, is every text with differing interpretations inherently equivocal as well? Our firm answer is no. Being equivocal is an inherent quality of a piece of speech; it is not imposed upon it externally. To classify a text as equivocal, one would need to demonstrate that the disagreements in its interpretation have persisted throughout history and will continue to do so. Knowledge and reasoning cannot definitively distinguish between the existence of a word and its interpretations.

Consider a scenario where a person reads or listens to a text and misunderstands the meaning of a word, idiom, or its composition. Another individual attempts to explain a sentence while disregarding the word order or contextual settings. Yet another treats each sentence as an isolated entity, explaining the text's meaning without considering the broader context and coherence. Are all these varied interpretations evidence of the text's equivocal nature? The differences in the interpretation of the Qur'ān share a similar nature. Consequently, not a single verse in the Qur'ān can be inherently declared as equivocal, as scholars from the outset to the

present day have consistently maintained that it is necessary to acknowledge multiple interpretations of a verse.

In contrast, among the interpretations proposed for a given verse, certain ones are chosen while others are set aside. Those left out are often favored by other scholars, and selections and rejections are accompanied by reasoned justifications. Sometimes, it's noted that a particular interpretation does not align with the dictionary's validation, at other times a misconception in comprehending the composition is rectified. There are instances of ignoring word sequence and contextual settings, as well as arguments grounded in the text's overall context and coherence. The realms of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), and exegesis (*tafsīr*) are replete with such discussions. Ibn Jarīr, for instance, is known for generously documenting various interpretations, but those familiar with his (*tafsīr*) will also recognize his criticisms of multiple interpretations in numerous instances. (*Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*), a condensed version of his work, also adheres to the principle of preference in its interpretations.

The commentaries of scholars such as (*Zamakhsharī, Qurtabī, Ālūsī, Ṭabāṭabāī*), and (*Abūl ālā Maudūdī*) serve as testimony to this fact. The Qur'ān has been translated into numerous languages around the world. A perusal of any of these translations reveals that none of the translators has ever rendered a single verse of the Qur'ān as equivocal. Instead, each translator employs their preference in all instances to convey the translation based on their understanding.

The commentaries of Imām Farāhī and Ustāz Imām Amīn Ahsan Islāhī's "Tadabbur e Qur'ān" epitomize this approach, where only one interpretation is favored not only for translation but also for exegesis (*tafsīr*). While disagreements may arise concerning this preference, the very existence of such disagreement underscores that the individuals in question do not consider the text to be equivocal. Instead, they maintain that the meanings derived from the text are incorrect for specific reasons.

The mistake many people make is their failure to distinguish between differences in interpretations and the potential connotations of a speech. These are two distinct concepts. Differences in interpretations can arise due to a lack of knowledge and a lack of thoughtful consideration. The absence of careful consideration can stem from various factors, including one's cognitive development, personal desires, biases, a preference for haste, minor distractions, and more. In the absence of these influences, the apprehension of making an error when favoring one interpretation of a sacred text like the Qur'ān over others is often sufficient to dissuade people from engaging in debates and criticisms on such matters. In contrast, the potential connotations of a speech have existed within it since its inception. Once a reader or listener identifies these potential connotations, it becomes challenging to separate them from the speech itself.

Consequently, when discussions about these connotations arise, individuals are compelled to acknowledge that this represents a permanent characteristic of the speech, with no viable means to eliminate it.

The Glorious Qur'ān is devoid of any such defects. Nothing of that nature can be demonstrated about it. It is "the knowledge (*al 'ilm*)" [2], it is "the truth (*al ḥaq*)" [1], it is "the scale (*mīzān*)" [4] that distinguishes good from evil and the separator (*furqān*) [5] between good and evil." It has been revealed in eloquent Arabic, and it serves as "the warning for the world (*nazīr al lil 'ālamīn*)." Thus, it stands as the conclusive divine evidence for the entire world. The Qur'ān affirms that there are no contradictions or multiple possible connotations in God's book; it consistently maintains univocality in its significance: "Had it been from someone other than God, they would have found in it many contradictions" [6].



References:

[1] Surah Āl i Imrān 3:60

[2] Surah Āl i Imrān 3:61

[3] Surah An Najm 53:28

[4] Surah Ash Shūrā 42:17

[5] Surah Al Furqān 25:1

[6] Surah An Nisā' 4:82

RECORD BREAKING NOT ALLOWED!

DR IRFAN SHEHZAD



Records are made to be broken. Every record raises the level of hard work and difficulty to challenge others to break it.

Every time a person with greater determination breaks the existing record and sets a new one. The entire progress and development of this world depend on embracing challenges, striving to outperform others, and showing strong determination. It is a sequence of creativity and courage, each one greater than the last, which continues to extend. It's as if it's a realization of God's verdict: His majesty has a newer manifestation (Q 55:29).

If records were unbreakable, all disciplines and sports would lose their attraction. People would lose hope, and spectators would get bored. However, in this very world, there is a discipline in which breaking records is not permissible. It is the department of religious studies. Here, people are told that the academic records achieved by the people of the past are bound to exist until the Day of Judgment. The wings of the spirits of new generations are clipped, and the limits are set well in advance to inform them that they should cross the limits at their own peril.

Regarding God, who continues to bestow a higher level of intelligence and capabilities to His servants in all disciplines, it has been assumed that He is not ready to show the same level of generosity for His religion. The belief has been enforced that the people who coincidentally arrived in this world have set the bar so high, not only in knowledge, intelligence, and skill but also in taqwā (piety), that even the imagination of reaching their standard is considered impossible. Every student is convinced during the very first lesson that their only duty is to

present evidence from the writings and sayings of their predecessors and restrict their deliberation and research within the circles they have drawn. It's easy to see how the determination, eagerness, and curiosity of the learner are extinguished at the initial stage of their journey.

The reason behind the decline of the department of religious studies is not a lack of intelligence but the assumption that a student cannot go beyond delineating the teachings based on the knowledge of the predecessors. The astonishing facilities the modern world has provided regarding sources of knowledge have made it possible for the current generations to surpass their predecessors. The understanding of religion is not a well but a vast river of knowledge. The river must continue to flow, and new leaves and fruits should continue to grow to maintain the freshness and beauty of the garden."

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

Javed Ghamidi's Visit to Australia

Last month, Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Mr. Hassan Ilyas visited Australia as part of an invitational tour to various countries. Their stay in Australia lasted for 10 days. Dr. Zulfiqar, the founder of "Almawrid Australia," organized a three-day workshop and a public event in Sydney. This workshop was a continuation of the series initiated by Hasan Ilyas in Australia last year, titled "Zurriyat-e-elbrahim Era by Era." People from all over Australia attended the workshop and benefited from the insightful lectures delivered by Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Following their time in Sydney, Ghamidi and Hassan Ilyas attended an event in Brisbane, Australia, organized by Iram, Ehtesham, and Zubair. This event drew a large number of participants. Additionally, Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi made a brief visit to Gold Coast, Australia. Overall, Ghamidi's visit to Australia was a highly successful tour.

Ghamidi's Brief stay at Singapore

After their 10-day stay in Australia, Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Hassan Ilyas proceeded to Singapore. Notably, the Ghamidi Centre's Educational Mission in Singapore is operated by women. During their visit, Ghamidi participated in two scholarly and da'wah meetings organized by Ghazal and Wajiha. Syed Manzoor ul Hassan, a research scholar of Al-Mawrid America and editor of the monthly Ishraq America, also joined these meetings from Malaysia. A special session was organized exclusively for women, allowing them to seek answers to various academic and religious questions from Ghamidi.



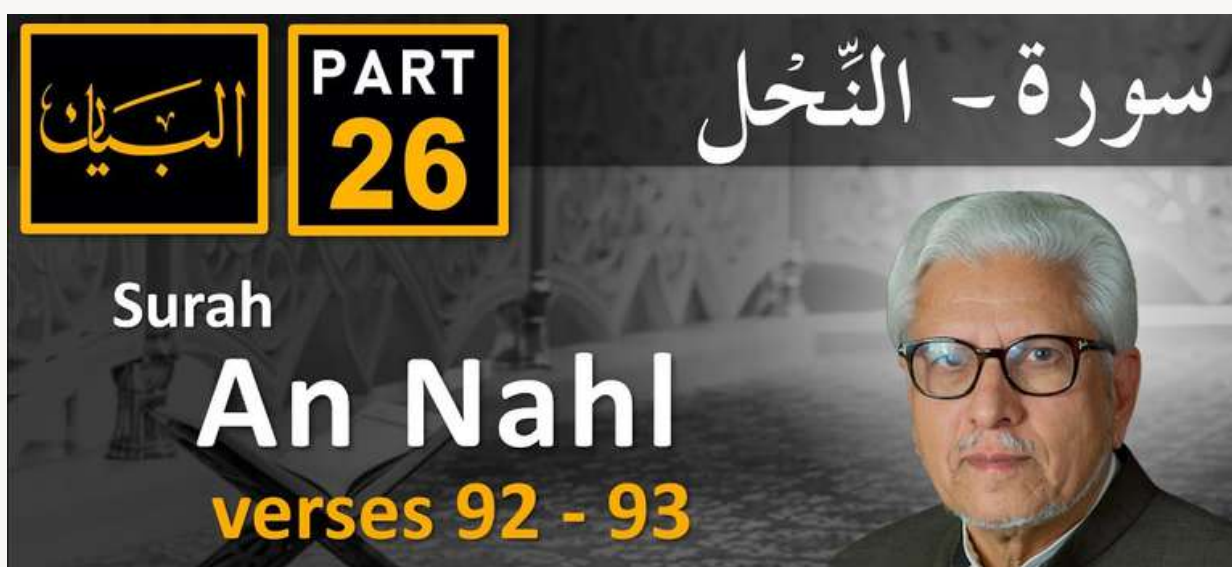
Malaysia Welcomes Ghamidi

Following their time in Singapore, Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Mr. Hassan Ilyas arrived in Malaysia. Ghamidi was warmly welcomed by students of Islamic International University and individuals with religious backgrounds in a public convention.

At the conclusion of the event, the audience requested Mr. Ghamidi to share useful advice. In response, Ghamidi advised them to become genuine seekers of knowledge, embrace truth, and communicate in a civilized manner.

Weekly Qur'an and Hadith Lectures

Under the auspices of the Ghamidi Center, a series of live lectures on the Quran and Hadith by Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi has been initiated. In October, eight sessions were held, focusing on verses 91-95 of Surah Nahl (16). The lectures covered important topics such as "Worshipping Graves," "Allegory of the Straight Path," "The Hūr of Paradise," and "What is Good and Evil?" These lectures on Quran and Hadith are accessible on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.



Audio Recording of Study of Sīrah

The Ghamidi Centre of Islamic Learning aims to provide the works of scholars from "Dabistān-e-Shibli" and other schools of thought in audio format. This initiative allows individuals who are not familiar with the Urdu script to benefit from the intellectual and scholarly thoughts of these scholars. Dr. Khalid Zaheer has initiated this project with the audio recording of Mawlana Wahīd uddīn Khan's book, "Study of Sīrah." In October 2023, Khalid Zaheer recorded two episodes of the book, available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Response to Criticism of Ghamidi's Views

Recently, Mr. Ahmad Javed, a renowned figure in literature, Sufism, and philosophy, delivered lectures in which he criticized Ghamidi's perspective on the coherence of the Quran. He asserted that Ghamidi's stance on the coherence of the Quran has produced a novel interpretation of religion, challenging the reliability of the established traditional view. Ahmad Javed suggested that Ghamidi's view is influenced by Western ideologies. In response, Syed Manzoor ul Hassan has provided a detailed reply to this criticism, addressing Ahmad Javed's objections and explaining Ghamidi's stance on the coherence of the Quran. This article can be found in the October 2023 issue of Ishraq America.

Why God Tests Man?

Muhammad Hassan Ilyas's article, "Why God Tests Man," was published in the October issue of *Ishraq*, US. The article addresses various questions about the reasons behind God's act of testing mankind in light of the views of traditional and modern scholars. Hassan Ilyas criticized traditional perspectives on the issue, highlighting that unsatisfactory answers have led some to lose interest in religion and consider the universe as an alternative to God.

Audio Book of al-Bayān Translation

The Ghamidi Center has organized the recitation of the Holy Quran over the course of a year under the Tazkir-bil-Quran Project. Shah Nawaz recorded the translation of the Holy Quran by Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, while Mushārī Rashid al-'Afāsi recorded the recitation of the Arabic text. The recitations are accompanied by text and translation displayed on the screen. Episodes of the recitation are regularly aired on The Ghamidi Centre's YouTube channel, with the first episode having been well-received by thousands of viewers.

The image shows two promotional posters for the audio book of al-Bayan. The left poster is for "Quran in a Year: Weekly Listening" and features a portrait of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. The right poster is for "Audio Book of al-Bayan, A Rendering of the Quran in Urdu" and features a portrait of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. Both posters include details about the project, such as the number of sessions, the broadcast schedule, and the YouTube channel link.

Interactive Sessions on the Topic: What is Hadith?

The discussion on "What is Hadith" is ongoing in the video series "In Response to 23 Objections." In October, four sessions were held, addressing issues related to the principles of understanding Hadith and the criteria for accepting or rejecting a report. The recordings of these sessions are available on the YouTube Channel of GCIL.

Ḥayāt e Amīn Audio Book

"Hayat Amin" is a biography of Mawlānā Amin Ahsan Iṣlāḥī, written by Naeem Ahmed Baloch, a research scholar at the Ghamidi Centre of Islamic Learning. The Ghamidi Centre has decided to present this biography in audio format. Mr. Khalid Syed, known for his charming voice, has been selected for this project. Three episodes of this audio project have been recorded thus far.

Questions and Answers with Dr. Khalid Zaheer

Dr. Khalid Zaheer has launched a weekly Q&A program from Canada, organized by the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning. Hosted by Malik Faisal Aslam, this program features questions from the public, presented to Dr. Khalid Zaheer, who answers them in the light of the Quran and Hadith. Recordings of this program are available on GCIL's YouTube channel.

What does the Holy Quran Demand from Us?

Manzoor ul Hassan, a research scholar of the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning, continues his program titled "Rāz e Hayāt." One of the most significant episodes aired last month is "What does the Qur'an want us to do?" In this program, the scholar delves into the Quran's demands regarding both worldly and eternal life. The program is accessible on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube Channel.

How to study criticism?

The conversation on "How to Study Criticism?" by Mr. Hassan Ilyas has been presented in an animated form on the YouTube channel of the Ghamidi Center. In this presentation, he explains how those who read and listen to Ghamidi should approach his intellectual criticism and discusses the obstacles they may encounter while engaging with criticism.



Teaching of "Al-Bayan" and "Mīzān" in English

Dr. Shehzad Saleem has initiated the teaching of Al-Bayan, Ghamidi's commentary on the Quran, and his book Mīzān, in English. In October, five lectures on Al-Bayan were held, covering verses 122 to 162 of Surah Baqarah. Dr. Shehzad Saleem also recorded three lectures under the "Mīzān" series, titled "The Economic Shariah." These lectures are available on the YouTube channel of the Ghamidi Center.

Mawlānā Iṣlāḥī's Educational and professional Ambitions

The second episode of Ḥayāt Amīn was published in Ishraq in October 2023. This episode sheds light on Iṣlāḥī's educational preferences in comparison to his grandfather's desire for him to become a clerk. The article also delves into the challenges faced by Shibli and his friends in establishing Madrasah al-Iṣlāḥ and other religious educational institutions. Moreover, Naeem Baloch describes the story of Shibli's ideological differences with the views of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Release of English Version of Ishraq America

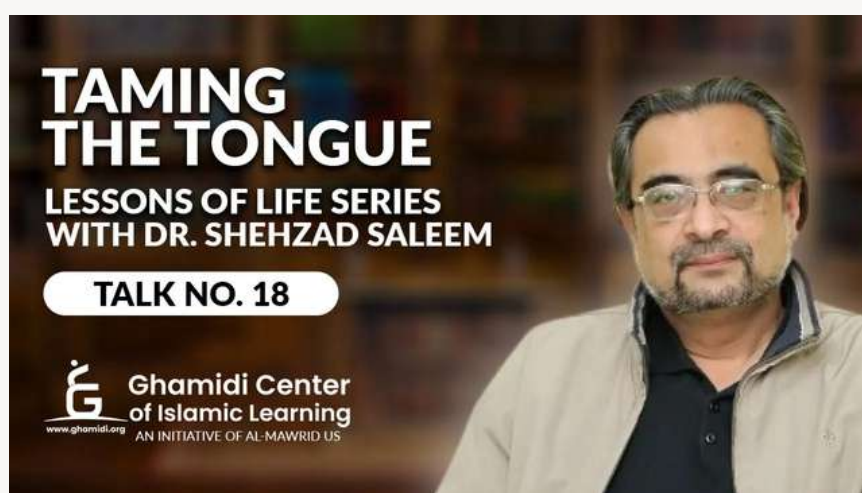
In October, the inaugural issue of the English version of "Ishraq America" was published. Mr. Abid Mehmood serves as the editor, and Muhammad Hassan Ilyas is the creative administrator. The editorial board also includes Mr. Ijaz-ul-Haq, Mr. Mahmood-ur-Rashid, Mr. Malik Elahi, and Mr. Muhammad Ammar Malik. The English edition of "Ishraq America" has received high praise from its readers.

Muhammad Yunus Visits Ghamidi Center

Renowned Pakistani scholar Muhammad Yunus Qasmi paid a visit to the Ghamidi Center last month. His research focuses on introducing the scholarly and intellectual contributions of Dr. Fazlur Rehman. During his visit, he recorded several videos featuring significant discussions about Dr. Fazlur Rehman in the Ghamidi Center's studio. These videos will soon be available on the Ghamidi Center's YouTube channel.

Recording of various lectures by Dr. Shehzad Saleem

In October 2023, Dr. Shehzad Saleem recorded two lectures on "Islamic Punishments" and "Misconceptions about Islamic Punishments." Additionally, he recorded eight lectures as part of the "Lessons of Life Series" with themes including "Free time leads to empty minds," "melting hearts," "introspection," "controlling anger," "controlling tongue," "Are We Ready to Die?" "Two Tough Trials," and "Discovering Your Inner Talent." These lectures can be accessed on the YouTube Channel of GCIL.



Forced Education: A Blessing or a Curse?

Dr. Irfan Shehzad, a research scholar at the Ghamidi Center, has authored an article titled "Forced Education." In this article, he critiques Pakistan's education system, highlighting the drawbacks of compulsory education and its adverse effects on children's futures. The article underscores issues such as poor academic performance, depression, dissatisfaction with career choices, and the inability to handle real-life challenges. The article is available in both Urdu and English versions in Ishraq US.

Weekly Question-Answer Sessions

The Ghamidi Centre conducts a weekly live question-answer session in which questions and objections on various topics are addressed. In October, one of the sessions delved into the topic of "Sayyidina Ali and Amir Muawiyah, Yazid, and the incident of Karbala." Recordings of these weekly Q&A sessions can be found on the GCIL YouTube channel.

Who am I?

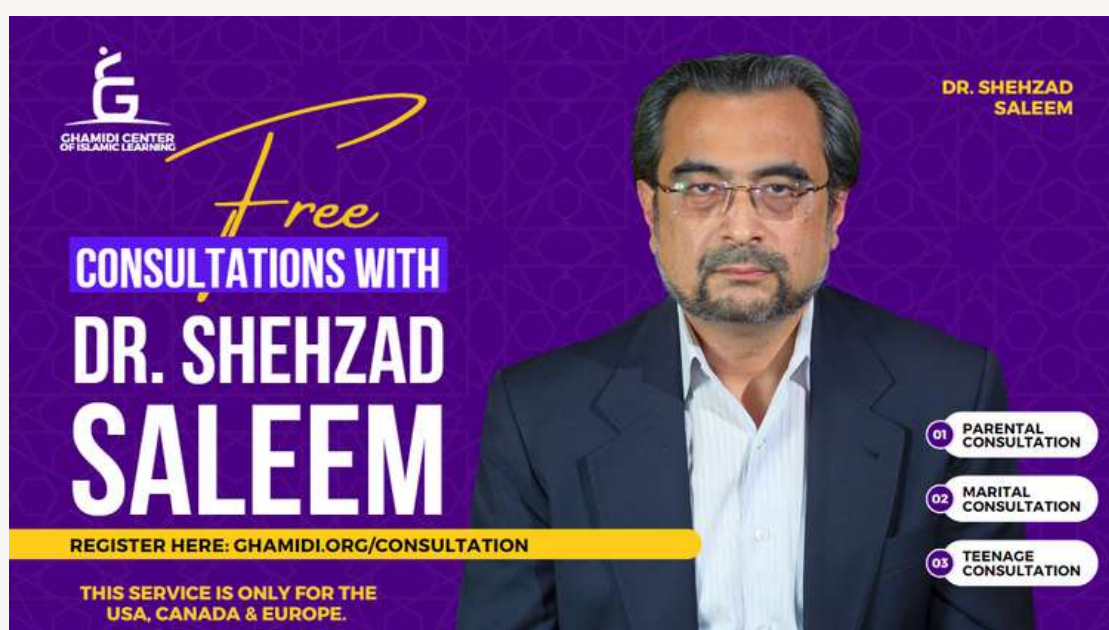
The question "Who Am I?" has been explored in the Ghamidi Center's weekly program "Q&A Syed Manzoor Ke Saath." The program also tackled important questions such as the nature of man's reality, the timing of their birth, the relationship between the soul and body, the nature of the covenant, and similar inquiries. This weekly program airs every Friday at 9 pm PST.

What is "Sadd-e-Zariah" (blocking the means)?

In 2018, Hasan Ilyas recorded a meeting with Javed Ahmad Ghamidi in Malaysia under the title "What is Sadd-e-Zariah?" In this informative discussion, the concept of Sadd-e-Zariah was elucidated, providing evidence from the Quran and Hadith to support its foundation. The conversation also delved into the prohibition of certain actions by jurists based on the principle of Saddi Zariah and addressed other pertinent questions. Last month, this program was made available to the public on the Ghamidi Centre's YouTube channel.

Consultation on Parenting, Adolescence, and Marital Issues

To assist individuals in addressing social concerns, Shehzad Saleem conducts private consultations every month. In these one-on-one sessions, people seek guidance from Shehzad Saleem on various personal and family matters. In the past month, Dr. Shehzad Saleem conducted 18 private sessions with individuals who sought advice on parenting, dealing with behavioral issues during adolescence, and improving their marital relationships.



The graphic features a purple background with a portrait of Dr. Shehzad Saleem on the right. On the left, the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning logo is at the top, followed by the word "Free" in a large, stylized font. Below it, the text "CONSULTATIONS WITH DR. SHEHZAD SALEEM" is displayed in white and blue. A yellow banner at the bottom contains the registration link "REGISTER HERE: GHAMIDI.ORG/CONSULTATION" and a note: "THIS SERVICE IS ONLY FOR THE USA, CANADA & EUROPE." On the right side, three white buttons with purple outlines list the consultation types: "01 PARENTAL CONSULTATION", "02 MARITAL CONSULTATION", and "03 TEENAGE CONSULTATION".

Issuance of Fatwas Based on Religious Teachings

Many individuals reach out to the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning seeking guidance on the practical applications of Sharia law. They often request definitive religious opinions (fatwas) on matters related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and various social and economic concerns. In the last month, GCIL issued five fatwas on such issues under the guidance of Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi, with Muhammad Hassan Ilyas overseeing the process.

Ask Shehzad Saleem

Question-Answer Session "Ask Shehzad Saleem" is a live monthly question-answer session in which Dr. Shehzad Saleem addresses inquiries related to various religious, moral, and social issues. During this session, people can pose their questions in both Urdu and English languages. Recordings of these sessions are accessible on GCIL's YouTube channel.



Poetic Interpretation of Hadith for Children

GCIL has introduced a new series that presents interpretations of prophetic hadith in poetic form, aimed at educating children. Syed Manzoor ul Hassan selects hadith reports with a focus on making the content accessible to young minds. In the October edition of "Ishraq," a narration from Musnad Ahmad was published under the title "Rights of God Upon His Servants." The poem explores the rights and responsibilities of God's servants toward their Creator.

Youth Dialogue on "Marriage and Relationships"

Recognizing that youth hold the key to the future, the Ghamidi Center of Islamic Learning invites scholars and organizes youth dialogues to address their religious and intellectual questions. In this context, programs were recorded with Yusuf Ghani and hosted by Muhammad Bashir Ilyas, focusing on "Marriage and Relationships." In October 2023, two programs on this subject were aired, and they are available for viewing on the GCIL's YouTube channel.

Recording of Weekly Program for Dunya News

"Ilm o Hikmat: Ghamidi Kay Saath (Knowledge and Wisdom: With Ghamidi)" is a well-known program on Dunya News Channel in Pakistan.

Hosted by Muhammad Hassan Ilyas, the program has been running for many years. It is recorded in Dallas and airs weekly. In October 2023, four episodes of this program were recorded and broadcast by Dunya News. These episodes covered topics such as the "Principles of Improvement of Human Psychology," the "Nature of Government in the Nation-State," and "Question and Answer" sessions aimed at enlightening the audience.

Teaching the Qur'an, Hadith, and the Bible

Dr. Shehzad Saleem has initiated a session called "Islam Study Circle," in which he discusses various religious, moral, and social issues in the light of the Quran and Hadith. The session comprises three parts: the detailed explanation of selected Quranic verses, discussions on chosen hadiths, and deliberations on excerpts from the Bible. The program concludes with a brief question-answer session on the discussed topics. This session is conducted in the English language. In the previous month, the program addressed topics such as the "Rule of Law," "Anger Control," "The Greatest Divine Order," and "Mixed Education."