

Contemplations from one man's journey back from Atheism

By Abul Abbaas Naveed Ayaaz



In the name of Allāh, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

After watching an interview with a Muslim brother from one of the Gulf countries, who left Islām for Atheism, spent many years upon this, and thereafter reverted to Islām, I wrote some points of benefit in Arabic, intending for these notes to be of benefit to an Arabic speaking audience.

Several brothers requested that I also make the same points available in English; perhaps Allāh would make it a cause of guidance for the western audience.

I entitled my original points:

ن رحلة عائد إلى الفطرة بعد تجربة سدين مع الإلحاد بروفا وادم

Lessons and contemplations from: 'The journey of the one who returned from Atheism to the Fitrah.'

As aforementioned, the original video is an interview with a man who uses the name, 'Abu Abdullah.' He grew up in a Muslim family in a Muslim country. However, he renounced Islām, remained upon Kufr for many years – may Allāh save and protect us – and thereafter returned to Islām with the guidance of Allāh, from his own free will, understanding and insight; having spent these long years living the “freedom” and “liberalism” he perceived he would find in Atheism.

His upbringing and background

- He is from an Arab Muslim country, having grown up in a righteous, cultured and well-read family. He is known for his intelligence, general knowledge and photographic memory.
- He loved reading as a young boy. This love for reading was instilled in him from a young age by his father who encouraged him and his siblings to read. However, he would read anything – the good and bad – without any distinguishing. [1] As a child, amongst other books, he read fictional stories such as, ‘A tale of the two cities’ (by Charles Dickens), ‘The Merchant of Venice’ (by William Shakespeare), ‘The Black Tulip’ (by Alexandre Dumas), as well as other children’s stories such as the Superman series and similar tales of superheroes. He now feels that books of this nature are not written for mere pleasure; rather they carry within them subtle yet strong ideas that are implanted in the minds of young children.
- He grew up regularly attending Salah in the masjid, and would also partake in some lessons in the Masjid. However, these lessons were often restricted to admonishments and heart-softeners, discussing virtuous actions such as: good manners, virtues of the prayer, and virtues of fasting and charity. There was also a great emphasis on the virtue of Jihad. [2]
- He developed a sense of what he understood to be ‘Islāmic activism’ throughout his youth. He would often sing Nashīds. He was the President of their version of an ISOC (Islāmic Society), the head of the Students Union and the head of a local Islāmic group. [3]
- He never studied, nor understood, the true essence of ‘Ibaadah, so he would pray but never truly understood why he is praying, the real wisdom behind praying etc. [4]
- He never studied Aqeedah. He explains that he did not really learn about Allaah – who He is, where He is, what His names are, nor his descriptions and actions. Likewise, he never acquired knowledge of His Tawhīd, nor was he taught about īmān in the Qadr (decree). He never learnt of why we were created and our purpose on this Earth. [5]
- Islāmic questions about belief were not only forbidden in his family but they were frowned upon. Such questions were equated to weak īmān.

How did he end up becoming an Atheist?

- He went to America on a state-sponsored study program and he lived with a very strict Catholic family. Along with this, he began to isolate himself from the Muslim community and his Muslim friends who were also in America.
- Whilst in America, he experienced a constant feeling of wanting to be accepted into his new environment, and so he did not live his life according to Islāmic standards. His main guiding principle was: to be accepted by those around him. [6]
- He realised later that in actuality, he did not leave his country for the purpose of studying. Behind the move was a deeper motive to flee from a Muslim environment that he, at the time, considered ‘restrictive’ and ‘close-minded,’ to one that seemed ‘free,’ ‘liberal’ and ‘open-minded.’ [7]

- He began to forsake and neglect some religious obligations, deluding himself into thinking that this integration is good for da'wah to non-Muslims. [8] The first thing that he abandoned was the Prayer, along with isolating himself from his Muslim friends and community.
- He was affected by harshness from his Muslim friends who boycotted him due to his increasingly unIslāmic outlook. One of his close relatives, who was with him in America, was particularly harsh with him. This resulted in him becoming further isolated.
- He then left the Sunnah and went towards Sufism, which distanced him from strictly adhering to the Sunnah of the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam).
- After Atheism, he eventually settled upon Agnosticism – solely because it was easier upon his conscience than absolute Atheism, and an easy retreat from intellectual challenges and arguments. This is because the answer to any question for an Agnostic is simply: “I do not know,” or “I do not reject belief in Allāh, perhaps he exists and perhaps he does not.”

His journey back to Islām

- This started with a personal tragedy when his younger brother passed away, and as the older brother, he was responsible for preparing for his brother's janaazah (funeral). He stood at the graveyard crying, but his uncontrollable tears were not due to the loss of his brother- rather he was crying at his own state.
- The first person who he approached to confide in was the same relative who was harsh with him when they were in America. This is because he considered this relative to be truthful, sincere and someone who wanted goodness for him. [9]
- He started coming back to Islām gradually, this time searching for answers about Islām.
- He joined Dar al-Qur'ān (an institute in his country), wherein he found two teachers who would reserve time for him. They welcomed his questions and answered them. One of the teachers taught him Tafseer of the 30th Juz of the Qur'ān from Tafseer Ibn Katheer. This was selected because the 30th Juz is centred on belief and the events after the Day Of Resurrection. The second teacher taught him Kitāb At-Tawhīd by Imām Muḥammad Ibn 'AbdulWahāb.
- The two teachers gave him a considerable amount of their personal time, so much so that one of them actually performed 'Umrah with him.

His advice to youth who are going through doubts about Islām

- Do not suffer in silence and do not conceal any doubt that you may have, nor remain shy to ask any question that may be troubling you. The real danger lies in hiding a doubt within you. You should therefore ask the people of knowledge, and those whom you trust with regards to Islām.
- Not making an effort to understand the role that your religion plays in your life is an avenue towards misguidance.
- Attach importance to Salaah. It has a strong effect in repelling doubt.

- Keep good friends and companions who are sincere, such that they want goodness for you and show you compassion and concern.

May Allāh keep us firm upon Islām and protect us from doubts and desires.

May peace and blessings be upon His Prophet and his followers.

Compiled by Abul Abbaas Naveed Ayaz

Footnotes

[1] There is no doubt that we should encourage our young to read books. However, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to choose books – and more so cartoons/videos – which bring some benefit to the young reader. Do not be ignorant of the hidden messages some of these books and cartoons may contain. Some contain aspects of shirk and kufr such as stories of magic. Children should not be left to choose what they watch and read, rather they should be guided by their parents to books which do not dispute Islāmic morality. I firmly believe that an author of any book – fictional or non-fictional – only writes a book with a certain set of objectives and motives in mind.

[2] This is a doubt amongst many weak-hearted Muslims that being a ‘good person’ means you are a good Muslim, regardless of Aqeedah, Hijaab, Salaah etc. Many callers who seek to water down the religion spread this dangerous doubt. Good manners undoubtedly play an important part in Islām, yet how many people possessed good manners but remained upon Kufr and therefore entered Jahannam. Moreover, the foundation of good manners is one’s relationship with Allāh, the strength of a person’s Aqeedah and how much they abide by the Sharee’ah. Our outlook should not be that we value ‘good manners with people’ yet place no value upon good manners with Allāh.

[3] This is a misconception amongst many young Muslims, particularly university students who think social/Islāmic “activism” is the primary objective of Islām. Music, free mixing and carelessness in ‘Ibaadah is all justified on account of social and Islāmic activism. It is important to emphasise that Allāh placed us upon this earth to worship Him upon Tawhīd, and to live our life within the boundaries of the Sharee’ ah – all else is secondary to this.

[4] The primary objective behind any act of worship is complete submission to the command of Allāh. Any other benefit is secondary.

[5] Unfortunately, amongst the groups are those who belittle the call to Tawhīd and the importance of rectifying people’s Aqeedah, yet this is the very reason that Allāh sent each of the Prophets. It is the basis of a person’s Islām and it is what keeps a person firm in the face of doubts. The brother in the interview identifies his lack of studying Aqeedah as being a reason for the weakness of his īmān, even though he studied ‘Fadāil Al-A’maal’ (The virtue of voluntary acts of ‘Ibādah).

[6] A Muslim only seeks to please Allāh regardless of whether the people around him are accepting or not. The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said,

Whoever seeks Allāh’s Pleasure at the expense of men’s displeasure, will win Allāh’s Pleasure and Allāh will cause men to be pleased with him. And whoever seeks to please men at the expense of Allāh’s displeasure, will win the displeasure of Allāh and Allāh will cause men to be displeased with him.

[Narrated by Ibn Hibban in his Saheeh]

[7] Freedom, in this life and more importantly, in the Hereafter, is found in submission to Allāh. As for a person who is imprisoned by his desires or wanting to please people, then this only leads to misery and unhappiness.

How pertinent are the words of the virtuous companion Rab'iyy Ibn 'Amir to Rustum, the Commander of the great Persian empire, during the battle of Al-Qādisiyyah in the year 14h. When Rustum questioned Rab'iyy about his mission, he replied:

Allāh, the Exalted, has sent us to rescue you from worshipping the creation to worshipping the Creator of the creation; and to rescue you from the constriction of this world to the vastness of this world and the Hereafter; and to rescue you from the darkness and oppression of the religions to the justice and light of Islām. Allāh, the Exalted, has sent us to save you from worshipping each other.

[8] Shaytan misguides people in small steps. It often begins with an action that a person may belittle, but it is an avenue to bigger sins. For this reason, Muslims should distance themselves from celebrations which are not from Islām such as birthdays, anniversaries, New Years, Mothers Day etc. Becoming negligent about these matters today will lead to many more misguided actions tomorrow – and this is the very plot of Shaytan. Perhaps this is the wisdom behind the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) warning so severely against imitating non-Muslims. He said:

Whoever imitates a group of people, will be resurrected along with them.

[Narrated by Ibn 'Umar; Collected by Abū Dāwūd]

[9] A person becoming angry for the sake of Allāh and at times, using a level of firmness in correcting a mistake is an indicator of his care and concern for the person. This brother realised this and therefore the first person he approached was the same relative who had initially been harsh with him. As for mere flattery and belittling of sins, then this is not 'wisdom.' Rather, it shows a lack of courage and īmān.

Shaykh 'Abdul-Aziz Ibn Bāz said:

So your brother is the one who advises you, reminds you, and alerts you. Your brother is not the one who gives you no thought, avoids you, or speaks to you with pretty words that lack real truth and sincerity. Rather, your brother, in reality, is the one who advises you, the one who admonishes you, and reminds you. He calls you to Allaah, keeps explaining to you the path to deliverance clearly until you follow it, and warns you about the path to destruction – he keeps explaining to you how evil its end is until you avoid it.

[Majmu Fatawa Wa Maqalat Mutanawi'ah Vol. 14 P.21]

عبر وفوائد من رحلة عائد إلى الفطرة بعد تجربة سنين مع الإلحاد

الأخ في المقطع السابق قد هداه الله إلى الإسلام بعد أن ارتد لسنوات طويلة – نسأل الله السلامة والعافية لنا ولجميع المسلمين

نشأة هذا الأخ

- الأخ من دولة مسلمة من أسرة صالحة مثقفة متعلمة
- كان يحب القراءة وهذا الشوق للقراءة من تربيته والده ولكن قراءته منذ صغر غير مميزة فيقرأ الطيب والخبيث
- ان يحضر الصلاة في المسجد والحلقات ولكن هذه الحلقات عبارة عن مواعظ في فضائل الأعمال كالصلاة والصوم والصدقة والأخلاق وخصوصا فضائل الجهاد إلخ...
- كان لديه ((حركة دعوية)) – في ذهنه وبمفهومه – أي كان صاحب أناشيد ورئيس ندوة الشباب ورئيس مجلس الطلاب ورئيس الجماعة الإسلامية... إلخ
- ما تعلم حقيقة العبادة أي كان يصلي ولا يعرف لماذا يصلي فله نقص في المفهوم الصحيح للدين
- ما تعلم العقيدة في الدروس والحلقات – أين الله ومن الله وما أسماؤه وصفاته وأفعاله وتوحيده والإيمان بالقدر ولماذا خلقنا... إلخ
- كانت الأسئلة الدينية والعقيدية ممنوعة يرونها عيبا

كيف وصل إلى الإلحاد

- ذهب إلى أمريكا مبتعثًا وسكن مع أسرة كافرة كاثوليكية متعصبة وانعزل عن جماعته الطلاب من بلده
- يريد القبول في هذه البيئة الجديدة فمعياره القبول عند الناس
- ما ذهب إلى أمريكا للدراسة بل هدفه كان الهروب من بلده ومن بيئة مسلمة يراها ضيقة وهو يريد ما يظنه الانفتاح والحرية
- بدأ يتساهل ويتنازل عن أمور دينية ويظن أن هذا التنازل فيه مصلحة دعوية للغير
- أول ما ترك من الأعمال الصلاة والبعد عن زملائه المسلمين
- تأثر بهجران وشدة ردة الفعل من زملائه وخصوصا من أحد أقربائه ومحبيه كان في أمريكا معه وهذا أبعد أكثر فأكثر
- وصل إلى فكرة ((لا أدرية)) بعد الإلحاد الصريح لأن ((لا أدرية)) أيسر على باله وهروبا من نقاشات ولأن ((لا أدرية)) لا ينكر الله جحدا بل يقول لا أدري ويمكن هذا ويمكن ذلك...
- قبل ((لا أدرية)) ذهب إلى صوفية فابتعد عن السنة

رجوعه إلى الإسلام

- أول ما بدأ أن يرجع حين مات أخوه الصغير فكان يبكي في الجنازة ولكن ليس البكاء حزنا على فراق أخيه بل بكاء على نفسه وحاله
- أول من ذهب إليه هو نفس القريب الذي اشتد عليه وهجره في أمريكا لأنه ناصحا وصادقا ومحبا له
- بدأ أن يرجع إلى الدين ويبحث عن الأجوبة لما يشكل عليه
- انضم بدار القرآن بكويت وخصص أحد المشايخ درسا خاصا بهذا الأخ ليجيب ما عنده
- بدأ بتفسير جزء عم لأنه ممتلئ بالعقائد وذلك من مختصر تفسير ابن كثير ومعه يدرس كتاب التوحيد للإمام محمد بن عبد الوهاب
- اهتم به الشيخان أحدهما يدرسه التفسير والثاني العقيدة واهتما به شخصيا حتى ذهب أحدهما معه للعمرة

وصيته للشباب

- أن لا يخفي أي سؤال أو شبهة فالخطر في الإخفاء ولكن السؤال لأهل العلم ومن يثق بدينه
- الإهتمام بالصلاة وله أثر نفسي عند الشكوك
- عدم معرفة وظيفة الدين في الحياة سبب لضلال عظيم
- الصحبة الصالحة لإخوة مستقيمين ناصحين محبين لك الخير

كتبه أبو العباس نفيذ عياض

السادس من جمادي الأولى، ١٤٤٠ هجري