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EDITORIAL

All thanks for Almighty, the most Merciful and Exalted

Awakening of the Heart

Yes, your physical heart beats. Yes, it is keeping you alive, physically. Yes, it is pumping blood without you ever having to remind it to do so-but is that all? What about spiritually? Is your heart spiritually beating? Is your heart keeping your connection with Allah alive? Is it pumping the spiritual motivation that you need to get through your daily life without falling to pieces-without breaking every moral fiber within your being? It is important to ask these questions, because if not, then life will have no meaning-no fruit-and not a moment of peace.

Maybe you remember a time when it was fully alive and thriving. You could feel it pumping the essential life juices from your spiritual heart through your veins and straight to your limbs, making the good deeds easy and making desires easily avoidable.

But maybe not. Maybe you do not ever remember it being alive. But you have craved it. You wish that you could feel it, that it would start pumping, beating, so that the emptiness inside you could finally fade away. You wish that it would start working, like you know it should, so that these useless desires that you know you should not be chasing will not seem so, enticing. You just want it to keep you alive.

Either way, it is possible. Either way, it is essential. And the fact that you even want it to is a sign, in and of itself, that Allah wants you to be awakened. He wants you to come back to Him. And how amazing is it to feel that the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth wants

you, specifically. Think about it for a moment, let it sink in. The purpose of the heart, is to love, so the most essential step in bringing it back to life, is to allow it love. Someone once asked me if we can teach our heart to love. The truth is, no we can not. But as Rumi, a poet, once said: "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it."

Whether we realize it or not, we have all built barriers around the walls of our heart. They may be walls that have accidentally been placed there, over time without our realizing. But sometimes these are intentional walls, which we have built up to protect ourselves from what we conceive to be potential harm. Whatever it may be, we must find out what walls stand between us and embracing the beautiful Love of Allah that our heart craves and needs. You may be thinking, "Well tell me, what are the walls that surround my heart that are preventing me from this love?" And I wish I could answer you clearly and precisely. But the thing is, it is your heart. No one knows your heart like you do-well no one except Allah. You must realize that it is essential to get to know yourself. If you know your heart you will know yourself-and if you know yourself you will begin to know Allah.

There are numerous barriers that may be there in your heart, but I will name a few to get you started while thinking about yourself. These are not comprehensive, rather simply a spark to ignite the fires of your thought.

Arrogance: Only the humble can know

Allah, as they realize that He is everything and they are nothing without Him. When the heart has arrogance, even just a little, this begins to serve as a barrier between His Love and His Light. Humble yourself for Allah, and He will raise you.

Anger: Anger, for other than the sake of Allah, hardens the heart. It consumes the heart and rids it of the opportunity to feel happiness and love. It prevents the Light of Allah from flowing in. If you are an angry person—angry at people, or at the world in general, get to know that anger. Figure out where it comes from and why it is there, and find a way to rid yourself from it.

Ignorance: This is a big one. If you do not know Allah, how do you expect to love Him? And I do not mean being able to recite 99 of His magnificent names in a song. I mean, know what these names refer to in Him and how that affects us. Specifically, how they

affect YOU. If you love a human being you spend time getting to know them. And most of the time, the more you know them, the more you love them. It can sometimes even become an obsession. What then of Allah? Shouldn't we get to know Him so that the walls of our ignorance that surround our heart begin to crumble and His love is allowed to flow through?

Strive to awaken the heart of your spirit and in turn awaken meaning to life. When the heart begins to thrive, doing good deeds become easy, and desires become unattractive and even disgusting. Do not give up on yourself, because Allah has not. And know that even in this state, you are beloved to Allah and He wants you close. Imam Al-Shaadhili once said:

"If you were to open the heart of the disobedient believer, its light would blind the universe.

What then of the obedient believer?"

Securing your child's Islamic future

The greatest investment that any community can make is to invest in their children. Our children are our future. If we invest in today's children and develop them into people who are firm in their Imaan, who cherish human value more than material wealth, who honour their parents and their elders and are generally an asset to society at large, then such an investment will earn tremendous returns and benefits for the Ummah.

The Maktab/Madrasah has always played a pivotal role in developing the children of the Ummah. By and large it is at the Maktab that our children learn the basics of Deen, the fundamentals that enable him to live and practice as a Muslim.

In communities where Maktab education is not provided, children grow up without knowing even the basics of Islam. They are unable to fulfill the fundamental aspects of Deen like wudhu and Salaah and in many cases are not able to recite the Kalimah properly.

Maktab education is essential in the life of every Muslim child and it is our duty as parents and guardians of our children to ensure they receive its instruction. Kindly contact your local Imaam/Masjid for information on enrolling your child into the Maktab.

Question Answer

Question

I want to ask you that what is the logical reason and why is it necessary for a women to get married with another person in order to get married again with her previous husband?

Answer

As Muslims, our basic purpose in this life is to submit to the rules, orders and commands of Allah. The primary benefit of obedience to Allah is achieving His pleasure and eternal happiness in the life to come. Allah says:

“Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and fears Allah and is conscious of Him (and His injunctions), those are the successful ones.” (24:52)

A slave does not question his master’s orders or the wisdoms behind them, but dutifully carries out his commands. Similarly, Muslims must obey the laws of Allah without question and without demanding to know the wisdom behind each and every law.

However, it is from the mercy of Allah that the benefits of complying with His laws are not limited to the next world, but are also experienced in this temporary abode. Allah says:

“Whoever, male or female, has acted righteously, while being a believer, We shall

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certainly make him live a good life, and shall give such people their reward for the best of what they used to do.” (16:97)

This verse promises that Allah will grant the person who is obedient a good life in this world. The Ulema mention that one of the ways this will materialise is Allah will grant him sufficient provision and contentment of the heart.

Besides these broad material benefits of obedience, there are also specific benefits to each injunction of Shari’ah. These worldly benefits, however, are sometimes visible and clear to us, and at other times they are not. Some of the worldly benefits of avoiding intoxication and gambling, for example, are expressed clearly in the Qur’an (5:91).

However, it must be borne in mind that the primary reason why we carry out the injunctions of Shari’ah are not their worldly benefits or wisdoms. If that was the reason, it would entail we are aware of the wisdom behind every law of Shari’ah, which is certainly not the case. Rather, the primary reason is obedience to Allah, and obedience itself is a great incentive for a slave to follow the laws of his True Master and Benefactor.

As far as the injunction in reference is concerned, Allah says:

"If he (i.e. the husband) divorces her (a third time), she is not lawful for him thereafter until she has intercourse with another husband." (2:230)

The clear injunction found in this verse is the reason why the law of halalah is necessary. Moreover, it comes in hadith:

The wife of Rifa'ah al-Qurazi came to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and she said: "I was with Rifa'ah, and he divorced me, making my divorce divisive (i.e. he issued three divorces), so I married 'Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Zubayr..." He said: "Do you wish to return to Rifa'ah? No (you may not), until you taste his honey and he tastes your honey (i.e. perform sexual intercourse)." (Bukhari)

The Ulema have mentioned that the worldly wisdom of this ruling is to deter the husband from issuing divorce. A man generally finds it extremely intolerable for another man to sleep with his wife. Thus, making halalah a condition for taking his wife back after three divorces is a strong deterrent to divorce. Divorce is reprehensible in Islam, as it entails the breakup of families and leads to societal turbulence and corruption. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"The most despised of lawful (acts) to Allah is divorce."

Hence, one of the wisdoms behind the law of halalah is to minimise divorce rates, and as a consequence, prevent social breakdown and corruption.

Question

What is the ratio between son & daughter in the property of mother?

My father has two marriages, my real mother died first and then my father. My mother has some personal property. I want to ask do our stepbrothers and stepsisters have share in our mother property or not?

Answer

In principle, stepsons and stepdaughters will not inherit from the deceased.

Question

How will a person read his sunnah salah if he missed Salaah with congregation?

Answer

1. If a person came for Fajr salah when the Imam had already commenced the Fajr salah, the sunnats should be read even after the Fardh Salah has commenced as long as the person is confident he will be able to join the Fardh salah before the tashahhud. If he doubts being able to join the Fardh Salah due to performing sunnats, he should leave out the sunnats and perform the two rak'at sunnah after sunrise till midday.

If the Fardh salah of Zohar and Asr has already commenced, one should join the Fardh salah and not observe the sunnats. The four sunnat-e-Muakkadah of Zohar should be read after the Fardh salah before the two sunnats of Zohar. The missed sunnat-e-ghayr Muakkadah of Asar should not be observed after the Asr salah.

Question

Can Husband and Wife offer Salah in Jama't at home, if somehow husband missed jama't?

Answer

It is permissible for the husband and wife to perform salah together. However, the wife will have to stand behind the husband.

Question

One of my friend ask me, "is reciting surah yasin at graveyard cause the waving of punishment in grave for 40 days."

He has heard that it does, so He wants to know is there any authentic hadith in support of this?

Answer

It is stated in the following hadith:
Anas, (RA), narrated that the Prophet, sallallahu alayhi wa sallam, said, "Whoever enters a graveyard and reads surah Yasin, Allah will lessen the punishment of the deceased and the reciter's reward will be according to the number of people buried there."

The hadith is considered reliable. The decreasing of the punishment from the inmates of the graves upon reading Surah Yaseen is general.

There is no mention of the punishment in the grave being waived for 40 days.

Question

I heard a lady scholar say that if a wife is in a bad marriage, she can do whatever her husband is telling her to do, let it be against the commands of Allah. Is there a condition acceptable to disobey Allah? E.g. Serving him alcohol, taking off hijab. She's supposed to drink alcohol if he wants her to. I mean those are the very clear disobediences of Allah.

Answer

If she is a scholar, she should be aware of the following Hadith:

"No obedience for evil deeds, obedience is required only in what is good."

She should also be aware of the following Hadith:

"It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen (to the ruler appointed over him) and obey him whether he likes it or not, except that he is ordered to do a sinful thing. If he is ordered to do a sinful act, a Muslim should neither listen to him nor should he obey his orders."

According to Shari'ah, if a Qadhi (judge) considers something to be circumstantially beneficial but it is against Shari'ah, he too cannot use his influential position as a judge and issue such a ruling. If he issues a

ruling against Shari'ah, it will be invalid.

It is clear from all the above that it is not permissible for a wife to perform any deed that is against the teachings of Allah or his Messenger Sallallahu 'Alayhi Wasallam if the husband requests her to do so. This includes consuming alcohol and lifting the hijab/veil from one's face.

Imam Muslim (ra) mentions the saying of the renowned scholar, Muhammad Ibn Sireen in the introduction of Sahih-Muslim:

"Indeed this knowledge is faith, so carefully consider from whom you take your faith."

The scholarly position to the woman in reference is questionable. We advise you to exercise extreme caution when taking knowledge from any source.

*Allah knows the best
 Checked and Approved by,
 Mufti Ebrahim Sahib.*

Question.

If a person has to give his wife the 2nd Talaq, what are the consequences? Iddat period, providing for the wife after the Talaq, status of marriage?

Answer.

If the husband and wife had reconciled after the first divorce and now he issues a second divorce, her Iddah will commence from the time of the second divorce. If they did not reconcile after the first divorce, the Iddah will continue from the first divorce and the second divorce will not cause the Iddah to restart. There is still room for reconciliation as long as three divorces have not been issued.

If they do not reconcile before the Iddah expires, the bonds of marriage will terminate and it will be necessary for them to renew the Nikah if they wish to reconcile thereafter.

During the Iddah period, the husband is obligated to provide maintenance for the

wife.

Question

If a musali is performing the 4 rakaats sunah of jumah and the Imam stands up for the khutbah, should the 4 rakaats be repeated after the 2 faraidh of jumah? (Even if one is offering 4th rakaat of the sunah, if it has to be repeated then, has it be repeated in all instances or are there any exceptions)?.

Answer

He should complete the four Rak'ah and shorten his Qira'ah. i.e., he should not recite lengthy verses as Qira'ah.

There is no need to repeat the four Rak'ah thereafter.

Question

Is it permissible for a person who is giving ZAKAT for the marriage of a girl to attend the dinner at the girls wedding ?

Answer.

Yes. It is permissible. Once Zakaat funds have been given to eligible recipients of Zakaat, it becomes Halaal money for them and is no longer considered as Zakaat. Hence if they now feed you from that money, it will be permissible to consume.

Question

I have heard that when you get married, there a certain manner and side on which husband and wife should sleep on the bed?

Answer

There is no specific mention in the Qur'an or Hadith as to which side of the bed the husband and wife should sleep on. The positions may be mutually agreed upon.

Yes, the Sunnah method of sleeping is to dust the bed thrice before getting into bed and to sleep on the right side with the cheek

resting on the right palm and the left hand on ones side.

Question

A few days ago, I received a message with a Hadith that says "Whoever is the first to give another person the news about the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, the fire of hell is Haraam for them". Is this authentic?

Answer.

We have not come across a Hadith in which it is mentioned that the fire of Hell is Haraam upon the first person who gives the news about Rabi'ul Awwal.

If this Hadith is fabricated and was not mentioned by Rasulallah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, the person who fabricated the Hadith as well as all those who convey the Hadeeth are deserving of the severe warning of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. Rasulallah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam said, "To fabricate my words is not like fabricating any other person's words. The person who fabricates my words should prepare an abode for himself in the fire of hell." (Bukhari).

Unfortunately, due to wide spread ignorance coupled with the advancement of technology, messages containing false information and fabricated Ahadith are widely circulated. The composers of such messages as well as those who forward them to others should take heed of the severe warning of Rasulallah Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam. It is therefore imperative that one exercises caution when one receives messages of such a nature wherein there is no authentic reference mentioned. Such messages or pieces of information should be referred to reliable and learned scholars for verification.

*And Allah knows the best
Mufti Suhail Sahib*

Lesson From The Qur'an

Surah Al-Imran - Verse 118-129

Note: Text in bold letters is the literal translation of the meaning of the Qur'an by M. Taqi Usmani and the normal text is the brief explanation compiled by Institute of Islamic Research, Darul Uloom Ilahiya.

In the preceding verses it is mentioned how the chill of unbelief and injustice destroys the deed -crop of unbelievers. Now, from verse 118 to 120, the believers are advised not to mingle with the wrongdoers or else the chill of their unbelief and wrongdoing may destructively affect their deeds also.

O you who believe, do not, in response to a friendly treatment, **take anyone**, from among the unbelievers, **as an insider** i.e., sympathiser, close friend or confidant, **but those from among your own selves** i.e., believers. There are numerous reasons behind this: (i) **They would spare no effort to do you mischief** and, therefore, keep on looking for ways to pit you against one another. (ii) **They want you to be in trouble**, the desire which never subsides from their hearts. (iii) Because of their strong enmity towards you **malice has come out of their mouths** (iv) **while what is concealed in their hearts is still worse** i.e., the intensity with which their enmity surfaces is far less than what really lies in their hearts which you are unaware of. Thus, **We have**

made the signs of their malice **clear to you, if only you understand** then see in the light of these signs. (3:118)

(v) **Look, you are the ones who** - in conduct - **love them** mindlessly, **and they do not love you** neither by heart not in conduct. Therefore, it would be nothing but sheer mindlessness on your behalf if you take someone, who is neither your well wisher nor the one loving you, as insider, (vi) even though **You believe in all the** revealed **books** including theirs, while on the other hand they, owing to their stubbornness, do not believe in your book (Qur'an) despite the fact that its truthfulness has become manifest to them. (vii) Don't get deceived by the apparent claim of their belief, because **when they meet you, they hypocritically say, "We believe", and when they are alone, they bite their finger-tips out of** extreme **rage against you. Say** to them O Prophet! **"May you perish in your rage** i.e., your wish will not be fulfilled even if you die." **Surely, Allah is All-Aware of what lies in the hearts** against the believers and accordingly conveyed it to you. (3:119)

(viii) The severity of their enmity and malice towards Muslims is such that **if something good happens to you** e.g., the development of brotherhood among you or your dominance over outsiders, **it annoys them** because of severe jealousy, (ix) **and if something evil befalls you, they are delighted with it** which proves the extent of their gloat. That they are secretly active in devising plots against you and leaving no stone unturned, worry surely is not the resort, rather **if you keep patience and fear Allah, their cunningness shall not harm you at all.** This then will be their unsuccessfulness in this world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be the punishment of Fire, as - **Allah is All-Encompassing of what they do** and He is sure to deal with them accordingly. (3:120)

In the foregoing verses it is mentioned that if Muslims take recourse to patience (Sabr) and God-fearing (Taqwa) the plots of their enemies will in no way affect them. Now, they are reminded about the Uhud-battle episode wherein they had to taste loss due to lack of patience and God-fearing; whereas in the battle of Badr, wherein by adopting patience and God-fearing, they triumphed through the warfare.

There can be another interpretation which is that in the preceding verses Muslims are prohibited to take infidels as insiders and now by narrating the episode of the Uhud-battle they are being enlightened about the harmful results that surfaced when they took infidels and hypocrites as insiders. It so happened that Abdullah bin U'by Ibn Salul, who had participated in the consultation before the battle, withdrew from the forces along with his three hundred men on the pretext that it was not a battle but merely a suicide. Seeing this, the two tribes – Banu Salamah and Banu Harithah, also intended to withdraw but Allah strengthened their hearts and they stood firm in the battlefield. It is regarding them that the following verses

were revealed.

O Prophet! It is worth to **recall the time when**, before the battle day, **you left your house in the morning in order to place the believers in positions for fighting** against the disbelievers near the mount of Uhud. On the way, Abdullah bin U'by – the leader of hypocrites withdrew along with his three hundred men on the pretext that – since his suggestions regarding the battle were turned down there is no need for them to fight as it merely amounts to suicide. This he plotted to destabilize Muslims, but **Allah is All-Hearing** - He heard his words, **All-Knowing** - He knew his plot which was about to entrap some believers. (3:121)

In the meantime **when two of your groups** - Banu Salamah and Banu Harithah - **were about to lose heart** and follow Abdullah bin U'by; **while Allah was their guardian** Who saved them from putting into action this unmanly intention. Now on, this group and all others are advised that **it is in Allah alone that the believers must place their trust;** they should neither believe in their own strength nor get captivated by their enemies' power or size. (3:122)

Here the incident from the unparalleled victory at Badr achieved on the sole basis of Tawakkul (trust), Taqwa (God-fearing) and Sabr (patience) is being narrated.

Allah certainly supported you at Badr when you were weak in your footing and victory against the enemy was impossible but, since you had placed your trust on Allah, He gave you honour. **So, fear Allah** and believe in His power and strength; We have, by the blessings of Our special aid, strengthened you so **that you may be grateful** that in the twinkle of an eye We strengthened the weak and weakened the strong. (3:123)

O Prophet! Remember the time **when you**, in order to strengthen their hearts, **were saying to the believers, "Shall it not suffice you that your Lord should help you with three thousand of the angels sent down** especially for you?" (3:124)

Of course, if you stay patient and fear Allah, and they come upon you even in this heat of theirs, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand of the angels, each having distinct marks to indicate that these are special forces from Allah sent down to aid special people; so don't panic at the mammoth size your enemy's power. (3:125)

And Allah did this solely to make it a good news for you, and so that your hearts may be at rest with it and you may not feel afraid of the size and power of the enemy otherwise there was no need. **Otherwise**, in reality **victory is from none but Allah, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise** - if He so wills He can bless you with victory without any materialistic means or aid of angels. (3:126)

The reason behind the victory you were blessed with is **so that He may cut off a flank of disbelievers**, consequently 70 top ranking disbelievers got killed, **or throw** some of **them down in disgrace, and they go back frustrated** i.e., either of the two. (3:127)

The following verse was revealed when during the battle of Uhud the Prophet (Sallallahu

Alaihi Wasallam) lost his teeth and he said, "How can a people succeed who injured the face of their Prophet?" However, according to a hadith quoted in Bukhari, it was revealed when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), while offering Fajr-prayer, invoked Allah and cursed some disbelievers who had martyred the Muslims.

O Prophet! **You have no authority in the matter** i.e., curse and mercy, ignorance and guidance are in His control, **unless Allah forgives them** after they repent by His succour; and the very people who are enemies of you and your religion would, by the power and wish of Allah, lay their lives for you and your religion, **or Allah punishes them** in this world by putting them to death or letting them live and die on disbelief, or in the next as fuel for the Hell, **as they are unjust** truly deserving such punishment; so don't curse them. (3:128) **To Allah belongs what is in the heavens and what is in the earth** therefore, He - as the Owner - has absolute authority that **He forgives whomsoever He wills and punishes whomsoever He wills. Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful**; His mercy prevails over His wrath, so don't haste in cursing people. (3:129)

Service to Others

Nowadays we all are so caught up in our busy lives and in accomplishing our daily tasks that very little attention is paid to serving others. We need to change this and try to cultivate in ourselves and in our children the desire to serve others. It should become one's ambition to invest one's free time in serving others. We should regard serving our parents as a source of perpetual reward. Our children should not feel ashamed of doing household chores or helping in the grocery shopping. They should cheerfully carry out the instructions of their parents at all times. They should be trained to give preference to others over themselves. At all times the comfort and wellbeing of others should be considered. Youngsters should respect the senior members of the family and be willing to assist them. They should not feel embarrassed to clean the house and their surroundings with their own hands. Helping the poor, mercy towards the weak and removal of harmful objects from the pathway should become natural to them.

Lesson From Sahih al-Bukhari

Dr. Rafiq Ahmad

The Book of Obligatory Ablution

The Book of obligatory ablution

And the saying of Allah: "O you who believe! when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and wipe your heads and your feet to the ankles; and if you are under an obligation to perform a total ablution, then wash (yourselves) and if you are sick or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy, or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith, Allah does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He wishes to purify you and that He may complete His favor on you, so that you may be grateful". (5:6)

And Allah said: "O you who believe! do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know (well) what you say, nor when you are under an obligation to perform a bath-- unless (you are) travelling on the road-- until you have washed yourselves; and if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you come from the privy or you have touched the women, and you cannot find water, betake yourselves to pure earth, then wipe your faces and your hands; surely Allah is Pardoning, Forgiving". (4:43)

Imam Bukhari (RA) has started this

book of Gusul (obligatory ablution) with two verses of the Qur'an as per his routine, i.e., to start different books with the word of Allah. Ibn Hajr Asqalaani (RA) explains why Imam Bukhari (RA) has quoted verses from Surah al-Maidah first and then that of Surah an-Nisa, while as Surah an-Nisa precedes Surah al-Maidah in the Qur'an. He says that in the verse of Surah al-Maidah the word "أطهروا" is used which bespeaks of generality and in the verse of Surah an-Nisa the word "اغسلوا" is used which bespeaks of specificity.

Allaama Ayni differs with Ibn Hajr, he says that the word أطهروا points towards exaggeration because in Gusul more water is used than in Wudu.

Chapter 1 : To perform Wudu before Gusul.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

It is to show the preferable way of performing Gusul.

Hadith No. 244

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

"Whenever the Prophet took a bath after Janaba, he started by washing his hands and then performed ablution like that for the prayer. After that he would put his fingers in water

and move the roots of his hair with them, and then pour three handfuls of water over his head and then pour water all over his body”.

Hadith No. 245

Narrated Maimuna (the wife of the Prophet) (RA)

“Allah's Apostle performed ablution like that for the prayer but did not wash his feet. He washed off the discharge from his private parts and then poured water over his body. He withdrew his feet from that place (the place where he took the bath) and then washed them. And that was his way of taking the bath of Janaba”.

Comments

Imam Bukhari wants to say that it is Sunnah to perform Wudu before Gusul. There can be two situations, one is that Gusul is being performed in such a place where water does not get collected and flows out from that place. In such a situation, one can wash his feet at the end of Wudu and then start performing Gusul. This is evident from the first Hadith. The second situation is that the used water of Gusul gets collected in that particular place and does not flow out. In this situation one should first perform Wudu without washing his feet, then perform his Gusul and then in the end withdraw his feet from that place to other place and wash them there.

Chapter 2 : Performance of Gusul by a man along with his wife.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Imam Bukhari (RA) had mentioned in Kitab-ul-Wudu about the husband and wife performing Wudu together by taking water from a single pot, here he is mentioning their performance of Gusul from a single water container.

Hadith No. 246

Narrated 'Aisha (RA)

“The Prophet and I used to take a bath from a single pot called 'al-Faraq'.”

Comments

Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) says that she and Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to perform Gusul together from a single pot, which was called al-Faraq. This pot had the capacity of three Sa', and one Sa' is equal to three kilograms and two hundred and seventy grams as per the Ulema of the sub-continent.

From this Hadith, the jurists have derived the following conclusions;

1. A husband and a wife can perform Wudu together.
2. A husband and a wife can see each others' private parts.
3. One should try to avoid wastage of water during Gusul. (Inaamul Bari)

A Hadith says:

“Ibn Hajr Asqalaani (RA) quotes in Fathul Bari from Ibn Hibban that Sulaiman bin Musa was asked if a man could see the private parts of his wife. He said that he asked same thing to Ata who in turn said that he asked the same to Ayesha (RA), who narrated the same Hadith (quoted in this chapter) and this Hadith is categorical on this issue. (And Allah knows the best).”

Chapter 3 : To perform Gusul with one Sa' or so.

Purpose of Tarjamatul Baab

Here again same thing is impressed that the water should not be wasted while taking a bath.

Hadith No. 247

Narrated Abu Salma (RA)

“Aisha's brother and I went to 'Aisha and he

asked her about the bath of the Prophet. She brought a pot containing about a Sa' of water and took a bath and poured it over her head and at that time there was a screen between her and us".

Comments

Abu Salma was the foster nephew of Hadhrat Ayesha (RA). He had taken breast feeding from Hadhrat Ayesha's sister Umm Kulthoom bin Abi Bakr (RA). The other person whom the narrator calls 'brother of Ayesha' was foster brother of Hadhrat Ayesha whose name was Abdullah bin Yazid as per Muslim. Ibn Hajr says that he was some other foster brother of Hadhrat Ayesha and not Abdullah bin Yazid. In short, both these were 'Mahram' (a person with whom marriage is not permissible in Islamic Shariah) to Hadhrat Ayesha. They asked her about the bath of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). It seems most probably that these people were having doubt about the quantity of water i.e., one Sa', which Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had used for taking a bath. They thought how was it possible to take a bath with such a small quantity of water. Hadhrat Ayesha (RA) took a pot of water equal to one Sa' and showed them practically that it was possible to use only this much quantity of water for taking a bath. The narrator clearly says that there was a veil between her and them, so there is no question that these could see Hadhrat Ayesha (RA). Here most probable is that Hadhrat Ayesha wanted to show them that this much quantity of water is enough. I think there is no need to make other guesswork.

Hadith No. 248

Narrated Abu Ja'far (RA)

"While I and my father were with Jaabir bin 'Abdullah, some People asked him about taking a bath He replied, "One Sa' of water is sufficient for you." A man said, "One Sa' is not sufficient for me." Jaabir said, "One Sa was sufficient for one who had more hair than you and was better than you (meaning the Prophet)." And then Jaabir (put on) his garment and led the prayer".

Hadith No. 249

Narrated Ibn 'Abbas (RA)

"The Prophet and Maimuna used to take a bath from a single pot".

Quotables

"I have read in ninety places in the Qur'an that Allah has preordained sustenance and guaranteed it for His creation, and I have read only once that Satan threatens you with poverty"

(Imam Hasan al-Basri (ra))

"Know that thankfulness is from the highest of stations, and it is higher than patience, fear and the detachment of the world"

(Imam Ghazali (ra))

"To be able to thank Allah is a blessing within itself"

(Imam Shafa'ie (ra))

Experience has proven that there is a greater need for pious company than Ilm (knowledge). This is why we see that people who have been in the company of pious saints, are far better than those learned people who lack the company (subhat) of the pious.

(Maulana Asbraf Ali Thanwi (ra))

You cannot stop the tongues of people but do not let the tongues of people stop you.

(Mufti Ismail Menk)

The Dignity of Islam's Social Etiquette

Ahmad Batili

Cordially making room for newcomers in a gathering is a rule of refined conduct taught and encouraged by the Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam.

Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says: "O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Make room [for one another]' in gatherings, then make room; Allah will make room for you. And when you are told: 'Arise!' then arise. Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge by degrees. And Allah is acquainted with what you do" [58:11].

This verse of the Qur'an holds divine instructions and rules of social conduct directed at avoiding discord, spreading care and friendliness among people, and maximizing the benefit of circles of knowledge when we are in them. These rules address assemblies, social gatherings, groups, and study circles. The first rule commands making space for newcomers when sitting in an assembly, allowing them to sit down, feel welcome and part of the assembly. This brings peace and strengthens ties.

The Messenger of Allah, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, was so beloved by his Companions (Sahabah) that naturally, they sought to sit as close to him as possible, and if that

meant they had to compete for a better place close to him, they did. This verse was, therefore, revealed, to address social manners and etiquette. Qatadah, of the great Successor (Tabi'ee) generation that came after the Companions, said commenting on this verse that "it was revealed concerning assemblies of learning and discussion, for when they saw someone approaching, the Companions used to be reluctant to concede a space for him in their assemblies with Allah's Messenger, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam-and thus Allah's instruction to make space for each other."

Several of the sayings of the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, speak to the merits of making space at assemblies. One of these quoted by Ibn Umar says: "Let no person get up only to have another to sit in his place, but rather make room and enlarge your circle" (Bukhari and Muslim). Another version cited by Ahmad, says: "...but rather make space, and Allah will make space for you."

When room is made for someone, it should be accepted, and the person should sit down next to those who made it, and thank them. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said: "When people take their places and sit, and a man invites a [Muslim] brother of his and makes room for him, let the latter take it.

It is a generous gesture offered to him, so let him sit there" (Tabari).

Making room for newcomers in a gathering is a rule of refined conduct promoted by the Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, and is characteristic of Islam. It is a sign of affability and mutual affection of all Muslims. It is both a courtesy and a good deed. When someone arrives late to a learning session, the people already there should make room, so that the latecomer may sit down, listen, and benefit from the discussion, rather than have him or her turn back with the excuse that no place is available or that the place is too tight, thus denying one the opportunity of learning. One hadith states that while Allah's Messenger, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, was sitting, three people approached. One of them found an opening in the circle and joined it. Another sat behind other people. The third turned back and left. Allah's Messenger said: "Shall I give you an account of these three? The first took refuge with Allah. As for the second, he felt shy and sat behind the people. The third turned away, so Allah turned away from him."

We should not separate people from each other, for Allah's Messenger, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said: "It is not lawful for any man to separate two people without their permission" (Abu Dawud and Tirmithi). Such separation may inconvenience them, for they may have special affection toward each other or may have been discussing a private matter. So separating them, by sitting between them, may disturb them.

The Prophet Muhammad, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, also said: "No one among you should cause a man to stand and then sit in his place" (Bukhari). A person who sits in a place first is more entitled to it. The best practice is for a person joining a group to sit next to the last person in it. Jabir Ibn Samurah said:

"When we joined the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, we used to sit where the end was, "meaning at the end of the group in order not to inconvenience anyone and make them get up" (Abu Dawud).

Another important rule of conduct at assemblies is to take the initiative when entering by greeting the people already there. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said: "Do not admit a person who does not begin with a greeting" (AbuYa'la). There are many ahadith on the subject of making the salutation of others a common practice. In one of these, the Prophet states: "O People! Spread greetings. Offer food. Keep in touch with your blood relatives. And pray while people are asleep. And you will be admitted into Paradise in peace" (Tirmithi).

When leaving a group, it is proper for a Muslim to commend the people there with salutations of peace, for the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, said: "If one of you joins an assembly, let him greet (the People there). And if he gets up while others are still sitting, let him greet (them). For the former (greeting) is not more of an obligation than the latter" (Ahmed and Abu Dawud).

When Muslims visit one another, they should not stay overly long. Once they have achieved what they came for, they should depart, in order not to inconvenience the host. That is why Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala, says: "And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise," which means that when one is asked to get up and leave, one should do so. Abdurrahman ibn Zaid said: "People used to gather at the house of the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, and when they wanted to leave, each desired to be the last to leave him, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam. That made things hard for Allah's Messenger. Therefore, they were ordered to leave."

It is proper for Muslims when sitting

with others that they should be both modest and attentive in the way they sit. They should not keep turning their heads in all directions without cause, lest they arouse suspicion and wariness. Nor should they keep clearing their throats for no reason.

If someone sneezes and then praises Allah (saying alhamdulillah), the people around should respond with a prayer for Allah's mercy for him. When yawning, the mouth should be covered and further yawning resisted as much as possible. One should not sit with one's back to other people. Moreover, in a group of three, it is not right for two to talk intimately and privately, leaving the third out.

Finally, let the assembly conclude with the supplication mentioned in a hadith of the Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, narrated by Abu Hurairah winch says: "When a person sits in an assembly, having engaged in much idle talk, and then says, before getting up: 'Glory and praise be to you my lord. There is no god other than You. I pray for your pardon and repent to you'-Allah forgives for him what he has done [meaning the idle talk] in that assembly" (Tirmithi).

Al-Jumuah

Lessons from a Donkey

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly.

Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off!

MORAL : Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up.

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

- 1. Free your heart from hatred – Forgive.*
- 2. Free your mind from worries – Most never happens.*
- 3. Live simply and appreciate what you have.*
- 4. Give more.*
- 5. Expect less from people but more from yourself.*

Ensuring a Strong Bond

Seeking Forgiveness

Mawlana Abdu-us-Sattar

One of the first steps on the path to Allah Most High is to ensure that we seek forgiveness from those wrong actions we have committed in the past. Each time we sin, disobeying Allah or leaving one of his commandments, we add a layer of spiritual filth onto our hearts. The result of this is that when we try to perform dhikr and other acts of worship, we cannot fully experience them, because that filth becomes a block between the reality of that act, and its receptor in the body, which is the heart. This is why despite performing our daily adhkar, despite reciting the Quran, sitting in muraqabah, sending salawat, we are not able to fully reap the benefits of these actions.

If you look at the instructions on a pack of glue, it will always mention to ensure that both surfaces which you want to join together are clean, to ensure a secure bond. The reason is because if there is any dirt or foreign substance between the two, the bond cannot take hold and remains weak.

The same is true with our relationship with Allah Most High. As long as we allow that layer of filth to remain upon us, our relationship with Him can never take hold and be maintained, and we will remain in the same pathetic state. Everyday saying that tomorrow will be different, tomorrow will be better, only to wake up to the same reality day-in and day-

out.

Reminder Concerning Tawbah

[...] Shaykh Zulfiqar Ahmad (may Allah preserve his legacy) gave a very beautiful, and practical reminder on turning in repentance to Allah Most High. I wanted to share a few of the points he made [...]:

1. Detach Yourself from Bad Company

Everyone is responsible for their own actions, but the company we keep strongly influences the decisions we make and can often be the impetus leading us to sin. Imam Ghazali mentions that a bad companion is worse than the bite of a snake because the poison of a snake only kills the body, whereas the poison of a bad companion kills one's iman.

He further explains that a bad companion is actually worse than Shaytan because although Shaytan plants the idea of sin in our hearts, he does not compel us to act. It is our doing which takes that idea and manifests it into sin. But when a friend calls us toward sin, he not only plants the idea in our mind, but he grabs our hand and drags us toward the sin.

2. Make Tawbah from Two Sides

As soon as we disobey Allah Most

High, we should ideally turn to Him in sincere repentance. However, many times we may not realize the mistake right away, or be so caught up in it, that we don't care. So once we recognize the disobedience, we need to make tawbah from two sides:

- a. Tawbah from the disobedience, and
 - b. Tawbah from the delay in making tawbah.
3. Fulfilling Rights is Part of Tawbah

Part of tawbah is having remorse and asking for forgiveness, but we must also ensure that the rights due upon us are fulfilled. Some of these are the rights of Allah; for example, making up missed prayers and fasts, paying our overdue zakah, etc. Others are the rights of the servants of Allah; for example, compensating for any financial loss (i.e., in the case of theft), apologizing to someone if we backbit or spoke inappropriately to them, etc.

4. A Common Deterrent to Tawbah

We all have made our fair share of mistakes (may Allah forgive us), but sometimes Shaytan tricks us into thinking, "I have so many sins, how can they all be forgiven? There is no point in making tawbah!" The key is not to look at the sins, however numerous and horrific they may be, but rather to look at the One forgiving the sins; how perfect and merciful is He!

5. A Common Complaint After Tawbah

"I made tawbah, but bad memories of the sin linger." If the tawbah was sincere, the memories will dissipate over time. Focus on creating good memories in the meantime (i.e. acts of obedience), and on increasing your daily dhikr (so that the remembrance of Allah can replace the whisperings of Shaytan).

These were just a few of the reminders; may Allah Most High forgive my shortcomings in presenting the words of our beloved Shaykh.

Masjid Rules

1. Silence at All Times

The Masjid is a place of prayer, devotion and meditation. If you can respect the hushed environment of your library, the Masjid deserves better.

2. Look after your Kids

If you bring your children to the Masjid make sure that you personally supervise them. If you are unable to do so, leave them at home.

3. Wear Respectful Attire

The House of Allah deserves your respect. Make a habit of keeping a Kurta or Jubbah in your car at all times or use the ones provided if needed.

4. Ensure Personal Hygiene

You will be standing side by side. No one likes being near a person with bad breath or with a body odour. Miswaak and Itr (perfume) are there for a reason.

5. Park your Vehicle Properly

Inconsiderate parking and blocking people's driveways are unacceptable. Don't destroy the reward of your worship by causing harm to others.

3 Prophetic Friendship Principles for the Social Media Age

Ibn Abee Omar

I'm just old enough that I remember a world before the social media age. That meant arranging going out with friends via landline house phones shared with the family, and feeling innovative when AOL Instant Messenger became popular. Going out with a friend usually involved some sort of vetting process where our parents got to know each other before granting us permission to do things like playing games together etc.

Social media can no longer be considered a fad. And with that, our community needs to progress (quickly) past conversations such as, "Is Facebook halal?" and "Should we even be using these platforms?" The reality is that this is communication, period. This is how it's done. Specific platforms may change, but video has already killed the radio star (so to speak). In 2008 I wrote an article introducing what Digg and Reddit were for the Muslim audience. By 2012, the conversation shifted to how Muslim parents need to understand Reddit.

The conversation we need to have now is how to understand Islamic principles so that we can practice them while utilizing these tools. The core of social networking is friendship. From a business perspective it's customer

engagement. Either way you look at it, it boils down to how you interact with others. With that in mind, let's take a look at 3 simple principles that need to be incorporated into our utilization of social media and networking.

1. You Are What You Feed

The similitude of good company and that of bad company is that of the owner of musk and of the one blowing the bellows. The owner of musk would either offer you some free of charge, or you would buy it from him, or you smell its pleasant fragrance; and as for the one who blows the bellows (i.e., the blacksmith), he either burns your clothes or you smell a repugnant smell. [Bukhari and Muslim]

It seems obvious, but sometimes we still need to connect the dots. The company we keep, is in reality who we follow. Our company is the updates we see on Facebook, the people we follow on Twitter, the photos we see on Instagram, and the people we text on WhatsApp.

You may be a fan of a particular athlete and follow him, but what's your reaction if he posts a photo of himself partaking in certain extra-curricular activities? What about

that “friend” (who you probably only actually met once or twice) who posts daily about how much they hate their parents? It's easy to be dismissive of these things and say you don't approve of it, but the reality is that you're constantly letting that messaging into your heart.

Don't believe me? Think about how many times you take out your phone in a day. When you wake up, on the way to school or work, during breaks, in meetings, at lunch, in line at the store, using the restroom, when going to bed... how many status updates do you consume on a daily basis? It's one thing to have a friend or acquaintance that you see a few times a year and maintain a relationship, it's something completely different to see 5-10 messages from that person throughout the course of the day.

Consider your feed your personal space. Be ruthless about who you let in. If someone is a bad or negative influence, remove them at all costs. The sanctity and health of your heart is too great to risk over a few likes or retweets.

2. You're Judged by Your Closest Friend

A man is upon the religion of his friend, so let one of you look at whom he befriends.
[Tirmidhi, Hasan]

There's an obvious meaning here we all understand, but there are also certain aspects that are somewhat overlooked. The first is that this hadith is a profound insight into the human mind. First it shows that who we associate with affects our subconscious much more than some of us might like to admit. Second, it shows that a good friendship means knowing one another on a deep level. It means that when you're actually friends with someone, you know them on a level that you're comfortable with their value system, beliefs, ethics, and character.

One pitfall of social networking is the

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idea of hyper-connectivity. The abundance of superfluous connections sometimes gives the false impression of actual meaningful interactions. Brady Quinn, who was the quarterback of the Chiefs when one of their teammates committed suicide, said something really insightful: “The one thing people can hopefully try to take away, I guess, is the relationships they have with people,” Quinn told reporters after the game. “I know when it happened, I was sitting and, in my head, thinking what I could have done differently. When you ask someone how they are doing, do you really mean it? When you answer someone back how you are doing, are you really telling the truth?”

We live in a society of social networks, with Twitter pages and Facebook, and that's fine, but we have contact with our work associates, our family, our friends, and it seems like half the time we are more preoccupied with our phone and other things going on instead of the actual relationships that we have right in front of us. Hopefully, people can learn from this and try to actually help if someone is battling something deeper on the inside than what they are revealing on a day-to-day basis.” [NBC Sports]

Usually your closest friends are people you have known for a long time. Strong friendships go through their own tests. What happens now is that when a friendship is tested, there's no longer an incentive to make an investment in that relationship. People can simply go over to Facebook and say, no loss, I have 600 more friends to talk to.

It doesn't take a huge leap of logic to see then why Facebook is listed more commonly as a cause of divorce. People thrive on this feeling of connectivity. They start to connect with exes who they otherwise wouldn't have talked to. If they get frustrated with their spouse they go and find someone else to talk

to because they don't know how to deal with a real relationship.

Change your focus from accumulating more friends and followers to cultivating the relationships with the close friends you do have. They're also a path to Jannah.

3. It's Not Always Good to Share

Love the one whom you love to a certain degree (moderately), perhaps one day he will be someone for whom you have hatred, and hate the one for whom you have hatred to a certain degree (moderately), perhaps one day he will be one whom you love. [Tirmidhi]

Moderation is the name of the game. As overused as that term is, its importance here cannot be overstated. There's the obvious meaning here, and that is to not over-share things with people you may later regret. This is something parents should focus on when teaching children how to use social media responsibly. Not everyone who is "your friend" is actually your friend or has your best interests at heart. On that note, high school and college-age youth should also lean heavily on their parents' life experience in this regard – they have dealt with lots of different types of people and will see the red flags with your acquaintances that you don't.

The real point to understand here is that social media is an envy amplifier. It's easy to look at someone's timeline and assume that everything is perfect for them. They have nice family photos, they post pictures from nice restaurants and vacations, and you're sitting there with all these problems and struggles. It's easy to develop hasad (envy) of people because of this. The same is true the other way around. Be careful of what you share because you may incite hasad in others.

It's also pertinent to mention here not to publicize one's own sins. In an effort to get

people to like them, many will post pictures of themselves engaged in some type of shameful behavior. Don't uncover a sin that Allah has covered for you. By the same token, don't be so keen to gain acceptance with someone on their social network, that you willingly go along with them posting shameful things. Whether you hit the like button or not, you can at least remove them from your feed.

When it comes to disliking someone we also need moderation. One of the most destructive practices online is trolling and bullying. This type of behavior becomes extra contagious online for some reason. When people see someone going at someone they don't like, it's very easy to hide behind your keyboard and join in. If you don't like someone, don't harass them or say anything negative. Simply block them or unfollow them and move on.

It's my hope that our ummah starts more openly understanding that social media is running our lives in ways we don't often think about. Checking our phone is not just something we do to pass time, but it's even replacing the desktop computer as our primary device. We need to move beyond whether social media is good or bad and start having frank discussions about how these networks are impacting our lives and relationships. We haven't even touched on things like information overload, or the drain of cognitive energy that prevents us from being able to do simple things like supplicating to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'ala (glorified and exalted be He).

Friendships shape us in more ways than we realize. We can no longer differentiate online and offline personas. Both have very real impacts on us and we need to be cognizant of the Islamic principles and how to live by them no matter how much the systems and environment around us change.

Taqwa of Our Predecessors

Majlis-ul-Ulema of S. Africa

THE TAQWA OF IBN SEEREEN

HADHRAT Allaamah Ibn Seereen (rahmatullah alayh) – died 110 hijri- was one of the greatest among the Muhadditheen. He was an outstanding Faqeeh and in the science of dream- interpretation he was an expert. Once, he acquired a loan of 40,000 dirhams to conduct some trade. The oil which he purchased with the money was filled in leather bags. In one of the oil containers a dead rat was found. Hadhrat Ibn Seeraan (rahmatullah alayh) commented: “It is possible that this rat had died in the tank from which the oil was filled into the leather containers..”

He therefore decided that all the oil was najis (impure), and had it thrown away. Since he was unable to pay his debt, he was imprisoned and he languished there for a considerable time.

Although in terms of the Shariah he was required to discard only the one bag of oil in which the rat was found, his lofty status of Taqwa constrained him to dump all the oil because of the possibility that the rat could have been in the tank from which the bags were filled.

The guard at the jail advised Hadhrat Seereen to spend the nights at his home, and return in the morning. Hadhrat Seereen said: “By Allah, I shall not aid you by betraying the

Sultan.”

His Taqwa was of such a lofty standard that Allah had bestowed to him the ability to act with Taqwa even in dreams. Hishaam Bin Hassaan narrated that Allaamah Ibn Seereen said: “If I see a ghair mahram female even in a dream, I turn away my gaze.”

Ibn Seereen (rahmatullah alayh) was a Taa-biee. However, senior Sahaabah had the greatest regard for him. Hadhrat Anas Bin Maalik (radhiyallahu anhu), a very senior Sahaabi and a close confidante of Rasulallah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was the Ustaadh of Hadhrat Ibn Seereen (rahmatullah alayh). During his last illness, Hadhrat Anas Bin Maalik (radhiyallahu anhu) had directed that when he dies, Hadhrat Ibn Seereen should give him ghusl and perform his Janaazah Salaat.

It so happened that when Hadhrat Anas (radhiyallahu anhu) died, Ibn Seereen was still in jail. The ruler permitted him to attend to the ghusl and Janaazah Salaat of Hadhrat Anas (radhiyallahu anhu). After attending to these duties, Ibn Seereen (rahmatullah alayh) returned straight to prison without even meeting any members of his family.

THE TAQWA OF IMAAM AHMAD

ONCE FRESHLY-BAKED bread was presented to Imaam Ahmad Bin Hambal

(rahmatullah alayh) by a servant. When Imaam Ahmad asked about the bread, he was informed that the bread had been baked in the home of his son, Abdullah. Abdullah was an Aalim of Taqwa. Despite the piety of his son, Imaam Ahmad refused the bread and instructed that it should be removed from his presence.

The reason for this attitude was that his son, Shaikh Abdullah, used to accept gifts from the Khalifah of the time, and Imaam Ahmad believed that the wealth of the Khalifah was contaminated.

On one occasion he had severed all relationship for a full month with his two sons and paternal uncle because they had accepted gifts from the Khalifah.

On another occasion when bread was presented to him, Imaam Ahmad enquired about the origin of the bread. The cook said: "I used your flour and obtained the yeast from your son, Abdullah." Imaam Ahmad refused to eat of the bread since he believed that it had become Mushtabah (Doubtful). The cook asked if he should give the bread to a faqeer (beggar). Imaam Ahmad said that he may do so on condition that he informs the faqeer that the flour was Ahmad's and the yeast was from Abdullah.

For an entire month no faqeer came to the door. The cook informed Imaam Ahmad that the bread was no longer fit for human consumption. Imaam Ahmad instructed him to throw the bread in the river.

Looking beyond the Screen

1. *We have hundreds of contact numbers on our cell phone. However, if we have no contact with Allah, then in reality we have no contact at all.*
2. *We have hundreds of rands of airtime or free minutes on our cell phone. However when our time is up to leave the world, then all our airtime and "free minutes" cannot extend our time on earth for even a second.*
3. *We may charge our cell phone battery until it is fully charged, yet if our lives are not charged with good actions, then our hearts will remain spiritually dead.*
4. *We may sms the worst of messages and choose to remain anonymous, but our Allah knows very well who we are.*
5. *We may commit the worst of sins via the cell phone and quickly delete them, however in our books of deeds they are fully recorded unless we have sincerely repented.*
6. *We may have a contract offering us free minutes, however in reality it is not free. We are paying for it with our valuable time, with the precious minutes of our lives. If the free minutes were abused in sin, we will continue to pay for it in the hereafter as well.*
May Allah save us and allow us to see beyond the screen by believing in the unseen.

Too busy to Pray Five Times?

Daliah Merzaban

Before I genuinely began to cultivate and nurture my relationship with Allah, I regarded the five daily prayers that Islam enjoins on believers as laborious. It seemed impractical to expect that I would be able to stop what I was doing during my busy work schedule to take time out and pray.

Working as a news wire journalist, I was often spending upwards of 10 hours a day in the office or at conferences, interviews and meetings, barely able to make time for a lunch break. If I wasn't working, my time was divided between house chores, errands, family and friends, and exercise. I was punctual with everything in my life, except that I was late five times a day.

In my mind, it was not viable to expect that I could wake up before the crack of dawn to pray the early-morning prayer, fajr, otherwise I would be too tired to work effectively later that morning. It also seemed inefficient to interrupt my work meetings to pray duhr, the mid-day prayer, and asr, the afternoon prayer.

Making the sunset prayer maghrib was often a challenge because the window to pray is typically quite short and coincides with the time between finishing work, having dinner and returning home. So, in effect, the only prayer that was feasible for me to pray on time was isha, the evening prayer. For most of my

life, thus, I would at best pray all five prayers in the evening, or skip prayers here and there to accommodate my immediate commitments.

Without realizing it, my inconsistency and approach to praying trivialized the principle behind performing prayers throughout the day. I believed in Allah and loved Him, but on my own terms, not on the terms very clearly set out in the Quran and Prophetic teachings. Yet praying the five daily prayers, at their prescribed times, is the backbone of being a Muslim; we cannot stand upright in our faith without them. It is one of the essential practices that Allah has called on those who endeavor to live in Islam, a state of existence whereby a human strives to live in submission to Allah.

When I came to truly understand the importance of prayer, the realization was both overwhelming and quick. It dawned on me that if I was not fulfilling this precondition, then I really could not claim to be Muslim. Even if I desired to have a solid connection with the Almighty I was not taking the necessary steps to do so. I promptly reoriented my life and it has now been a year and a half that I have not intentionally missed a prayer time, whether I am in the office, mall, grocery store, out with friends or travelling.

Looking back, I see how wrong I was about the impracticality of Islamic prayers,

which are succinct and straightforward notwithstanding their resonance. When I moved from trying to fit prayers into my life to fitting my life around my prayer schedule, I instantly removed a great deal of clutter from my daily routine. Since regular prayer promotes emotional consistency and tranquility, I began to eliminate excess negativity and cut down on unnecessary chitchat, helping me be more focused, productive and patient.

Over a short period of time, what amazed me was how easy and fluid the prayers became. Performing the early-morning prayer actually gave me a burst of energy during the day and, gradually, the prayers that I had initially perceived as cumbersome became an essential facet of my routine. With Allah's help, I would find ways to make a prayer regardless of the hurdles. While in Canada for the summer, I would often catch duhr prayer in a department store fitting room, with the help of a handy Islamic prayer compass application on my iPhone.

"Verily the soul becomes accustomed to what you accustom it to.' That is to say: what you at first burden the soul with becomes nature to it in the end."

This is a line drawn from a magnificent book I am in the process of reading by great Islamic thinker Al-Ghazali, entitled "Invocations and Supplications: Book IX of the Revival of Religious Sciences." Al-Ghazali describes a series of formulas, drawn from the Qur'an and Hadith, which we can repeat to help us attain greater proximity to the divine and purify our hearts.

At each turn in my quest to enrich my faith, I have found that what at first appears difficult becomes easy when performed with sincerity. Soon after I reoriented my life to revolve around prayer, the five prayers felt insufficient in expressing my devotion. I exam-

ined Hadith, or the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and discovered there were optional prayers I could add to my routine. Since then, I have not let a day pass without praying them.

To supplement my prayers, I have integrated various zikr, or remembrance and mentioning of Allah, into my days. Zikr, including repeating such phrases as "la illa ha il Allah" (There is no god but Allah), habitually draws our attention back to Allah.

Among the many rich invocations mentioned in Ghazali's book is this one which I have started to incorporate. As we leave our houses each day, if we say "In the name of Allah" (Bismillah), Allah will guide us; when we add "I trust in Allah" (Tawakaltu al Allah), Allah will protect us; and if we conclude with "There is no might or power save with Allah" (La hawla wa la quwwata illa billah), Allah will guard us.

I suppose to an outsider, these acts of devotion can appear a bit obsessive, and I have had a couple of people say this to me. Yet it is an obsession with the greatest possible consequences that can improve rather than disintegrate one's disposition. The more time I devote to Allah, the greater the peace of mind I find filling my life and the more focused I become on what is important -- such as treating my family and friends honourably, working hard in my job, giving charity with compassion and generosity, and maintaining integrity.

Remembering Allah throughout the day, through prayer and invocation, truly does polish the heart as Hadith teaches; you erase obstructions that would impede faith in its purest form.

"Truly when a man loves a thing, he repeatedly mentions it, and when he repeatedly mentions a thing, even if that may be burdensome, he loves it," writes Ghazali.

Daliah Merzaban is an Egyptian-Canadian journalist, editor and economic analyst. (Islamcity)

How to Survive School Without Swearing

Zaynub Siddiqui

The first day at a new school. Middle School.

It was intimidating and I was super nervous like any other student. Even more nervous because I was wearing hijab, I was new and school had been in session for two weeks. As I slowly walked through the quiet hallway knowing that everyone was already in class, I felt a bit uneasy. I would surely catch everybody's attention in the classroom I was about to enter.

Up the new stairs, I walked up to the quiet 7th grade hall; the silence amplifying the nervous voice in my head. That is when I heard a buzzing sound and it so began. Students rushed out in herds and yelled, screamed, and shouted through the hallways. As I shuffled my way through the human herd of young adults, words that could never escape my mouth came out of theirs with such ease. Words that were foul, something that I was taught was rude... disgusting. A girl wearing the sixth grade uniform colors spoke her words out aloud to her friend beside her, "D@#n that f*#&ing teacher, she..."

I hurried down the hallway and heard more ugly words; words that scared me.

Stupid and Idiot were as far as I had ever heard. Even those were not allowed in our house. I could understand using them, but

this was a whole new level.

Over the weeks, I realized that it was normal to speak like that in my school. What was even more ludicrous was that if you did not curse it was considered amazing. "Gurl, why you dont say anything?" and "I could never survive if I were you!" my new classmates told me as I responded to their questions to why I didn't curse.

But that was the beginning of the year, when I was brand new 'fresh meat' and was what they called "innocent". Soon, the words became something not alarming to me... something that was 'normal'.

Soon enough I too began to sorta curse. I was hanging with church girls who went to church every Sunday, and girls who wore hijab.

They cursed a lot.

My friend, Gwen, was like me. She chose not to cuss. She is sweet, loves anime and was cool without cussing. That's when I noticed that it was going to become a problem. My boundaries had shifted from stupid and idiot. This was not me.

It is not the character of a believer to indulge in slandering, cursing, or immoral talk." (Tirmidhi)

So I took it on my own accord. I made myself stop. At moments I would feel myself

slip. Sometimes, I would miss the way the foul words would prove my point. I didn't even know what they meant; I was saying them because everyone else was. They made me look strong and that was what everybody wanted to be: intimidating, mean, rude, and obnoxious. It was the opposite of what society wanted, everybody I knew in school wanted to be 'different', to be 'bad'.

Cussing is everywhere! When you or anyone you know is trying to stop understand it will be hard if it is a habit, at moments you may feel strange and awkward not doing what everyone else is doing.

1. First make yourself be conscious of what you are saying.

Curse words slip out all the time! Everybody makes mistakes and it will happen but just catch yourself. If you find yourself slipping just close your mouth and repeat in your head. "I will not curse." It sounds really stupid and you might be thinking. "Oh god this is so stupid!" But it does work.

2. When your friends curse:

Ask your friends to try not to curse in front of you. Let them know that it makes you uncomfortable. The most likely reason why you are cursing is because of your friends. They curse which causes you to curse and so on. 'The words we use affect how we feel about ourselves, how others react to us and how others feel about themselves.' Our words truly shape our world.

3. Ask yourself why am I doing this.

When I thought about it I really only did start cursing to impress most of my friends. I sometimes cursed to express my anger or happiness.

"I'm so d@#n happy!" or the opposite when I was mad.

Try to find another way of expressing yourself when you're upset, happy, frustrated,

in pain...etc. I asked myself: would I say this in front of my parents? If my parents aren't there, Allah is still there. Allah is watching all the time, even in school.

"Not a word does he (or she) utter but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it)" (50:18).

4. Try not to let the ugly words become normal.

When it becomes normal to you, it becomes a part of you. Like a routine. The first time and second and third will be strange but eventually in a month it will be normal and something that becomes apart of your everyday life. In the beginning it may be cool but you just end up sounding ignorant and unprofessional.

The Prophet ﷺ (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "People are not thrown into the hellfire on their faces or noses except due to the result of their tongues." (Ahmad and al-Tirmidhi)

5. Ignore! Just ignore it!

Use the same technique you use when your nagging siblings bother you, or when your boring history teacher is explaining something you already know! Just try it, you will never know until you try it.

To be honest being a new teen myself, I understand how this article might just sound super-lame and goody 2 shoes to some, but think of the outcome of how you speak will affect your future, it could even get you fired. If we aim to become blessed, articulate, compassionate citizens of this world we need to start using qawllun sadeeda.

"Be careful of your words, for they become your thoughts. Be careful of your thoughts, for they become your actions. Be careful of your actions, for they become your character. Be careful of your character, for it becomes your destiny." – Anonymous

Stop Calling Me a Revert!

Idris Tawfiq

Muslims believe that Islam has existed since the beginning of time and that it is the natural religion of mankind. Its message is for all people.

All people born into this world are born with the knowledge deep within them that there is a God, one God, who speaks to His Creation.

Muslims similarly believe that it is the actions of a person's parents, and of the society and culture around them, which make him or her Christian or Hindu or whatever, by going through ceremonies to make them part of those religions. Left to their own devices, people would naturally believe in one God. (Muslim)

This is why, as Muslims, we don't talk of people "converting to Islam". According to Islam, when a person freely chooses to accept Islam he or she is coming home, returning to that original state in which he was born. You can't convert to something you originally were.

New Muslims or Reverts/Converts?

The problem comes, then, in deciding what to call these people who accept Islam later in life. If we are not to call them "converts", what are we to call them?

Unfortunately, in rightly rejecting the

word "convert", many Muslims have settled for using another word which is quite unsuitable and, to many who have accepted Islam, quite offensive.

In the English language, we usually use the word "revert" to mean taking a step backwards in life. People can revert to a life of crime, for example, or they can revert to smoking. In English usage, we don't usually revert to something good. It has a very negative connotation. So how can we possibly refer to those who embrace Islam with their hearts and minds as "reverts?"

The one who first coined this term to refer to New Muslims was probably not familiar with English as a first language. The idea is correct, that people are returning to Islam, but the word is not – and it can do more harm than good.

As Muslims, we need to realize that New Muslims (my term) are not a problem. They are not some inadequate addition to the Muslim Ummah who will one day get to learn all there is to know about Islam and until then we all just have to put up with their shortcomings and lack of knowledge. No! God Almighty calls whom He Wills to Islam. We don't. And we don't get to choose who they are.

First of all, we need to realize and accept that they are full Muslims. They are one

hundred per cent Muslim, not people in the process of becoming Muslim. By taking Shahadah with full knowledge and a free will a person becomes a Muslim, not a half Muslim or a not quite Muslim yet.

There are many who accept Islam and declare Shahadah after many years of questioning and reading. Many of them know far more about Islam than some Muslims who have been Muslim all their lives.

There are also many new to Islam who very quickly become involved in the work of Dawah, telling others what Islam is really like. Their stories of coming to Islam are often the very catalyst for others also to become Muslims. Their commitment and passion are an inspiration and, indeed, often show up the rather lukewarm practice of many who have been Muslim since birth.

New Muslims' Rights

New Muslims have rights. They have the right first of all to be accepted fully into the Muslim community without question. As they grow in the knowledge and practice of their faith they will be able to contribute more and more, but right from the start they have a contribution to make and it calls for wisdom from the community's leaders to ease them gently into the life of being a Muslim and maybe find roles for them to play suitable to the gifts and talents they possess.

New Muslims are also entitled to all the support they need for them to grow as Muslims. God Almighty has given these new brothers and sisters to us and it is our duty to help and care for them, like tender young plants, as their faith becomes stronger.

We all make mistakes from time to time. New Muslims are often terrified of doing something wrong in front of their new brothers and sisters and it is terrible for them when a member of the community points out their

mistake in front of others.

Not performing wudu (the ablution before prayer) properly or perhaps entering the mosque with our left foot rather than our right are things we get to learn about with time. Just as babies can't be expected to know everything at birth, neither can New Muslims be expected to know everything about Islam right from the start. They need to be corrected in a very gentle way, away from the gaze of others so that it doesn't cause embarrassment.

And those new to Islam are surely entitled to be taught properly right from the beginning. One of the reasons many new to Islam fall away from their new faith is that they find the wrong Muslim companions or even no companions at all and so have no one to teach them.

The community needs to ensure that someone is responsible for each one who accepts Islam. It isn't enough, after four weeks, asking: "where is the brother who accepted Islam one month ago?" It is hardly any surprise that no one has seen him if no one showed any interest in him during those four weeks.

The best system, of course, would be for the Muslim community to adopt a mentoring program, where one person in particular is responsible for one new Muslim in particular. This might just be asking how she or he is from time to time or it might involve walking with them to the mosque or even having sessions to discuss the practice of Islam.

Islam is a faith of brothers and sisters. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) didn't just wake up one day and decide it would be nice to call each other brothers and sisters. We do this in Islam because that is what we are. We really are brothers and sisters to one another. And brothers and sisters are committed to help each other.

So, instead of being concerned to

point out that our brothers and sisters in Islam are new to Islam and instead of pointing out that they still have much to learn, we should try, instead, to make them feel welcome and as part of the community as any other member.

If we need to use a special term at all, why not talk about "New Muslims?" My own preference is to talk about those who have embraced Islam. It might take a couple of seconds longer to say, but it is a much friendlier term and it certainly shows that these brothers and sisters are welcome.

Whatever term we do use, let us stop talking about reverts and, instead, let us help those new to Islam to see how really beautiful, gentle and sweet Islam really is and how blessed they are from all the people in the world to have been called By God Almighty to be Muslims.

Source: onislam.net

BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL REMINDERS

For moms & dads (as received from friends). Please read, reflect, and share --->

- *When I get down into Sajda & the kids giddy up on me, I must remember, Allah is Al-Haleem (The Forbearing). Maybe it's more about building perseverance than just performing prostrations.*
- *When my energy levels run dry & the kids push all the buttons, I must remember, Allah is Ar-Rahman (The Merciful). Maybe it's more about showing compassion than preaching independence.*
- *When I'm about to break the long fast & little summons of 'wash me!' rise from the bathroom, I must remember that Allah is Al Kareem (The Most Generous). Maybe, (undeservingly) He is giving away a huge piece of Jannat in exchange for a tiny morsel of food.*
- *When I can finally sit peacefully on my prayer mat at night to connect with Him but they won't fall asleep, I must remember, Allah is Al-Qadir (The Omnipotent). Maybe He only wants to see my one hand raised in prayer while the other rocks His little creation to sleep.*
- *When at the parking lot, after a hectic food shop, they won't sit & buckle up, I must remember, Allah is Al-Baseet (The Expander). Maybe He's advancing me to the next level of fasting, which is much more than refraining from just food and drink.*
- *When I want to shut down, do nothing because I'm exhausted, hungry and thirsty but all they want to do is play, I must remember, Allah is Al-Mu'id (The Restorer). Maybe He wants to restore my energy, through laughter, love and making others happy.*
- *When feeling thirsty, my kids insist on going to the park on a hot sunny day, I must remember, Allah is Al-Gafur (The Forgiving). Maybe He will forgive more sins for cheering climbs and pushing swing seats.*
- *When all the mess and untidiness makes me want to explode, I must remember, Allah is As-Sabur (The Patient one). Maybe, I need to count the times I have messed up, to realise how lucky I am that HE is always willing to forgive.*
- *When all my efforts and hard work go unnoticed with loved ones, I must remember, Allah is Al-Wahhab (The Bestower). Maybe it's about feeling ashamed of my ungratefulness for His continuous and countless blessings.*

R.Omar.

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do.

Personalities

Abdullah ibn Huthayfi As-Shaami (RA)

History would have by-passed this man as it had by-passed thousands of Arabs before him. He, like them, would have had no claim to attention or fame. The greatness of Islam, however, gave to Abdullah ibn Hudhafah (RA) the opportunity to meet two world potentates of his time? Khusraw Parvez the King of Persia and Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor.

The story of his encounter with Khusraw Parvez began in the sixth year of the Hijra when the Prophet (Sallallahu Alyhi WaSallam) decided to send some of his Companions with letters to rulers outside the Arabian Peninsula inviting them to Islam. The Prophet attached great importance to this initiative. These messengers were going to distant lands with whom there was no agreement or treaty. They did not know the languages of these lands nor anything about the ways and disposition of their rulers. They were to invite these rulers to give up their religion and forsake their power and glory and enter the religion of a people who shortly before were almost their subjects. The mission was undoubtedly hazardous.

To make known his plan, the Prophet (Sallallahu Alyhi WaSallam) called his companions together and addressed them. He started by praising Allah and thanking Him. He then recited the Shahaadah and went on: "I

want to send some of you to the rulers of foreign lands but don't dispute with me as the Israelites disputed with Jesus, the son of Mary. "O Prophet of Allah, we shall carry out whatever you wish," they responded. "Send us wherever you desire." The Prophet (Sallallahu Alyhi WaSallam) commissioned six of his Sa-haabah to carry his letters to Arab and foreign rulers. One of these was Abdullah ibn Hudhafah (RA). He was chosen to take the Prophet's letter to Khusraw Parvez, the Persian king.

Abdullah (RA) got his camel ready and bade farewell to his wife and son. He set out, alone, and traversed mountains and valleys until he reached the land of the Persians. He sought permission to enter into the king's presence informing the guards of the letter he was carrying. Khusraw Parvez thereupon ordered his audience chamber to be made ready and summoned his prominent aides. When they had assembled he gave permission for Abdullah (RA) to enter. Abdullah (RA) entered and saw the Persian potentate dressed in delicate, flowing robes and wearing a great, neatly arranged turban. On Abdullah (RA) was the plain, coarse clothes of the Bedouin. His head though was held high and his feet were firm. The honour of Islam burned fiercely in his breast and the power of faith pulsed in his heart.

As soon as Khusraw Parvez saw him approaching he signalled to one of his men to take the letter from his hand. "No," said Abdullah. "The Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi WaSallam) commanded me to hand over this letter to you directly and I shall not go against a command of the Messenger of Allah." "Let him come near to me," Khusraw said to his guards and Abdullah (RA) went forward and handed over the letter. Khusraw then called an Arab clerk who originally came from Hira and ordered him to open the letter in his presence and read its contents. He began reading: "In the name of Allah, the Beneficent the Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Khusraw the ruler of Persia. Peace on whoever follows the guidance..."

Khusraw only heard this much of the letter when the fire of anger burst within him. His face became red and he began to perspire around the neck. He snatched the letter from the clerk's hand and began tearing it to pieces without knowing what else it contained and shouted, "Does he dare to write to me like this, he who is my slave"? He was angry that the Prophet had not given him precedence in his letter. He then commanded Abdullah (RA) to be expelled from his assembly. Abdullah (RA) was taken away, not knowing what would happen to him. Would he be killed or would he be set free? But he did not want to wait to find out. He said, "By Allah, I don't care what happens to me after the letter of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) has been so badly treated." He managed to get to his camel and rode off.

When Khusraw's anger had subsided he commanded that Abdullah (RA) be brought before him. But Abdullah (RA) was nowhere to be found. They searched for him all the way to the Arabian Peninsula but found that he had gone ahead.

Back in Madinah, Abdullah (RA) told

the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi WaSallam) how Khusraw had torn his letter to pieces and the Prophet's only reply was, "May Allah tear up his kingdom".

That's the story of Abdullah ibn Hudhafah's (RA) meeting with the Persian king. His meeting with the Byzantine emperor took place during the caliphate of Umar ibn alKhattab (RA). It too is an astonishing story.

In the nineteenth year after the Hijrah, Umar (RA) despatched an army to fight against the Byzantines. In it was Abdullah ibn Hudhafah. News of the Muslim force reached the Byzantine emperor. He had heard of their sincerity of faith, and their willingness to sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah and His Prophet. He gave orders to his men to bring to him any Muslim captive they might take alive.

Allah willed that Abdullah ibn Hudhafah (RA) should fall captive to the Byzantines and he was brought before the Emperor. The Emperor looked at Abdullah (RA) for a long time. Suddenly he said, "I shall make a proposal to you." "What is it?" asked Abdullah (RA). "I suggest that you become a Christian. If you do this, you will be set free and I shall grant you a safe refuge."

The prisoner's reaction was furious: "Death is preferable to me a thousand times to what you ask me to do." "I see that you are a bold man. However, if you respond positively to what I propose to you, I will give you a share in my authority and swear you in as my aide."

The prisoner, shackled in his chains, smiled and said, "By Allah, if you give me all that you possess and all that the Arabs have in exchange for giving up the religion of Muhammad, I shall not do so." "Then I shall kill you." "Do what you want," answered Abdullah (RA).

The emperor then had him put on a cross and ordered his soldiers to throw spears at him, first near his hands and then near his

feet, all the while telling him to accept Christianity or at least give up his religion. This he refused over and over again to do.

The emperor then had him taken down from the wooden cross. He called for a great pot to be brought. This was filled with oil which was then heated under a fierce fire. He then had two other Muslim prisoners brought and had one of them thrown into the boiling oil. The prisoner's flesh sizzled and soon his bones could be seen. The emperor turned to Abdullah (RA) and invited him to Christianity.

This was the most terrible test that Abdullah had had to face up till now. But he remained firm and the emperor gave up trying. He then ordered that Abdullah (RA) too be thrown into the pot. As he was being taken away he began to shed tears. The emperor thought that he had at last been broken and had him brought back to him. He once more suggested that Abdullah (RA) become a Christian but to his astonishment, Abdullah (RA) refused.

"Damn you! Why did you weep then?" shouted the emperor.

"I cried," said Abdullah (RA), "because I said to myself 'You will now be thrown into this pot and your soul will depart'. What I really desired then was to have as many souls as the number of hairs on my body and to have all of them thrown into this pot for the sake of Allah."

The tyrant then said, "Will you kiss my head? I will then set you free?" "And all the Muslim prisoners also?" asked Abdullah (RA).

This the emperor agreed to do and Abdullah (RA) said to himself, "One of the enemies of Allah! I shall kiss his head and he shall set me and all other Muslim prisoners free. There can be no blame on me for doing this." He then went up to the emperor and kissed his forehead. All the Muslim prisoners were released and handed over to Abdullah (RA).

Abdullah ibn Hudhafah (RA) eventually came to Umar ibn alKhattab (RA) and told him what had happened. Umar (RA) was greatly pleased and when he looked at the prisoners he said, "Every Muslim has a duty to kiss the head of Abdullah ibn Khudhafah (RA) and I shall start."

Umar (RA) then got up and kissed the

*Advices of
Moulana Maseebullah Khan (RA)*

1. *Those who make Du'a are never deprived.*
2. *Those who fear Allah are Divinely Protected*
3. *Be careful before making friends...hypocrisy has become common.*
4. *Stay away from Mushtababaat (doubtful food).*
5. *Execute good deeds with enthusiasm.*
6. *Abstain from evil and with disgust.*
7. *Good character means to exercise tolerance.*
8. *Good character is soft speech and kind words*
9. *Constantly keep check on the nafs (self).*
10. *One sermon is enough to change a sincere person.*

Truly, each of the above advices is a gem for those who seek the Divine Friendship of Allah.

The Prophetic Advice

Unseen World

If made known to us

Mawlana Manzoor Noumani (ra)

It is related by Abu Hurayrah (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "By Him who has my life in His Hands, if you knew what is known to me (about the Anger of the Lord and the terrible events of the Last Day and the Hereafter), you would laugh less and weep more." (Bukhari)

forehead touching the ground. If you knew the things that are known to me, you would laugh little and weep much, and could not enjoy the bed with your spouses, and would go out into forests and deserts groaning and crying out to the Lord". (After relating it) Abu Zarr (RA) said to us: I wish I were a tree that was cut down". (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi , Ibn Majah)

Commentary:

If all that was revealed to the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) about the Lord's supreme indifference to everything, and His Anger and Almightyness and frightful happenings of the Last Day and Futurity came fully to our knowledge and our eyes could see what was visible to him and ears could hear what was audible to him, our peace of mind would be destroyed so completely that we would grieve much and rejoice little.

* * *

It is related by Abu Zarr Ghifari (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "I see the things of the invisible would you do not see and hear the sounds (of the invisible would) you do not hear. The sky is shaking and it is appropriate that it shakes. By the Glorious One in whose power is my life! There is not even a space of four fingers in the heavens where an angel is not prostrating himself before the Almighty, with his
34. (Vol.15, Issue: 04)

Commentary:

The chief task and mission of the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is to communicate to the bondsmen the truth that the duty of his followers is to believe in those truths and observe those commands as the fundamental principles of their lives. The range of the sources of knowledge. Like the intellect and senses. What Allah has granted to mankind is limited to the visible world. They do not go far enough to uncover the realities of the other (the invisible) worlds. The only way for us to know and understand the transcendental truths, therefore, is to rely on and accept as authentic what the Divine Messenger see, hear or tell. This is Faith in a nutshell.

In the Tradition the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has made the awe-inspiring revelation about the other world that the sky is shaking with the Power and Splendour of the Lord and with the abundance of the an-

gels. There is hardly any space in it where an angel may not be prostrating himself in reverence and humility. He has, further, emphasized that if we became aware of what was known to him, we would not be able to live happily in this world and enjoy its comforts but abandon our homes and roam about in wilderness, wailing and beseeching the Lord of mercy.

The narrator, Abu Zarr (RA), was so deeply moved by the report that while relating it would often burst out: "I wish to Allah that I was a tree which was cut down from the roots so that I was not presented to the Lord for the Great Reckoning".

Since man has been created to function as the Vicegerent of Allah on earth and he can discharge his duty properly only when he enjoys peace of mind in the world, the truths have not been revealed to him which would have ruined his composure and tranquility. For example, if the punishment of the grave and Hell was made known to us and we could see all the events of the Hereafter with our own eyes, we could not attend to the daily needs or even manage to live. But as the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) was raised for the fulfillment of a special mission, it was essential that these realities were revealed to him to a certain extent so that he could attain certitude and assurance that was needed for his lofty work and position. Thus, certain truths beyond the sphere of human experience were made known to him, and, with it, Divine Providence ordained for his heart an extraordinary strength that enabled him to carry out the tremendous responsibilities of Messengership in a fitting manner and lead a balanced life that could serve as a model to mankind at all times.

* * *

Abu Sa'eed Khudri (RA) has said that when the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) came out for prayers one day, he

found people enjoying a laugh among themselves (in the mosque). He said, "If you were to keep much in remembrance of death which is cutter-off of pleasures, it would distract you from what I see. Keep in remembrance of death which is the cutter-off of pleasures, for a day does not come to the grave without it saying, 'I am the house of exile, I am the house of solitude, I am the house of dust, I am the house of warms.' (Obviously, only he can hear whom Allah causes to hear). When a believer dies the grave says to him, 'Welcome and greeting; you are indeed the dearest to me of those who walk upon me, I have been given charge of you today and you have come to me and you will see how I treat you. It will then expand for him as far as a door to Paradise will be opened for him. But, when a very wicked evil-doing person or a disbeliever is buried, the grave says to him, 'No welcome and no greeting to you; I have been given charge of you today and you have come to me and you will see how I treat you.' It will then press on him till his ribs are crushed together." The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) indicated that by interlacing his fingers. The, he added, "Seventy dragons will be put in charge of him of such a nature that if one of them was to breathe on earth it would produce no crops as long as the world endured, and they will bite and scratch him till he is brought to the reckoning." The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said, "The grave is one of the gardens of Paradise or one of the pits of Hell". (Tirmidhi)

Commentary:

It is to be made clear that the use of the word 'grave' implies the *Barzakh*, the intervening period between death and resurrection. It be also made clear that the use of the word 'seventy' or any other figure of number merely conveys largeness or plentiful. The

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Love is a Skill

Dr. Salman Al Odah

The unrivalled poet of love, Nizar Qabani, wrote: Love, on Earth, is something from our imagination; If we had not found it therein, we'd have invented it. Those who truly love each other would not want to be separated from their love, even if they have to endure much pain for its sake. We need to love life. We need to love what we find in life, if we do not find in it what we already love. We need to be able to see the good side of whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. This applies even to our problems, obstacles, and tribulations. Such are life's lessons that teach us to be patient and strong and that direct our attentions back to Allah. Such challenges also enable us to come up with better alternatives. We need to enjoy the duties that we have to bear: our jobs, our studies, helping others, maintaining family ties, carrying out or responsibilities, and our obligatory worship. You can do something simply because it is your job and you have to do it. Your results will be lacklustre and uninspired. This is totally different than when you love your work. Then you give it your best and the results can be astounding. Love for the work you carry out is part of the love of Allah. Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

"Allah loves it that if one of you does some

work, that he does so with proficiency." [Musnad Abī Ya`la]

Love for Allah is a feeling that fills our lives with joy, contentment, and peace of mind. It makes our prayers the "sweetness of our eyes" just like it was for Prophet Muhammad, who also said: "O Bilal, [summon us to prayer] and let us find our rest in it." He found rest, solace, and contentment in prayer. He did not see prayer as a chore which we need to get out of the way so we can rest! The love of life, with all of its pain, difficulties, and longings, is something profound, because life is Allah's gift to us. We should love that Allah has made us human beings, a creation which He has honoured and exalted above much of what He created. As human beings, we are the kinsfolk of the prophets, then messengers, and the righteous. We should love the souls Allah has placed within our bodies, that animate us and give us the strength to hope and aspire to greater things. We should love being the descendants of Adam and Eve, whose first abode was Paradise, and who, after they ate of the tree, were placed in the Earth to populate it and benefit from Allah placing everything in it at their disposal. As a result, their descendants built great nations and civilizations, made great scientific discoveries, and amassed

knowledge of many things. Do not hesitate to act because you fear being disappointed or making a mistake. That is a natural part of life. Learn to accept what is good, and learn to love things though they fall short of perfection. You will be loved in return. Love your spouse, your home, your family, your friends, and the good relationships you have with others. In order to live life enthusiastically, you need to learn how to love what you are involved with. Start a new job, learn a new language, get involved in something new. Learn how to accept challenges with confidence and proficiency. If you dislike something and find it a burden, you will not be productive no matter how qualified and capable you are. Ask yourself: What are the new skills and discoveries within your vocation or field of specialization? Be flexible, able to adapt to changing circumstances. Envision your success and keep a positive focus. Be certain that there are a hundred ways to realize the goal at hand, and do not lock yourself into a narrow vision of how to get things done. Identify the factors that impede your success, try to get them under control, and change them into positive factors if you can. Frustrations and impediments beset every endeavour, no matter what your strategy is in approaching it. Do not undervalue what is available to you. It may be the best there is. Sometimes we undervalue what we have simply because it is what we have! Love is a lesson you can learn. Do not be stingy with your love. Train your heart muscles to extend the scope of your love to others and to wish the best for them. learn to love your city, your job, or whatever circumstances Allah has decreed for you. If you love those things, you will be sincere in your dealings with them and you will excel.

Work & Afterlife Balance

More than ever, everyone is looking for a work-life balance in today's busy world. However as Muslims, it is important we strive for a work & afterlife balance.

This balance is based on the premise of responsibility as described in the following hadith:

Narrated Abdullah (RA): Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alaibi Wasallam) said, "Everyone of you is a guardian and is responsible for his charges. The ruler who has authority over people, is a guardian and is responsible for them, a man is a guardian of his family and is responsible for them; a woman is a guardian of her husband's house and children and is responsible for them; a slave ('Abd) is a guardian of his master's property and is responsible for it; so all of you are guardians and are responsible for your charges." (Sahih Bukhari)

So you're responsible at work as an employee and need to fulfill the responsibilities upon you, and you're responsible for your spouse and children (and parents) and need to be home to fulfill your responsibilities towards them. This sense of responsibility will allow you to better build a work & afterlife balance. However this will not be easy and will require continuous review and adjustment.

The Urgency of Personal Change

We live in an era in which the world is mired in great challenges. It is no longer possible to ignore the turmoil that surrounds us, be it the instability in many countries or the problems associated with the millions struggling to make a living. Whatever be the reasons that led the world to this stage, it's clear that a change is essential to get out from this chaos.

Our personal lives are not immune from this turmoil. Many times we all seek to correct the course of our lives to maximize our share of worldly and spiritual fulfillment. Whether its to inculcate better Islamic habits or others related to secular aspects of our lives, the process of personal change provides us with an opportunity to improve ourselves.

The ability to come out of this state – to change – also gives us hope for a better future. Fortunately, we live during times where good advice surrounds us. The Internet and its support structure have provided us with a way to gain instant access to stores of knowledge and words of wisdom. The problem, however, has been that our pace of change hasn't kept up with what we learn from this knowledge. You see, there comes a point in our lives where we need to go beyond learning and to eventually change and start living that wisdom.

Bringing lasting personal change however, isn't that easy and many of us give up

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trying. But since change is important to get us out of our current states, we simply can't quit. So, the struggle must go on until we find a way to overcome barriers to personal change.

We may wonder about why we fail to change? For those of us who have attempted to change with not much to show for, the process can be frustrating. Understanding reasons that lead to this failure can help us overcome these obstacles. Let's review those below.

Desensitization to time

Procrastination is known to be one of the biggest hurdles to change. Psychologists refer to procrastination as "the act of replacing high-priority actions with tasks of low-priority, and thus putting off important tasks to a later time." Whether one procrastinates in worldly or spiritual matters, it has its consequences. Procrastinators falsely assume that time will be available in the future, which may not be true. For example, we see that in the Quran Allah mentions numerous nations who were given time to heed to His message and change. The ones who didn't were suddenly taken by surprise at their appointed time. In the Chapter of Al-Anaam (verse 44), Allah says,

"So, when they forgot (the warning) with which they had been reminded, We opened for them the gates of every (pleasant) thing, until in the midst of their enjoyment in that which

they were given, all of a sudden, We took them (in punishment), and lo! They were plunged into destruction with deep regrets and sorrows." while they will bear their burdens on their backs; and evil indeed are the burdens that they will bear! "

The message above couldn't be clearer. Allah gives us the time to reform ourselves. When we postpone indefinitely, we shouldn't be surprised if our conditions worsen. Allah says in the Quran,

"Verily, We sent (Messengers) to many nations before you (O Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)). And We seized them with extreme poverty (or loss in wealth) and loss in health (with calamities) so that they might humble themselves (believe with humility)." (6:42)

We should, therefore, urgently start facing up to our spiritual and worldly imperfections which may be manifesting as sins. Accordingly, we need to make the connection between those imperfections and our undesirable conditions. Remember, the price of putting off change can come in the form of tough times and future regrets. Let's not procrastinate until tomorrow because even if we had the extra time, tomorrow could bring additional challenges thus increasing the load of our burdens.

Desensitization to falsehood and imperfections

Change of any type first requires clearly identifying and recognizing the negative behavior, habit, thought, or belief. However, when one gets desensitized to such imperfections, the need for such a change is no longer felt. The "negatives" become part of our existence and we become complacent about them. For example, many amongst Muslims pray Fajr prayers after the prescribed time (or miss it altogether) and no longer see it as a sin or feel the impulse to correct such a behavior.

Today, we live in trying times where guidelines driven by personal interests rather than based on divine teachings are being used to decide the lawful (halal) and the unlawful (haram). This is slowly blurring the dividing lines between falsehood and truth. As a direct consequence, though unknown to many of us (including Muslims), we have slowly begun to be more accepting of wrong behaviors leading to devastating consequences. This is similar to the boiling water and frog analogy, which states that if a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out. However, if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will fail to feel the change and thus will never jump out, dying in the process.

This loss of our sense to distinguish between falsehood and truth makes Shaytan sneak into our lives, further hindering our efforts to improve. Allah says in the Quran, *"And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious (Allah) (i.e., this Quran and worship of Allah), We appoint for him a Shaitan (Satan/devil) to be a Qarin (a companion) to him. And verily, they (Satans/devils) hinder them from the path (of Allah), but they think that they are guided aright!"(43:36,37).*

Islamic teachings thus warn us against getting into such traps and instead instruct us to never lose sight of the distinction between right and wrong. Just because we chose to ignore rectifying the wrong to suit our situations doesn't transform wrong into right. By maintaining that distinction we can still expect to rectify it someday.

Lack of commitment

Commitment to change is essential for any major change of attitude to take place in the long run. Research has proved that things such as "will power" can take us only so far and for so long. We need a more stable "inner

resource" to sustain our change efforts for the long run.

One way to ensure that you stay committed to any change effort is to clearly define the outcome that you envision from that change. Envisioning the outcome for a change is quite different from simply having the desire to change. Although desires may provide the emotional fuel behind our change efforts, they don't manifest the underlying complexities to drive an actual change process. Outcomes from the intended change must therefore be envisioned clearly, e.g. the new person that you will become after you give up a certain negative behavior, to ensure continued commitment levels.

Take the example of the prophet's commitment when he started propagating the Islamic message during the early days of Islam. When the prophet's uncle warned him of the risks of doing so, he clearly stated, "O my uncle, by Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left in return for my giving up this cause, I would not give it up until Allah makes Truth victorious, or I die in His service." It was that kind of a commitment that kept him going for the rest of his life and to bring about the change that he did.

To motivate us to do good deeds and to put our temporary stay in this life in perspective, Allah and His prophet have very clearly defined the outcomes of our actions in this life and hereafter. The detailed account they have provided us about our stay in this world and after we take the last breath, show us a clear path from now until our final destination. For us to make any change therefore, we should commit ourselves and clearly envision the outcome that we expect from our change.

Lack of a personal change system

Islam constitutes a system of obligato-

ry ibadat such as prayers, fasting, etc., that helps a Muslim adhere to a discipline of maintaining his or her relationship with Allah. No one would disagree that if such ibadat were instead optional, most of us wouldn't be able to maintain our current levels of spirituality. So, just as methodical and disciplined systems help us perform effectively in both our spiritual and worldly matters, instituting a methodical "personal change system" is equally important to help us follow through on the changes that we want to make in our lives. Such a system will help us to make, track, and sustain changes throughout our lives.

Parting words

Finally, let's remember that to seek a change in our conditions we must do things differently from the way that initially led to where we stand today. So, the road from misery to fulfillment, from good to great, and from Allah's displeasure to seeking His pleasure starts with you getting on the process of change. As Allah says in the Quran:

"Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves" [13:11].

Post by Aqeel Shahzad

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point to understand here is that we must not neglect Allah or the reckoning in the hereafter. We must fight negligence by continually remembering death and the grave. This method is a sure way of correcting ourselves. The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) had prescribed this method to his Companions (RA) and they created through it taqwa, fear of Allah, and thought of the hereafter. Even today we find these characteristics in those slaves of Allah themselves who continually remember death and the grave.

Humility in Prayers

In an environment with increasing distractions how do we make our prayers more beneficial for our selves? Following is an excerpt from Inner Dimensions of Islamic Worship, a compilation of Imam Ghazali's works that can inspire us to develop humility and become closer to God through prayer.

God, says in the Quran:

'And perform the Prayer in remembrance of Me.' (20:14)

'Do not be one of those who are neglectful.' (7:205)

'Do not approach the Prayer when you are intoxicated, until you know what you are saying.' (4:43)

Some say that 'intoxicated' means inebriated by many anxieties, while others say it means drunk on the love of this world. According to Wahb, the meaning is obviously a caution against worldly attachment, since the words 'until you know what you are saying' explain the underlying reason. Many are those who pray without having drunk wine, yet do not know what they are saying in their Prayers!

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

'If a man performs two cycles of Prayer without the distraction of any worldly thought, all his previous sins will be forgiven.' (al-Bukhari/Muslim)

'Prayer is nothing but submissiveness, humility, supplication, sighing and remorse, holding out your hands and saying: "O God! O God!" Otherwise it is fruitless.' (al-Tirmidi/al-Nasai)

erwise it is fruitless.' (al-Tirmidi/al-Nasai)

In the earlier scriptures, we find these words attributed to God, Glorified is He: 'I do not accept the Prayers of everyone who prays. I accept the Prayers of none but those who are humble before My Majesty, who are not arrogant towards My servants, and who feed the poor and hungry for My sake.'

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) also said:

'Ritual Prayer was made obligatory, Pilgrimage and circumambulation were ordained, and the rites of sacrifice were instituted, all for the purpose of ensuring remembrance of God, Exalted is He. If your heart is devoid of awe and reverence for the One Remembered, who is the aim and the goal, what is your remembrance worth?' (Abu Daud/al-Tirmidi)

This advice was given to someone by the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam):

'When you pray, pray like a person who is saying farewell,' (Ibn Maja/al-Hakim/al-Baihaqi) i.e. saying farewell to himself, to his passions and to his life, before setting off on the journey to his Lord.

Again God Almighty reminds us in the

Quran:

'O Man, you labor towards your Lord laboriously, and you shall meet Him.' (84:6)

'Be aware of God, for it is God who teaches you.' (2:282)

'Be aware of God, and know that you are going to meet Him.' (2:223)

Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) reminds us:

'If a man's Prayer does not deter him from indecency and mischief, he gains nothing from God but remoteness.' (al-Tabarani)

Since Prayer is intimate communion, how can it go with heedlessness? Bakr ibn Abdullah (ra) said: 'O believers, if you wish to enter the presence of your Lord without permission, and to speak with Him without an interpreter, you have only to enter!'

When someone asked him how this could be he said: 'You do your ablution correctly and enter your prayer-niche ... There you are! You have entered your Lord's presence without permission and may now speak to Him without an interpreter.'

Said Aisha (RA) her:

'God's Messenger would talk to us and we to him, but when it was time for Prayer it seemed as though he did not know us, nor we him.' (Azdi - mursal)

This was because they were completely in awe of God the most Great and Glorious.

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said:

'God has no regard for a Prayer in which a man's heart is not present as well as his body.'

When Said al-Tanukhi (Muslim jurist 776/854 CE) was praying, tears used to flow incessantly down his cheeks and onto his beard.

God's Messenger once saw a man playing with his beard during the Prayer, so he said:

'If this man's heart was submissive, every part

of his body would also act with humility.' (al-Tirmidi - daif)

It is related that al-Hasan (ra) noticed a man playing with pebbles as he prayed: 'O God, marry me to the maidens of Paradise!' Al-Hasan said 'A poor suitor you are. You propose to the maidens of Paradise while playing with pebbles!'

Someone asked Khalaf ibn Ayyub (Islamic scholar and poet from Al-Andalus 1013/1081 CE): 'Don't the flies bother you so much during your Prayer that you have to chase them away?' He replied: 'I do not make a habit of anything that would spoil my Prayer.' When asked how he had acquired such patience, he said: 'I have heard that culprits patiently endure the Sultan's whip, because this gives them a reputation for being "able to take it." They boast of their patient endurance. Here am I, standing before my Lord in Prayer. Am I going to budge for a fly?'

It is related of Muslim ibn Yasar that, when he wanted to pray, he would say to his family: 'You may talk, for I shall not hear you.'

It is said that he was praying one day in the Great Mosque of Basra, when a corner of the building collapsed. This attracted a crowd, but he was quite unaware of what had happened until he had finished his Prayer.

Whenever the time of Prayer approached, Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA), used to quake and change color. They asked him: 'What is the matter with you, Commander of the Believers?' To this he would reply: 'The time has come for a trust which God offered to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it; they were wary of it, but I have taken it on.'

It is said of al-Husayn ibn Ali (RA) that he used to turn pale when he made his ablution. When his family asked him what came over him during his ablution, he would say: 'Do you realize before Whom I wish to stand in

Prayer?'

According to Ibn Abbas (RA), the Prophet Dawood (AS), used to say in his intimate Prayers:

'My God, who inhabits Your House? And from whom do you accept the Prayer?'

Then God told him by inspiration:

'Dawood, he who inhabits My House, and he whose Prayer I accept, is none but he who is humble before My Majesty, spends his days in remembrance of Me and keeps his passions in check for My sake, giving food to the hungry and shelter to the stranger and treating the afflicted with compassion. His light shines in the sky like the sun. If he invokes Me, I am at his service. If he asks of Me, I grant his request. In the midst of ignorance, I give him discernment; in heedlessness, remembrance, in darkness, light. He stands out among ordinary people as Paradise towers over earthly gardens, its rivers inexhaustible and its fruits not subject to decay.'

It is related of Hatim al-Asamm (ra), that he said, in answer to a question about

Prayer:

'When the time for Prayer is at hand, I make a proper ablution, go to the spot where I intend to pray and sit there till all my limbs and organs are in a collected state. Then I stand up to perform my Prayer, placing the Kaba between my brows, the Bridge-over-Hell beneath my feet, Paradise to my right and Hell to my left, and the Angel of Death behind me, thinking all the while that this is my final Prayer. Then I stand between hope and fear. I carefully pronounce "Allahu Akbar!" Then I recite the Quran harmoniously, bow in humility and prostrate myself submissively. I then sit back on my left haunch spreading out the top of my left foot and raising my right foot on the toes. I follow this with sincerity. Then I wonder whether or not my Prayer has been accepted.'

Ibn Abbas (RA) (Cousin of the Prophet), once said: 'Two modest cycles of Prayer, performed in full awareness, are better than a whole night's vigil when the heart is inattentive.'

Investing in Good Days

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) once said: "Take benefit of five before five: Your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before you are preoccupied, and your life before your death."

(Narrated by Ibn Abbas and reported by Al Hakim)

This is along the lines of what we've been speaking about recently about making most of good days. Having free time and a relaxed good day is a blessing and thus a responsibility, not a license to be unproductive, laze around and waste time. Having said that, it doesn't mean that you can't engage yourself in relaxing (but productive) activities in such days. Examples of such activities: reading, catching up on an online course that you enjoy, spending quality time with your spouse and children, calling your relatives or visiting them, listening to or attending an Islamic lecture, and lots more. Just because you want to be productive in a good day doesn't mean you should lock yourself down and work. It means either recharging yourself with relaxing (but productive) activities or pursuing goals you rarely have a chance of pursuing when you're busy.

Happenings

Exhibition, depicting names of Allah, attracts pilgrims

An exhibition, titled "The Beautiful Names of Allah," has been an attractive destination for pilgrims visiting Madinah since its opening last November. Inaugurated by Madinah Emir Prince Faisal Bin Salman, the exhibition displays, on large posters, the names of Allah and their meanings. There are also several TV screens that show alternating scenes of nature along with relevant verses of the Holy Qur'an to indicate the power of Allah. Khadija, an Algerian pilgrim who came to the Kingdom to perform Umrah with her family, said they visited the exhibition after they saw a poster near a building where the exhibition is taking place. "There is nothing that one can say about all these beautiful pictures and videos except Subhanallah," said Khadija.

Echoing the same view, Iqbal, a Pakistani father of three, said although he has come to the Kingdom on three different occasions with his family to perform Umrah, this is the first time he has seen such an exhibition. "We typically go to the Prophet's Mosque, Mount Uhud and some historic mosques here, but this time we visited this exhibition as a group. We all enjoyed it as it was a new experience for all of us and it's a nice place where children can learn and take photos."

The exhibition, located close to the western side of the Prophet's Mosque, was

launched to celebrate Madinah as the cultural capital of the Islamic world. Pilgrims of all nationalities can visit the exhibition and choose guides that speak Arabic, English, French, Turkish, Urdu or Indonesian. The manager of the exhibition, Raja Al-Jihani, said that the exhibition will remain open for another year and be expanded to accommodate additional sections.

Words & illuminations exhibition in Madinah

Madinah On the occasion of Madinah being selected Capital of Islamic Culture 2013 by the Islamic Education Science and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), the city is holding an exhibition to celebrate this event under the ages of Madinah Governor Prince Faisal bin Salman. Each year ISESCO selects a city in the Islamic world to celebrate Islamic culture and those manifestations are usually celebrated through art and cultural exhibitions. To coincide with this announcement of the next selected Islamic Cultural Capital and to celebrate the year of Al Madinah Al Munawwarah as the Capital of Islamic Culture 2013, a special world-class exhibition in association with the British Museum is being mounted here. The exhibition will be named 'Words and Illuminations' and encompassing art works of calligraphy and photography.

Prince Faisal bin Salman has actively supported the effort and worked closely with

both Venetia Porter of the British Museum and Mohamed Al Edrisi to curate the exhibition. A sneak preview of the exhibition took place in January for the Ministers of Culture from several countries of the Islamic world. The Grand Opening will take place on Feb. 9. The two components of the exhibition are a selection of Art works from the collection of contemporary works in the British Museums on Arabic calligraphy, augmented by loans of important art works from private collection in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf and the wider Islamic world. This effort is organized in cooperation between two leading galleries, Athr Gallery in Jeddah and Agial in Beirut.

In parallel with the calligraphy component of the exhibition, a photography exhibition will be mounted using the first photographs ever taken in Madinah (The Sadeq Bey photographs from 1880 A.D. and Mirza images from 1881 A.D.) as part of a chronological photo essay up to 1920 A.D. These photographs are taken from the collection of Darat Al Malik Abdul Aziz (King Abdul Aziz Foundation), The King Fahd Public Library and the archives of noted International bodies like the Royal Geographic Society and the Barakat Trust.

The historical photography section of the photography exhibition will also coincide with the publication of the book "Al Madinah Al Munawwarah" by the noted photographer and photo researcher Humberto Da Siliviera and his work on these historical photographs is the core of these historical photographs. In addition to the historic photography component a few important historical objects of Islamic art will also be displayed to complement the photographs. The second part of the photography exhibition consists of commissioned works by noted Saudi artists with photography as their medium. The artists and photographers have undertaken works that are focused on Madinah and include unusual studies of Al

Masjid Al Nabawi, people of Madinah, Madinah region archeology and landscape, as well as aerial photography of the region.

The exhibition will be hosted in a modern building part of the Meridian Hotel complex in the Al Aqeeq District, 7km from the Haram, in Madinah. It has been designed and transformed into a world-class art space by Tarik Alireza Consulting Engineers. This area falls out of the Haram zone thus enabling people of all faiths to visit the exhibition. The duration of the exhibition is 3 months and will be accompanied by two catalogs, one on the calligraphy exhibition and the second on the photography exhibition.

One of the significant precedence that this exhibition establishes is the need to provide in our cities spaces that can host exhibitions for local exhibitors and international partners. The reign of Madinah as capital of Islamic culture in 2013, was indeed a successful one that has taught us that with diligence, perseverance and enlightened leadership, a lot can be achieved and accomplished. This exhibition, as well as the many activities that took place in the last several months shows the intention that Madinah will reassert itself, again, as an Islamic center of learning and culture that it maintained in its first two centuries when the Prophet, peace be upon him, and his companions made it a beacon of piety and learning.

Saudi Gazette

5th Global Islamic Marketing Conference

In Cooperation with the Centre for Research, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Qatar University and following the last four successful conferences organized by the International Islamic Marketing Association in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Cairo, and Istanbul, the 5th Global Islamic Marketing Conference (GIMAC5) will be held on April 22-24 in the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur where it will gather academics, re-

searchers, and businesses from all contents.

Since its inception, this annual conference has been the premier and leading conference on Islamic marketing where world thought leaders meet and shape the future. This year's conference will build on and extend the successes of the previous events and strengthen its position as the sole destination for the businesses and academics interested in Islamic Marketing including managers, policy makers, and practitioners.

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Islam 2nd Largest Religion in Italy

Members of the Italian Muslim community have come together to discuss problems facing the religious minority, highlighting Muslim contributions to the Italian economy and complaining about lack of official status for the second largest religious group in the country.

Figures from the national statistics agency "Istat tell us that there are currently about 1,700,000 Muslims in Italy," said Izzedin Elzir, Florence imam and head of the Muslim umbrella group *Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia (UCOII)*, ANSA news agency reported on Tuesday, February 11.

"There are over 700 mosques," Elzir added.

The Florence imam comments came during his meeting with other members of the Muslim community at the special conference for Muslims held on Tuesday in Rome,

The conference was held at the Niccolò Cusano University and was attended by leading members of the Italian Muslim community.

Speaking at the conference, Elzir referred to Muslims contributions in the Italian economy.

"Muslims account for 4-5% of national

GDP. In other words," Elzir said.

"Islam constitutes added value for Italy."

Despite the "added value" the Muslim community brings to Italy, they have no official status, the imam added.

"Despite the fact that freedom of religion is enshrined in the Constitution, the absence of a resulting law had led to the Muslim community's de facto not being recognized by the Italian State, with which there is no agreement", in the likes of those regulating relations between Italian institutions and religions other than Catholicism (with which relations were set down in the Concordat).

Similar agreements were entered year ago with other minority religions, such as Judaism and Buddhism.

Agostino Cilardo, expert in Islamic law at the Naples Orientale University, shared a similar concern.

"The problem of a lack of representation is a concrete one, not only an official one," noted Cilardo.

"When you draw up an agreement, the counterpart is a unified organization. But who can speak on behalf of Muslims in Italy," he said.

The lack of official status means Muslims organizations are not eligible for funding through the Italian law that allows taxpayers to allocate part of their taxes to a religious group of their choice.

Efforts to recognize Islam in Italy, even unofficially, are often slammed by the separatist Northern League. Plans by Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta to establish a museum of Islamic art on the banks of the Grand Canal in Venice has also sparked angry reactions from separatist Northern League.

Plans by regional councils to build more mosques have also been slammed.

NFM

Blameworthy Morals

Ghussah

Mawlana Maseeh-Ullah Khan (RA)

Allah says:

“And those who swallow anger and those who forgive people, Allah loves the righteous.”

Rasulullah (saws) said:

“Do not become wrathful.”

“A powerful man is not one who defeats (another) in physical combat. Verily, a powerful man is he who controls his nafs at the time of anger.”

In another narration it appears that a strong man is he who controls anger. It is essential to keep anger under control. One should never act spontaneously in accordance with the dictates of anger. On the contrary, anger should be made subservient to the instruction of the Shariah. It is natural to be aroused in the state of anger. Such natural propensity is not rebukeable. But, Allah has endowed man with volition (ikhtiyaar will-power). Anger has therefore to be controlled since it is within the scope of man's volition to do so. Failure to exercise this volitional power is contrary to insaanaiyat (humanity).

There are many reasons for the inclusion of anger in the natural attributes of man. Along with the quality of anger Allah has endowed man with the ability to control such anger to ensure that the latter is not misap-

propriated and unjustly employed.

Ghussah in itself comes into motion involuntarily. It is automatically activated. But, acting in accordance with its demand is voluntary, hence refraining from it is likewise voluntary. The remedy for a volitional act (the way of curbing it) is nothing other than the exercise of one's volitional power to bring about restraint and control. This is within one's ability even if one experiences a degree of difficulty in the exercise of such volition. Repeated exercise of the volition of restraint weakens the demand of anger. In consequence, refraining from anger becomes a relatively simple task.

The following narration appears in the hadith shareef:

“The qadhi should not decide between two parties while in anger.”

The judge or the ruler is not permitted to issue a verdict while in anger, but should postpone the trial or case for a later date. The term, qadhi in the context of this Hadith applies to every person having authority over people. The instructor, teacher and head of a family all fall within the purview of this Hadith. They should not be hasty in meting our punishment to their subordinates while in the state of anger.

Those in authority should remember

that Allah is the defender of the rights of those who have no defender. Allah will demand from the aggressor the rights of the oppressed. According to the Hadith Shareef, Allah and Rasulullah (saws) will claim from the tyrannical ruler the rights which he usurped even from his non-Muslim subjects. It is therefore imperative to exercise caution when punishing.

In cases of injustice executed in the state of anger, it is essential that the aggressor, after his anger has subsided, publicly apologise and humble himself in the presence of the one whom he has wronged. The aggressor should personally apologise in profusion and seek the pardon of the one whom he had wronged. This measure will restore the intelligence of the aggressor to equilibrium. He will thus be prevented from the perpetration of injustice at the behest of anger.

At all times refrain from haste. One has to strive greatly in opposing the dictates of anger. Whenever one succumbs, resort to istighfaar and obtain the pardon of the one

whose rights have been violated. Recite:

Transliteration:

A'oozu Bil-laahi Minsh-shaitaan-ir-rajeem

when overtaken by anger: sit down if you happen to be standing; if you happen to be sitting then lay down. Make wudhu with cold ware: or drink cold water. Divert your attention by immediately engaging in some other activity, especially reading which is very efficacious in curbing anger. If all this fail to eliminate the anger, withdraw from the presence of the one who is the target of your anger.

The Remedy

Remember that Allah has greater power and authority over you and that you are also disobedient to Him. Should he also adopt the attitude of Wrath with you, what will be your condition? Also reflect that nothing can happen without the Will of Allah. Ponder then: Of what worth am I? I am an absolute non-entity. How can I then act in conflict with Allah.

Benefits of Tawakkul

One of the major benefits of Tawakkul is that it can relieve us from unnecessary anxiety, worry, and resulting depression from the challenges that we may be facing. By believing that all our affairs are in Allah's hands and we can do only what is in our control, we leave the results to Allah and accept His decree whatever it may be. Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali said, "the fruit of tawakkul is the acceptance of Allah's decree. Whoever leaves his affairs to Allah and then is accepting of what he is given has truly relied on Allah. Al-Hassan and others among the salaf defined tawakkul as ridhaa (acceptance)." (Jami' Al-'Uloom wa Al-Hikam)

Let's strive to understand the concept of Tawakkul and to make it part of our belief systems. We will notice that things will not only get resolved easier with His help, but Tawakkul will also relieve us from the day to day anxieties and worries associated with the challenges of this life.