Pearls from the Path

A Compilation of Fascinating Stories and Anecdotes from Islamic History

Compiled by Moulana Afzal Ismail

Pearls from the Path is a collection of relevant and thought provoking incidents gathered from the books of Islamic history. A rich collection of stories with powerful lessons for everyone, Pearls from the Path will ignite your passion for Islamic history and illustrate the priceless heritage that Muslims have left for all of mankind. Discover amazing tales of heroism and bravery, marvel at the lengths that the scholars of old would go to in order to gain knowledge, be amazed at the trials that pious men have faced, and take heed from the mistakes of men through the ages. Adults can learn valuable lessons that will help them navigate the complex modern world, while the youth will learn that history has an important place in both the present and the future. Whether you want to expand your existing knowledge or introduce your family to the wonders of their Islamic heritage, this compilation of short stories will serve as an invaluable resource. For those interested in Islam, or who want to know more about Islam as a way of life, Pearls from the Path serves as an effective bridge towards the understanding of Islam and Muslims.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transliteration Key</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Muftī Muhammed Saeed Motara</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Muftī Ebrahim Desai</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Maulāna Ebrahim Bham</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Maulānā Hassen S Dockrat</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Prof Ziyad Motala</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface to the First Printing</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pearl Necklace</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graves of Ṣaḥābah Opened</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Escape from Death</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Saint Deceived by the Devil</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juraij is tested</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power of Sūrah Yāsīn</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migration to Madīnah</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imām Qurtubi’s Escape</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm for Islamic Knowledge</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Valuable Du‘ā’ for Protection</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Indeed</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncompromising Faith</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Pious Union Produces Pious Children</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brave Muslim Mother</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Scholar of Profound Knowledge</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrupulous Muslim Rulers</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honour Through Islam</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unchallenged Beauty of the Qur’ān</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for Ḥadīth</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Respect for Ḥadīth than for Kings</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stung Sixteen Times</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTENTS

Excellence of Qaṣīdah Burdah 48
Vain Attempt to Steal the Body of Nabī ﷺ 50
Concern for Fellow Muslims 51
  Pretending to be Deaf 51
  A Word of Regret 52
Greed for Wealth 53
Young Girl Inspires a Scholar 55
The Great Mufassir - ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ 57
  In-depth Knowledge 57
  Sound Understanding 58
  Blessed Link 59
Morality versus Promiscuity 60
The Qurʾān – A Truly Remarkable Book 62
  Recite With Respect and Devotion 62
  How Much of Qurʾān do the Pious Recite? 62
  Effect of Excessive Qurʾānic Recitation 63
  Upon Completing the Qurʾān 63
Intense Trial of a Saint 63
Paying More than the Seller Asks 68
When the Fire did not Burn 69
  The story of Ibrāhīm ﷺ 69
  The story of Abū Muslim Khawlānī 70
Imām Abū Yūsuf’s ﷺ Last Moments 72
A Woman Who Spoke from the Qurʾān for Forty Years 73
Wisdom Conquers 82
  Amazing Insight 82
  Avoid the Shame 82
  Kind Manners 83
Acid Test of Wealth 83
Honesty Beyond Measure 86
Justice of Islam Wins Hearts 86
A Pious Couple 88
Islam Overcomes Pagan Culture 89
Compassion for Creation 90
  Return the Chicks 90
  Fusṭāṭ - The Tent City 90
Sincere Man seeks Divine Reward 92
The Qur’ān is Divinely Protected 93
Tears of Ṣalāḥuddīn 94
Islamic Justice Converts Enemy 95
Excellence of Durūd 96
Glimpses from the life of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abdul ‘Azīz 97
   Amazing Integrity 97
   Simplicity 97
   Concern for Humanity 98
   Devotion 98
   Trustworthiness 98
   Justice 99
   Humility 99
   Kindness 99
Sincere Repentance is Rewarded 100
Sincerity Removes Obstacles 101
Love for the Master 103
A Fire-Worshipper Embraces Islam 105
‘Umar Embraces Islam 108
Cure for Poverty 111
Muslims in the Court of Rustam 112
Truth Scores a Magnificent Victory 115
A Drunkard is Guided 116
Alarming Outcome of Disbelief 118
Optional Ḥaj or Charity? 120
   Assisting the Destitute 120
   Angel Deputed to Perform Ḥaj 121
Thirst for Islamic Knowledge 122
Allāh is the Best of Planners 124
Human Being is the Best of Creation 126
Sacrifice of ‘Ulamā’ in Pursuit of Knowledge 128
   Hunger 128
   Seventeen Year Separation from Family 128
Marriages with a Difference 130
   Belief in Taqādīr (Predestination) 130
   A Wise Woman 131
CONTENTS

Glimpses from the Life of Imām Bukhārī (رضی الله عنه) 132
  Mother’s Du‘ā’ 132
  Business Integrity 132
  Humility 132
  Kindness 133
  A Handsome Investment 133
  Amazing Memory 133
  Astounding Intellect 134
  Qur’ānic Recitation in Ramadān 134
  Devotion in Ṣalāh 135
  Simplicity in Food 135
  Honesty and Generosity 135
  Blessed Grave 136

Enemy is Pardoned 136
A Female Muftī 138
Who is Dajjāl? 139
Effect of Ṣadaqah 142
A Contented Wife 143
A Wise Woman 144
Good Neighbours 145
  Amazing Asking Price for a House 145
  Concern for a Sinful Neighbour 145
A Deal Turns Sour 147
Transformed into an Ape 149
The Wisdom of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (رضی الله عنه) 152
  Recovering Stolen Goods 152
  Refreshing the Memory 152
  Who Should Speak first: Husband or Wife? 153
  Marital Relations in Ramadān 154
  Six Mistakes 154
  Continue to Seek Knowledge 155
  A Wise Proposal 156
  Solution to a Complex Matter 156
  Respecting his Mother’s Wishes 157

The Curse of Wine 158
Better than a Servant 159
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allāh’s ﷺ Help Comes in Amazing Ways</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventures of a Student of Ḥadīth</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient Muslim Women</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim Woman Corrects Judge</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slave Girl Deciphers the Clue</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pious Woman Explains the Verses of Ḥijāb</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ṣadaqah Rewarded before Death</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mu’adh-dhin Dies as a Disbeliever</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yūnus ibn ‘Ubaid - The Honest Trader</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generosity in Trade</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Integrity</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience is Rewarded</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Unfortunate End</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daughter of Sa’īd ibn Muṣayyab </td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Pearl Necklace

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul Bāqī ibn Muḥammad al-Bazzāz al-Anṣārī gives an account of his life: “I was a student in Makkah. One day, I was very hungry and could not find anything to stave off my hunger. On my way home, I found a small velvet pouch neatly tied with a tassel. I picked it up and returned home with it. Upon opening it, I found a beautiful pearl necklace, the like of which I had never seen before.

I later went out and saw an old man with five hundred dīnārs in a cloth, crying out loudly, “This is the reward for the one who returns to me a pouch with a pearl necklace.”

I thought to myself, “I am in need and extremely hungry. I can benefit from this reward by returning the purse to the old man.”

I approached him and said, “Come with me!”

I led him to my house. He described to me the pouch and tassel, the pearls, the number of beads in the necklace and the cord it was strung with. I took out the pouch and gave it to him. He handed the five hundred dīnārs to me.

I refused to accept the reward, saying, “It was necessary for me to return the pouch to you without any reward.” He insisted that I take it, but I refused.

After a time, I left Makkah and travelled by sea. The vessel carrying us was wrecked and many passengers drowned. I managed to hold onto a piece of the floating vessel and continued to float on the ocean, not knowing where I was destined to end up. I finally drifted to an island inhabited by Muslims. I went to one of their masājīd1 and began reciting the Qur’ān. When they heard me, a number of them requested that I teach them to recite the Qur’ān correctly. I commenced teaching them, and was remunerated well for my services.

1 Plural of masjid.
One day, I noticed a few pages of a Qur’ān in the masjid. I picked them up in order to peruse them. When the people saw me, they asked if I could write. I replied in the affirmative and they requested me to teach them. Soon many of them brought along their children to me, so that I could teach them as well. This occupation made me completely independent.

After some time, they requested that I marry an orphan girl from amongst them. I refused, but they insisted, and I finally agreed to their request. After the nikāh (marriage) had been performed, she was brought to me. I could not remove my gaze from her, because I saw the same pearl necklace, that I had found many years ago, around her neck.

The people said to me, “O Shaikh, you will break the heart of this girl by staring at her necklace instead of looking at her.”

I narrated the story of the necklace to them and they shouted out the takbīr' loudly. I asked them what the matter was, and they replied, “The man who had taken the necklace from you, was the father of this girl and he used to say regarding you: ‘I never met a more truthful Muslim. May Allāh  bring him to us so that I could marry him to my daughter!’ This du’ā’ (supplication) of his has now been fulfilled.”

I lived with my wife and was blessed with two sons from her. She finally passed away and I, together with my two sons, inherited her necklace. Later, my two sons also passed away and I became the sole owner of the necklace. I eventually sold it for a hundred thousand dīnārs.”

Honesty must form the core of human interaction to create a sound society.

Allāh  provides from sources that man cannot comprehend.

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1 A proclamation in Arabic which means that Allāh  is the Greatest.
2 Adh-Dhail ’Alā Ṭabaqātit Ḥanābilah, vol 1, p 443; Ṣafḥāt Min Ṣabril ’Ulamā’ p 74
Graves of Ṣaḥābah Opened

In 1929, King Faiṣal of ʿIrāq saw a dream in which he was advised by two Ṣaḥābah (companions of Nabī ﷺ), Ḥudhaifah ibn Yamān ﷴ and ‘Abdullāh ibn Jābir ﷴ, to move their graves, as water from the river Tigris was seeping into them. The king commanded that an area between the graves and the river be dug open to ascertain the truth of the matter. They, however, found no sign of water in the graves. The king, therefore, dismissed the dream.

But, the king saw the same dream a number of times again and it began to worry him. He gathered the ‘Ulamā’ (scholars) of ʿIrāq and narrated his dream to them. One of the ‘Ulamā’ present mentioned that he too had seen the same dream. After deliberation and consultation, it was decided that the graves of these two great Ṣahābah be opened. If water was indeed seeping into their graves, then the bodies would have to be moved to a new location.

As it was the first time in the history of Islam that the graves of Ṣaḥābah were to be opened under such circumstances, the ʿIrāqī Government made elaborate preparations for this momentous event. A date was decided upon, and it was publicised accordingly, so that people could attend. Incidentally, the date was close to the period of ḥaj. When the news reached Makkah and Madīnah, people who were on ḥaj requested that the date be reset for a later time so that they could attend as well. The event was then reset to a later date.

Many people from ʿIrāq and other areas arrived on the stipulated date and the graves were opened. Amazingly, after thirteen centuries, their bodies were completely fresh and intact. A non-Muslim eye-specialist, who witnessed the proceedings, confirmed that the special glow, which normally disappears a few moments after a person dies, was still noticeable in the eyes of both Ṣaḥābah. On seeing this, he accepted Islam.

An area close to the grave of Salmān al-Fārsī ﷴ was prepared. The bodies were raised from the graves and moved to their new abodes of rest.
Many people present were fortunate enough to assist in carrying the blessed bodies to their respective graves.

Many non-Muslims, who witnessed this miracle, accepted Islam.¹

Occasionally, Allāh ﷻ shows man such miraculous signs. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Qur’ān:

سَنُرِيهِمْ هَالِعَةَ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ هَالِعَةَ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمَّ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

“We will show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves until it becomes manifest to them that this (religion) is the truth.”

(Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, verse 53)

Incidents of this nature strengthen the Īmān (faith) of a believer in the greatness of Allāh ﷻ and the truth of Islam.

¹ Jahāne Dīdā, p 55-58