

HOW TO SAFEGUARD

OUR

RELIGION AND DIGNITY!



MOHAMMED LAMINU DANGATA

MAKING SENSE OF FAITH, WORSHIP, MORALITY!

HOW TO SAFEGUARD OUR RELIGION AND DIGNITY!

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ISLAM IS PEACE; AND SO, TO BE A TRUE MUSLIM, YOU OUGHT TO RELATE WELL WITH OTHERS, INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT!

Upon seeing a dead body, The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Either he achieves rest, or others have been relieved of him." The companions asked:

"O Messenger of Allah, what do you mean by 'Either he achieves rest, or others have been relieved of him'?" The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:

"When a believer passes away, he is saved from the tiredness and worries of the world and he achieves the Mercy of Allah. When a sinner or an evil person passes away, people, lands, trees, and animals are relieved of him, and they find peace." (Bukhari, Rikak, 42; Ahmed, V 296, 302, 304)

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"Abu Huraira (RA) relates that the Prophet (pbuh) said, 'By Allah, he is not a believer; by Allah, he is not a believer; by Allah, he is not a believer.' He was asked, 'Who is he, O Messenger of Allah?' He answered, 'He whose neighbour is not safe from his evils.' "

Making Sense of Faith, Worship, Morality!

DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my late grandfather, Alhaji Idris Nankwasibaba of Salaga, for his love and open-handed generosity.

"You can't have it both Ways, you wouldn't have it any other Way too, except that same Way, and that is all the way." MLD

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INTRODUCTION

Our Faith, the inevitable element of our Religion and indeed necessary precondition for acceptance of deeds, is being exposed to such misguided beliefs as those in jinn (demons)/ in Communion of Spirits, in Ancestral Sacrifice, in Soothsaying, and in Ministry of Angels, the obvious Faith destroyers.

Our Worship, another constituent of Islam and a clear manifestation of Imaan, is being rendered null and void by impious practices like invocation of spirits (jinn, angels, or “souls of the dead) or pictures (atumi) of Prophets, Saints, Auliya’Allah (Friends of Allah) or Auliya’a Shaitan (Friends of the Devil), Demonic Protection, and Ancestral Sacrifice, not forgetting certain violations that have the potential of degrading its quality, rendering it deficient.

Our Morality, yet another aspect of our Deen (Religion) and true demonstration of Faith, has been reduced to debris by amorous and immoral practices such as prostitution, homosexuality, pornography, promiscuity, obscene music and movies, and premarital and extramarital sex, as well as indecent exposure and exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex.

Our Dignity, the distinctiveness of our sense of worth, has been blemished by demeaning acts of defiance, the open disobedience to the Dictates of the Holy Qur-an and the civilised Traditions of The Prophet (pbuh), with their consequential damage or stigmatisation, resulting in low self-esteem, lack of self-respect, or lack of sense of pride.

It is no wonder that our intellectual, spiritual, moral, or material well-being leaves much to be desired; therefore, the need to bring out the understanding of what it takes to shield not only our Imaan (Faith), but also our “Ibadaat,” (Worship) “Mu’amalaat,” (Worldly affairs) and indeed “Darajaat” (Honour) from “Shirk,” (Polytheism) Immorality or Amorality, and humiliation or embarrassment, in this World and in the Hereafter, is imperative.

To this end, we ought to cast light on what it takes to be guided by Faith, by a sense of Worship, by a sense of morality, and indeed by a sense of dignity, not forgetting sense of decorum, focusing on Faith and its safeguards, Worship and its safeguards, Morality and its safeguards, and Dignity and its safeguards, as well as Da’wah, the invitation to Guidance.

CHAPTER 1

FAITH AND ITS SAFEGUARDS

1.1. FAITH/IMAAN

Imaan is generally outlined using the Six Articles of Faith; namely, Belief in Allah, Belief in Angels, Belief in Allah's Messengers, Belief in Allah's Revealed Books, Belief in the Day of Resurrection, and Belief in Divine Preordainment.

BELIEF IN ALLAH: The first Code of Belief in Islam, the foremost conviction in the Unseen, comprises the Belief in the Oneness of His Lordship, in the Oneness of His Worship, and in the Oneness of His Names and Attributes. In particular, it refers to wholehearted acceptance that It is Allah and Allah Alone Who created the Universe, the creation of which was a successful accomplishment not more by accident than design; that He and He Alone is worthy of Worship; and that His and His Names and Attributes Alone be invoked.

The following Textual Evidence is a clear attestation to the established connection between Faith and Allah's Independent Lordship over Creation: "Do not those who disbelieve see that the heavens and the earth were closed up, but We have opened them; and We have made of water everything living, will they not then believe?" Q. 21:30

The Good Book corroborates the fact that because Allah Alone created the heavens and the earth and all that, He Alone deserves Worship. It is proclaimed: "O mankind! Worship Your Lord (Allah), Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become Al-muttaqun (The pious)." Q. 2:21

And indeed, Believers are obliged to invoke Allah by any of His Attributes, but not by any hidden name, be it angel's, jinni's, or human's. It is emphasised: "And invoke no other ilah (god) along with Allah...(none has the right to be worshipped but He)..." Q. 28:88 Of course, "He is Allah besides Whom there is no god; the Knower of the unseen and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. **He is Allah besides Whom...(none has the right to be worshipped but He)**, the King...the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. **Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him...**He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. **To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him.** And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise." Q. 59:22-24

BELIEF IN ANGELS: The Faith in Angels, the second conviction in the Unseen, is one of the connotations of the Belief in Allah. This is a complete and undoubted acceptance of the absolute reality of angels. Especially, it refers to any complete, enthusiastic recognition of the factual way of life of angels, not only as immaterial beings or good spirits, but also as Allah's Messengers, as human guides, guardians/protectors, and removers of souls, among other things.

BELIEF IN ALLAH'S MESSENGERS: This Statement of Belief is the resolution that all the well-chosen are from Allah, the Merciful. Particularly, it refers to unconditional acceptance of all Allah's Messengers, not forgetting His other Prophets, not only as humans, but also as givers of glad tidings and of warning. And indeed, receipt of their Message and Tradition is fundamental to this pledge.

BELIEF IN ALLAH'S REVEALED BOOKS: This Statement of Faith is the firmness that the divinely revealed Scriptures are from Allah, the Creator. Unconditional acceptance of the authenticity of the Divine Message is central to this Tenet of Faith. It is the wholehearted recognition that Allah's Revelation is the absolute Truth. Thus approval of its genuineness, accuracy, or dependability is relevant to this Conviction.

It is worth remembering that acceptance of this certainty is Faith Foundation; and indeed, subsequent acceptance of the Dictates of the Book of Allah results in increased Faith. In other words, the more you accept Allah's Statements without disputing them, the more you attain Faith. This leads to increased Guidance. It is emphatically stated: "While as for those who accept guidance, He increases their guidance and bestows on them their piety." Q. 47:17

BELIEF IN THE DAY OF RESURRECTION: The Conviction in the Day of Restoration means that there is life after death. Especially, it refers to the Belief in Resurrection and in judgment, as well as in Reward—Paradise, and in Punishment—Hell, not forgetting similar conditions of bliss and torture in the grave.

BELIEF IN DIVINE PREORDAINMENT: This is the sixth and last of the fundamental Codes of Belief in Islam. It means that whatsoever Allah has ordained would surely come to pass. Particularly, it refers to the fact that Allah's Decision is based on His advance Knowledge or Awareness of our fate. This is a clear indication that Allah knows and is aware of the outcome of events before those events actually occur. Such events are said to be predestined because Allah has absolute control over them. And each of them occurs by Allah's Will or Permission.

Allah's Will is Guidance, so it is in accordance with His Will that He does a lot of good. The Qur-an vividly explains: "Whatever of good reaches you, is from Allah..." Q. 4:79

By Allah's Permission, however, any misfortune that befalls us is from ourselves; He is aware of it, but He allows it by not preventing it from happening. Allah has established the truth of this: "No calamity befalls, but by the Leave [i.e. Decision and Qadar (Divine Preordainment)] of Allah ...And Allah is All-Knower of everything." Q. 64:11

Indeed, Faith is of the essence. It is a necessary precondition for acceptance of deeds, the absence of which renders such acts of piety as Salat, Fasting, and Hajj, as well as of righteousness as justice, patience, and generosity null and void in the Sight of Allah (swt). The Final Message supports the preceding facts in the following Words: "Whoever works any act of righteousness and has faith,- His endeavour will not be rejected: We shall record it in his favour." Q. 21:94

1.2. SAFEGUARDING FAITH

This involves strict avoidance or sincere repentance of believing in such components of lack of Faith (Kufr) as belief in jinn (demons), in Soothsaying, in Demonic Protection (i.e. talismanic ring, belt, or smock), in Communion of Spirits, in Ministry of Angels, in Ancestral Sacrifice, in human metamorphosis (humans turning into tabby cats, dogs, vultures, etc.), in Coptic Exorcism or Spiritual Healing, in disappearing magically or demonically or mysteriously, in burying talismanic objects or animals alive, in producing nightmare (demonic or magic dream), in magic potion, in traditional magic eyeliner, in magic string (akadi/kobri), in magic pomade, and in love, hatred, or market spells.

Preserve your Tenets of Belief by providing adequate shields against wholehearted acceptance of jinn/demons as your helpers or protectors or guardians, for such is a misguided belief. It is categorically stated: "O children of Adam! let not the Shaitan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the garden...surely We have made the Shaitans to be the guardians of those who do not believe." Q.7:27

Save your Faith from soothsaying by not visiting such agents of the Devil as occult malams/soothsayers/fortunetellers and believing in what they are telling you, for such practice ultimately results in your forty consecutive days' prayers being rendered null and void. It is stated: "Safiya Bint Abu Obaid (RH) reports from the speech of the wives of the Prophet (pbuh) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, 'If a person goes to a

soothsayer, asks him about something, and believes him, his Prayer will not be accepted for forty days.’ ”

Let’s shroud our Convictions against the belief in demonic protection by covering them with supplications/prayers or Divine Protection, which is angelic, instead of covering them with such magic protective objects as rings, smocks, belts, and chains as talismans. Isn’t Allah (swt) your Protector? It is answered:

“Allah has full knowledge of your enemies, and Allah is Sufficient as a Wali (Protector), and Allah is Sufficient as a Helper.” Q. 4:45

The following Textual Proof further attests to this: “And verily, there were men among mankind who took shelter with the males among the jinn, but they (jinn) increased them (mankind) in sin and transgression.” Q. 72:6

Cover your Imaan by keeping it hidden from the belief in ancestral or neo-ancestral sacrifice. Hide it from such misguided belief by surrounding it with Divine Sacrifice (Eid Adha or Abraham Sacrifice and Aqeeqah/child naming Sacrifice), but not with neo-ancestral Sacrifice.

This means that there is no obvious reason why Moses’ Divine Sacrifice should be mistaken for Ancestral or “neo-Ancestral” Sacrifice. His was expedient in that it was applicable just in that particular circumstance. Allah Himself ordered him to tell his people to offer Sacrifice to Him. So certainly, that was a pious Sacrifice, which was devoid of any invocation of spirits. It is revealed: And (remember) when Musa (Moses) said to his people: “Verily, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow...” Q. 2:67

However, Allah had not made mention of any colour initially; the Jews insisted on colour, instead: They said: “Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its colour. He said: He says, ‘It is a yellow cow, bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders.’ ” Q. 2:69

Even though some have confused Ancestral Sacrifice with Believers’ Sacrifice, we now have evidence to the contrary. So I humbly throw a challenge to all professed “occult malams” to inform their clients or the easy game to produce yellow cows.

Conserve your Imaan by always accepting Guidance without disputing, criticising, or questioning it. The following Scriptural Statements have left nothing to the imagination: “Then who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah and **denies the truth** [the Qur-an, the prophet (Muhammad—pbuh), the Islamic Monotheism,] when it comes to him. **Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?**” Q. 39:32 Besides,

“And he went into his garden while in a state (of pride and disbelief), unjust to himself. He said: 'I think not that this will ever perish. **And I think not the Hour will ever come...**' His companion said to him during the talk with him: '**Do you disbelieve in Him Who created you out of dust?...**' ” Q. 18:35-37

Protect our Faith against pride, looking down on others, or rejection of Guidance by humbly submitting to the Will of Allah, instead of turning away from it knowingly or deviating from Allah's obvious Signs.

Let's face it; respecting some people such as the wealthy, the powerful, and the famous by, say, squatting, whiles belittling others such as the poor, subordinates, and labourers is highly hypocritical and ironical. It is hypocritical in that honouring those at the top of the heap whiles downplaying the importance of those at the bottom of the heap is a pretended reason for pleasing Allah. And it is ironical because it is the wrong result, Allah's displeasure, that is within reach.

No doubt, honour is earned through unquestioning obedience to Allah's Commands; and so, show your displeasure at those who are in the process of openly disobeying Allah such as those wearing mini-skirts, exposing their breasts, exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex, hugging, and holding hands (boyfriend-girlfriend), as well as those at beer/drinking bars by not greeting them.

And that of course is the weakest manifestation of Faith in respect of putting others right on wrong-doings, beyond which the heart is deprived of the delight of Faith, let's bear it in mind.

According to Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA), The Prophet (pbuh) said, "...pride is to completely disregard the truth and to scorn (to look down upon) the people." The Holy Qur-an further states, "And (remember) when We said to the angels: 'Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan), **he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers** (disobedient to Allah)." Q. 2:34 And indeed, "Surely, **those who reject Faith** (disbelieve in Allah and in Muhammad—pbuh as being Allah's Messenger and in all that which he (pbuh) has brought from Allah), neither their properties, nor their offspring will avail them aught against Allah. **They are the dwellers of the Fire, therein they will abide.**" Q. 3:116

Of course, we need to keep our Conviction safe from defying or refusing to obey the Truth, being insolent or intentionally and rudely showing no respect, as these are symptoms of arrogance, the persistence of which deprives the arrogant of the Good End. It is connected: Narrated Abdullah bin Mas'ud (RA): Allah's Messenger (pbuh)

said, "Whosoever has pride in his heart equal to the weight of an atom (or a smaller ant) shall not enter Paradise..."

Let's not dispute Guidance; the possibility of our prayer, fasting, Hajj, or charity being rendered null and void because of our refusal to submit to Allah's Command when admonished by continuing to commit such pointless acts of defiance against Him as praying amidst pictures of human beings and animals, praying with jointed hair, Rasta, or dreadlocks; and squatting as a mark of obedience and respect is a wake-up call to all those who have got caught up in such deviant practices.

What then is the driving force behind such insensitivity? Pride? Here is the connection: "And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah,' he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. So enough for him is Hell, and worst indeed is that place to rest.'" Q. 2:206

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah's Apostle said, "Allah will not look, on the Day of Resurrection, at a person who drags his garment (behind him) out of pride and arrogance."

We need to shield our Tenets of Faith from preferring the mention of creatures such as cult figures or religious leaders to Allah's Mention, or from becoming grief-stricken when the Word of Allah is mentioned, for it is a reason for lack of Faith in the Hereafter. The Holy Book has truly thrown light on such undue preference in the following Words: "And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust (From the Oneness of Allah) and when those (whom they obey or worship) besides Him (...) are mentioned, behold, they rejoice!" Q. 39:45

Prevent your Conviction from being destroyed by hypocrisy by not pretending to be pious and righteous; or better still, by not blending your wholehearted acceptance of the Islamic Belief System with your complete and undoubted acceptance of Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, Ancestral or Neo-Ancestral Sacrifice, and Communion of Spirits, among others, within your heart.

Do safeguard your Imaan against hypocrisy by shielding it from alleged Faith in Allah, from pretending to please Him in Worship and Moral Values, or from carrying out deeds of Piety just to be seen of or be praised by others.

The Holy Qur-an clarifies: "And when they meet those who believe, they say: 'We believe,' but when they are alone with their Shayatin (devils), they say: 'Truly, we are with you; verily, we were but mocking.'" Q. 2:14

Allah further states, "They have made their oaths a screen (for their hypocrisy). Thus they hinder (men) from the path of Allah. Verily, evil is what they used to do. **That is because they believed, then disbelieved, therefore their hearts are sealed, so they understand not.**" Q. 63:2-3 Lastly, "And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh), and that they came not to As-Salat (the prayer) except in a lazy state and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly. So let not their wealth and children amaze you (O Muhammad—pbuh); in reality Allah's plan is to punish them with these things in the life of this world **and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers.** They swear by Allah that they are truly of you while they are not of you, but they are a people (hypocrites) who are afraid (that you may kill them)." Q. 9:54-56. (also, see Q. 9:84)

Clearly, the hypocrites in Faith are the rebellious in the True Faith of Islam. Indeed, we can instance Abdullahi Ibn Ubay, Abdullahi Ibn Samad, Abdullahi Ibn Namjal, and Mistah as hypocrites during the life time of The Prophet (pbuh).

"Kitabullah," the Book of Allah, has added force to the abovementioned facts: "And never (O Muhammad—pbuh) pray (funeral prayer) for any of them (hypocrites) who dies, nor stand at his grave. Certainly, they disbelieved in Allah and His Messenger (pbuh), and died while they were Fasiqun (rebellious—disobedient to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh))." Q. 9:84

Such proponents of pagan and secular values are by far the undoubted enemies within the fold of Islam. It is connected: "...That is because they believed, and then disbelieved ...**They are the enemies, so beware of them...**" Q 63:2-4 And indeed, "They wish that you reject Faith, as they have rejected Faith, and thus that you all become equal..." Q. 4:89

Remember, "Shaitan (Satan) has overpowered them. So he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Shaitan (Satan). Verily, it is the party of Shaitan (Satan) that will be the losers!" Q. 58:19

Protect your Imaan against Hasad (jealousy and envy), the destructive emotion, by sincerely accepting and appreciating your Creator's Distribution of Graces and Favours -- wealth, beauty, power, knowledge, wisdom, opportunities, etc. It is proclaimed: "Allah favored some of you over others with wealth and properties... Do they deny the favors of Allah?" Q. 16: 71 And indeed, "Do they envy men for what Allah has given them of His Bounty...?" Q. 4: 54

The Prophet (pbuh) further said: "Beware of jealousy, for verily it destroys good deeds the way fire destroys wood." [Abu Dawood]

Allah's Messenger (pbuh) was asked: "Who are the best of people?" He (pbuh) replied: 'The one with a clean heart and truthful tongue.'

They asked: 'We understand a truthful tongue, but what does a clean heart mean?' He answered: 'It is the heart of one that is pious, pure, and is free of sin, transgressions, hatred and Hasad.' " [Ibn Majah]

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "They are enemies for Allah's Bounties." They asked: "Who are they?" He said: "Those who envy people for what Allah has given them of His Bounty." [at-Tabarane]

But remember, you can constructively envy others because the Shari'ah allows Ghibtah (envy that is free from malice), which means neither wishing for the loss of the blessing nor hating its continued existence with the person, but desiring the same for oneself without the desire for removal of the blessing from others.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "Envy is allowed in two cases, in case of a man whom Allah has given the Qur'an and who recites it throughout night and day; and a man on whom Allah has bestowed wealth who gives it away throughout night and day." [Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim]

He (pbuh) also explained, saying: "I wish I were given what he was given and did with it what he did." [at-Tirmidhee and Ibn Majah]

The following is a remedial action against jealousy and envy: If you feel that you are jealous of a specific person, then buy them a gift, exchange handshakes with them (i.e. people of your sex), and salaam to them. And because Hasad is the result of hatred, The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Shake hands, for this will dispel rancour, and exchange gifts and love one another, for this will dispel hatred." [Narrated by Maalik in al-Muwatta (1413)]

The Prophet (pbuh) further stated: "Do not look to those above you. Look to those below you, as it will more likely remind you of Allah's favors bestowed on you." [Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim] On another occasion, he said: "If one of you looks at someone wealthier and better built than him, he should also look at someone of lower standard than himself." [Saheeh Muslim]

Keep your love, compassion, and mercy safe from jealousy and envy by resorting to the following spiritual Healing Property of the Qur-an on diseases or deficiencies of the heart: (They say): "Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower." Q. 3:8

Then, supplicate to Allah (swt) against the envious by reciting the following curative action against Hasad: "Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of the dawn...from the evil of the envious when he envies." Q. 113:1--5

Indeed, if we really aim at pleasing Allah and Allah Alone, then we have to be guided by Faith by, for example, manifesting the Belief in Angels by wholeheartedly accepting them as our protectors, instead of jinn, and as recorders of our deeds by not hiding or otherwise to cast love or market or hatred spells, to view magic mirror or pornography, to spend spirit money, and to turn into dogs or tabby cats, among other things. It is explained: "This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard (against evil). **Those who believe in the unseen...**" Q. 2:2-3

No wonder, those who are Allah-conscious, particularly in solitude where there is no danger at all of being seen or arrested or humiliated by any one or the police, are the very people who are rightly guided. Allah corroborates: "And it is alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not: **they do not believe.** You can only warn him who follows the reminder and **fears the Beneficent Allah in secret**; so announce to him forgiveness and an honorable reward." Q. 36:10-11

We really have to exercise precaution by practising caution in advanced measure warding off such impending dangers as deprivation of the delight of Faith. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "There are two groups in my nation who have no share in Islam: the Murji'a and the Qadariyya.' He was asked, 'What are the Murji'a?' and he answered, 'They are those who say that Faith is mere saying with no deeds.' He was asked, 'What are the Qadariyya?' He answered, 'They are those who say that there is no fate (destiny).'" (Bukhari, Muslim, as related by Ibn Abbas –ra)

I hope by now you have safeguarded your Imaan, haven't you?

CHAPTER 2

WORSHIP AND ITS SAFEGUARDS

2.1. WORSHIP

Worship is defined as an act of religious devotion usually directed towards the Creator (True Worship) or a deity (false worship). True Worship, a manifestation of Faith, refers to such acts of obedience to the Divine Command as Salat (Prayer), Fasting, Pilgrimage, Sacrifice (Eid Adha Sacrifice and Aqeeqah – child naming Sacrifice), Remembrance of Allah, Recitation of the Holy Qur-an, and Supplication/Invocation.

2.2. SAFEGUARDING WORSHIP

Safeguarding Worship means protecting Deeds of Faith in respect of Prayer/Invocation/Supplication, Hajj/Pilgrimage, Sacrifice, Zikr (Allah's Remembrance), Fasting, etc. It refers to keeping (True) Worship safe from not only false worship, but also from immoral and amorous practices through strict avoidance or sincere repentance of **practising** or **using** any of the following deeds of Kufr (Disbelief) and the like: Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, Communion of Spirits (Invocation of Jinn -- demons), Ministry of Angels (Invocation of "Angels"—Harut and Marut), Ancestral Sacrifice, magic potion, traditional magic eyeliner (witches' eyeliner), and magic pomade.

Let's save our effort (Worship) from "Shirk" (act of associating partners with Allah) by not directing our intention, Prayer/Invocation/Supplication, Fasting, Sacrifice, among others, to creatures, instead of the Creator.

Safeguard your Ibadaat against "**Shirk of Intention**" by **not** intending to believe in and then carry out Worship in order to please others besides Allah.

For example, if the devils (jinn) command one to slaughter a pigeon every 90 days as a condition for renewing any spirit-money agreement, then one is said to be a false worshipper. This is so because such Sacrifice is carried out in fulfillment of the devils' command (neo-Ancestral Sacrifice), but not Allah's (Eid Adha Sacrifice), thus aiming at pleasing the wrong objects of Worship, the devils—creatures, instead of the Right Object of Worship, Allah—the Creator.

The Holy Qur-an has cast light on the need to direct all intentions to Allah and Allah Alone in the following Words: “And to your Lord (Alone) turn (all your) intentions and hopes.” Q. 94:8

Truly, actions are judged according to intentions.

Protect your Deeds of Piety against “Shirk of Invocation” by not requesting or using the hidden power of Occult, which is outside you, to help you achieve a purpose in life. Casting money or love or curse or divorce spells, charming, incantation, exciting the Tempests or Nightmare (species of demons), and wearing such magic protective objects as rings and silver chains typically exemplify “Shirk of Invocation.”

Such hidden power of occult, derived from the devils (jinn), “angels,” “Saints in Heaven” or “souls of deceased humans,” the Sun-god (“Allahu Shamsu”), or the “Holy Ghost,” is invoked to help “occult malams” solve their problems.

These are misdirected acts of invocation, which are attributable to the Devil, but not to Allah the Exalted. The following Statement of Allah clarifies this point: “They (all those who worship others than Allah) invoke nothing but female deities besides Him (Allah), and they invoke nothing but Shaitan (Satan), a persistent rebel!” Q. 4:117

We must of course keep our acts of obedience safe from “Shirk of Undue Obeisance” by not obeying and respecting any authority in practices or actions that are related to Worship or are in defiance of the Divine Command in respect of Piety (Faith-cum-Worship).

For instance, in Worship, especially in Prayer, Believers obey and show reverence to Allah by strictly adhering to the prescribed rules of Rukuh (bending at the waist), Sujud (prostration), squatting, kneeling down, etc., which are physical components of Worship, with standing and sitting upright as the usual, exceptional positions.

And because intention is central to Worship, believing in and intending to please other creatures, especially the elderly and/or the wealthy, by making such undue bends is “Shirk,” and of course of obedience. The Glorious Qur-an casts light on this misdirected obedience: “They (Jews and Christians) took their rabbis and their monks to be their lords besides Allah (by obeying them in things which they made lawful or unlawful according to their own desires without being ordered by Allah), and (they also took as their Lord) Messiah, son of Maryam (Mary), while they (Jews and Christians) were commanded [in the Taurat (Torah) and the Injeel (Gospel)] to worship none but

One Ilah (God—Allah) La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He)...” Q. 9:31

Therefore, we need to keep away from making such bends as a mark of obedience and respect to the wealthy and the powerful in society, in spite of the fact that those persons usually demand unquestioning, undue bow from us. At best, we must always err on the side of caution by not obeying them in such extremely unusual practices. Allah insists: regrettably, “On the Day when their faces will be turned over in the Fire, they will say, ‘Oh would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger (Muhammad—pbuh). And they will say, ‘Our Lord! Verily, we obeyed our chiefs and great ones, and they misled us from the Right Path.’ ” Q. 33:66-67

Shield your Piety from “Shirk of Undue Love” by not sharing the love that is due to Allah and Allah Alone with religious scholars, politicians, Idols, etc. Never ever let your inclination to be unreasonably attracted towards and have uncontrolled affection for others, instead of submitting to Allah Alone. Do not compromise your acts of devotion by considering them less important than having time with or for the sake of being accepted by or of pleasing those you love. It is proclaimed, “And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe love Allah more (than anything else). If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment, that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment. When those who were followed disown (declare themselves innocent of) those who followed (them) and they see the torment, then all their relations will be cut off from them....Thus Allah will show them their deeds as regrets for them. And they will never get out of the Fire.” Q. 2:165-167

In fact, some religious groups have adopted secular humanism. For them, their cult figures are more important than Allah's Religion. Because of this, there are personality cults surrounding such leaders. The so-called religious group members often please their group leaders, instead of Allah, by shirking from their religious obligations or plunging themselves into their religious prohibitions.

Strictly speaking, to allow the love of such things as money and desire to come between you and your Creator, Allah, is to worship them. Indeed, sharing the love that is due to Allah and Allah Alone with worldly possessions is “Shirk” of undue love.

Letting your inclination to be unreasonably attracted towards and having uncontrolled affection for money, etc., so much so that you compromise your acts of devotion by considering them less important than having time with your customers or business partners or for the sake of amassing wealth or of satisfying or pleasing your heart

desires or of gratifying the senses can best be described as associating partners with Allah, the Creator of such creation.

Indeed, carrying out acts of Worship almost always at your own preferred time, but not at the divinely prescribed time, is ironical because it is the wrong result, non-acceptance, which is within reach. It is impliedly established: “Men whom neither trade nor sale (business) diverts from the Remembrance of Allah (with heart and tongue), nor from performing Al-Salat...That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds...” Q. 24:37-38

According to The Prophet (pbuh), “The worshipper of the dirham will always be miserable.” And Allah (swt) categorically stated in the Glorious Qur-an, asking: “Have you not seen the one who takes his desires as his god?” Q. 25:43

You really have to safeguard your Love in Allah’s Worship or your Allah-consciousness in relation to time-consciousness against considering it less important than having time with your business or gratifying your senses. Beware!

Defend your Worship against the minor “Shirk,” ar-Riyaa, the secret “Shirk”. Protect your “Ibadaat” against performing Acts of Worship in order to show off, to be praised, or to obtain some material gains. According to Mahmood ibn Lubayd, Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said, “The thing I fear for you the most is ash-shirk al-asghar (minor shirk)...What is minor shirk? He replied, ‘Ar-Riyaa (showing off), for verily Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection when people are receiving their rewards, ‘Go to those for whom you were showing off in the material world and see if you can find any reward from them.’ ” (Ahmad, at-Tabarane...))

He also reports: “The Prophet (pbuh) came out and announced, ‘O people beware of secret shirk!’ The people asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, what is secret shirk?’ He replied, ‘When a man gets up to pray and strives to beautify his prayer because people are looking at him, that is secret shirk.’ ” (collected by ibn Khuzaymah)

Conserve your Acts of Worship by shielding them from “Ash-Shirk-al-Khafi,” by avoiding being unreasonably, inwardly dissatisfied with outcomes of events, attributing them to others besides Allah, or being consciously and continuously lamenting. Preserve your “Ibadaat.”

Although this unjustifiable connection is not immediately obvious, it is certainly the commonest of all. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Ash-Shirk-al-Khafi in the Muslim nation is more inconspicuous than the creeping of a black ant on black rock in the pitch-

darkness of the night. And this inconspicuous shirk is expiated by saying thrice the following sentences every day:

Allahuma Inna Nahuzu Bika Min An Nushrika Bika Shai' aa Nalamuhu Wanastagfiruka Lemaa Laa Nalamuhu.

'O Allah! I take your refuge from that I should ascribe anything as partner in Your Worship, being conscious of that, and I beg your pardon for that sin which I am not aware of.'

Shield your ablution from conversation or argument by covering it with intention (for the purpose of purity within the heart), Bismillahi (In the Name of Allah), reverent silence, attentiveness, and the concluding supplication.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Allah does not accept Prayer without purification..." (Sahih Muslim and others)

The Prophet (pbuh) also said, "There is no wuduh for him who does not mention Allah's Name upon it." (Sahih- ibn Maajah, At-Tirmithee, Abu Dawood, and others)

After wuduh, first of all say aloud or silently the following (concluding supplication): "Ash-hadu an laa ilaaha illallahu wahdahu laa shareeka lahu wa ash-hadu an-na Muhammadan abduhu wa rasul hu." – (I testify that there is none worthy of Worship except Allah, I testify that Muhammad (pbuh) is His Slave and Messenger.)

Then say aloud or silently the following: "Allah hum maj' alnee minat-taw-wabeena, waj' alnee minal muta tah-hireen." --- (O Allah, make me one of those who constantly repents to You and of those who purify themselves.) Sahih – At-Tirmithee

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) further said, "None of you makes wuduh and completes the wuduh and then says 'Ash-hadu an laa....' Except that all the eight Gates of Paradise are opened for him – so that he enters by whichever he pleases." (Sahih—Muslim, Abu Dawood...)

Among things that invalidate wuduh, the following are noteworthy: urine, wind, excretion, blood, sound sleep whiles lying down or reclining, touching the uncovered private parts.

With regard to wind, without a sound or smell, one's ablution is valid. The Prophet (pbuh) said, "There is wuduh except from a sound or smell." Sahih—UI-Jaarni

Menstruating and post-partum bleeding women are not allowed to pray but are required to complete their bleeding period and make ghusl (wuduh plus bathing the entire body) before returning to their prayers.

Persons with continuous flow of urine, blood, or excretion from the private parts should wash those parts and make wuduh for every prayer, after the time has elapsed. The Prophet (pbuh) said to Fatima bint Hubaish: “Give up prayer when your menses begins, and after it finishes, wash the blood off your body (by having a full shower or bath) and start praying.” Sahih-AI-Bukhari

In another version, he said to her, “Refrain from Salat during the days of your normal menses then wash and make ablution for every Salat and then pray even if blood drops onto the mat.” Sahih- Al-Bukhari

In the case of the urine of an infant who does not eat food, At-Tirmidhi (10) and ibn Maajah (525) narrated from Ali bin Abi Taalib (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said concerning the urine of an infant boy, “Sprinkle the urine of a boy and wash the urine of a girl.”

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “When one of you performs ablution carefully and utters the following supplication, “ I bear witness that there is no god but Allah...,’ the eight gates of Paradise will be opened to him to enter from whichever one of them he chooses.’ ” (Tirmidhi, as related by Omar –ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Tayammum is done with two strokes: one for the face and the other for the arms to the elbows.” (Tabari, *Kabir*, Hakem, as related by Ibn Omar- ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “When one of you puts his feet in his footwear, when in a state of purity (ablution), then he can wipe on them: three days for the traveler and one day for resident.” (Ibn Abu Shaiba, as related by Abu Hurairah –ra)

Ali (ra) says, “I saw the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) wiping the upper surface of his footwear.” (Abu Dawood)

Al-Hassan (ra) says, “Wiping of the footwear is done in lines with fingers.” (Sa’id Ibn Mansoor, sunan)

Save your Devotion by showing reverence to the Call to Prayer. Listen to it attentively, repeat the Wordings after the caller, and invoke Allah’s Blessings on The Prophet (pbuh) immediately after its completion. According to The Prophet (pbuh), his promised Intercession on That Day is only granted to those who, after having listened to the “Azan” in reverence silence and responded to it, supplicated for him.

The traditional private prayer which is said after the Call to Prayer is this: “Allahumma Rabba hadhihid-dahwatit-taammati wassalaati qaa’imati ati Muhammadan wasiilata wab’ ath-hu maqaaman mahmudal-ladhii wa’ adtahu. Warzuqnaa shafaa’ atahu innaka laa tukh-lifu mii’aad.” (O Allah, Lord of all supplications and steadfast prayer, grant Muhammad the most favoured and excellent position. Admit him to the praise-worthy place that You have promised him. Bestow upon us his intercession, for You do not fail in Your Promise.)

We need to keep our Piety safe from carrying out Worship, particularly Zikr, while watching movies or listening to music by preventing it from being undermined by such self-indulgence.

Your Salat is an inevitable part of your “Ibadaat” and indeed of your “Deen,” so be mindful of its acceptance, instead of destroying it. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said, “For everything there is a face and the face of your Religion is the Prayer. So see to it that none amongst you damages and disfigures the face of his Religion.”

Protect your Salat against the disadvantage of walking to pray and of joining the congregation in haste by obeying the following Hadiths:

The Prophet (pbuh) says, “When you come to prayer (in the Mosque), do not come running, rather, come walking solemnly with quietude; perform the part of prayer you catch up with the congregation and make up for the part that you miss.” (Al-Nasa’i, Ibn Habban, as related by Abu Huraira –ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) says, “If you catch up with the Imam even when he is sitting just before concluding the prayer, you will attain the merit of praying in congregation.” (Al-Hakem, as related by Abu Huraira-ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) says, “If someone performs ablution with care and goes to the Mosque to pray with the congregation but finds that the prayer is over, Allah will grant him the reward of those who were present and performed the prayer, without diminishing anything of their rewards.” (Bukhari, Muslim, as related by Abu Musa – ra)

Preserve your standing in Salat (Prayer) by safeguarding it against such forbidden acts as neglecting raising hands during the Takbiratul ihram, before and after rukuh, and upon standing up for the third rakat; against placing the hands on the waist or belly, instead of placing the right hand on the back of the left palm, wrist and forearm, unless otherwise dictated by necessity; against looking sideways or into the sky, instead focusing your gaze at the point of prostration; against “breaking” your fingers or cracking your finger joints; against toying with your garment or hair, as an alternative to standing motionless; against saying Takbiratul ihram while going to rukuh, in place of

saying it while standing upright, joining the congregation; and against deafening recitation, instead of reciting the Qur'an in a reasonably low but slow tone and in a reverent style.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Straighten your lines, align your shoulders, yield your hands to your brother's, and close the gaps, for indeed Shaytaan comes between you through them, just as the small lamb does."

Aisha says, "I asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about turning in Salat and he said, 'It is the portion that Satan steals from the slave's Prayer.' "

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri says, I entered the Mosque with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) while a man was sitting in the middle of the Mosque with his fingers intertwined... The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) turned and said, 'If one of you is in the Mosque he should not intertwine his fingers, as intertwining of fingers is from the Shaytan, and you are in the Prayer while you are in the Mosque until you leave it.' Related by Ahmad

In another version, Anas relates that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "...If you must do it, then do it in the voluntary Prayers, but not in the obligatory Prayers."

With regard to cracking finger joints during Salat, the following Hadith is worth referring to: The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Do not crack your finger knuckles while in prayer." (Ibn Maja, as related by Ali -ra)

As to whether something is allowed or not, the following Hadith serves as a point of reference: On the authority of al-Numah bin Basheer, who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'That which is lawful is plain and that which is unlawful is plain and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which not many people know. Thus he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself regarding his Religion and his honour, but he who falls into doubtful matters falls into that which is unlawful, like a shepherd who pastures around a sanctuary, all but grazing therein...'"

Let's not escape from reality; it is only by wholeheartedly accepting the best alternative, a reasonable argument based on Guidance, without disputing it and by going by it that we can please Allah, resulting in us having our free-will limited by His Will, Guidance.

Reasonably, if indeed only the best of our deeds are rewarded, then following Al-Husna (the best) is the way forward, let's bear it in mind. It is proclaimed: "...That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds..." Q. 24:37-38

Again, safeguard your standing in Salat by forming a row ahead of or behind the threshold of any architectural structures in the Mosque, for Mu'awiyah bin Qurah

reports that his father said, “We were prohibited from aligning between as-sawaaree (fences, walls, pillars, etc.) during the time of Allah’s Messenger (pbuh), he drove us away from them.”

With regard to praying alone behind a row, Alee bin Shaybaan said, “We prayed behind him -- The Prophet (pbuh) – The Prophet of Allah finished the Prayer. He saw a man praying alone behind the line. The Prophet of Allah waited until he finished his Prayer, then he said to him, ‘Return to your prayer, for there is no Prayer for the one alone behind the line.’ ”

What should one do in this case? Should one pull some one from the immediate row or join it or stand alone behind it? Reasonably, if the row is loose, then joining it is ok; otherwise, pulling some one from it will be the best option, but not standing alone behind it, since that is explicitly forbidden and stepping backward to form a row is allowed, let’s bear it in mind.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “When something serious occurs and one of you fears missing an opportunity, he has permission to pray like this (by combining two prayers.” (Nasai, as related by Ibn Omar –ra)

Our “Rukuh” or bending at the waist leaves a lot to be desired; and so, protect it against the two extremes of bending by striking the right balance between what is considered too little and too much, with the back alongside the head in a straightened position, firmly putting your palms on your knees, with a brief pause before returning to the usual standing position, saying “Subhaana Rabbee-yil Adheem” --How perfect is my Lord, the Supreme (3 times), not forgetting focusing the gaze at the point of prostration.

Abi Masud al- Badri (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “Allah does not consider the prayer of a man who does not straighten his back when bowing for rukuh and performing sajdah.”

The Prophet, when bowing for ruku’, used to grasp his knees with his hands, keeping his fingers apart, and when prostrating for sujud used to keep his fingers stretched together on the ground.” (Nasai, Baihaqi, related by Wa’el Ibn Hajar)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “...When one of you bow down in ruku’, he should not lower his head below the level of his back, and he should keep his back straight...” (Related by Abu Sa’id –ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Allah does not accept prayers from someone who does not pay alms until he performs both of them. Allah has combined them, so do not separate them.” (Abu Naim, Hiliya)

We need to protect our “Ibadaat” against serious violations of the prescribed rules of prostration by prostrating on both the forehead and nose; on the two palms, but not on fists nor folded fingers; on the toes of the two feet, not lifting one foot nor placing it over another nor lifting the two feet, keeping away the stomach from the thighs, and the elbows from the ground and the thighs, with a brief pause before raising the head from the ground, saying “Subhaana Rabbee-yil Aa’laa” --Glory be to my Lord, free from all imperfections, the Most High (3 times), occasionally shedding tears.

Ibn Abbas reported that the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: “I have been commanded to prostrate myself on seven bones:" forehead," and then pointed with his hand towards his nose, hands, feet, and the extremities of the feet; and we were forbidden to fold back clothing and hair.”

Abdullah b. Abbas reported that he saw 'Abdullah b. al-Harith observing the prayer and (his hair) was plaited behind his head. He ('Abdullah b. 'Abbas) stood up and unfolded them. While going back (from the prayer) he met Ibn 'Abbas and said to him: Why is it that you touched my head? He (Ibn 'Abbas) replied: (The man who observes prayer with plaited hair) is like one who prays with his hands tied behind.

Anas reported: “The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Observe moderation in prostration, and let none of you stretch out his forearms (on the ground) like a dog.”

Al-Bira' (b. 'Azib) reported: “The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said. When you prostrate yourself, place the palms of your hands on the ground and raise your elbows.”

Wa'el Ibn Hajar (ra) relates, “I saw the Prophet (pbuh) in prostration with his hands near his ears...I saw the Prophet (pbuh) in prostration on his forehead and nose.” (Ibn Abu Shaiba)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Allah the Most Sublime does not accept the prayer of someone whose nose does not touch the ground.” (Tabari, as related by Um Atiya)

Nafe' relates that Ibn Omar (ra) once stayed in Azerbaijan for six months during which he shortened his prayers; and he used to say, 'When you resolve to have permanent residence in a place, then you have to perform prayers in full.' ” (Abd Al-Razzaq)

Our sitting for Tashahud needs to be kept safe from resting on our toes and ankles, as a substitute for laying the left foot flat and sitting on it or on the left buttock, as well as for erecting the right foot, with the toes of the right foot pointing at the Qiblah, if possible; from placing our hand(s) between our thighs, as a replacement for putting the right hand on the right thigh, and the left on the left, with the right index finger, which is

stared at, pointing at the Qiblah.

Protect your “Ibadaat” against praying with or in the midst of images of human beings and animals or better still against manifesting your disbelief in Angels. Narrated Salim's father: “Once Gabriel promised to visit the Prophet but he delayed and the Prophet got worried about that. At last he came out and found Gabriel and complained to him of his grief (for his delay). Gabriel said to him, ‘We do not enter a place in which there is a picture or a dog.’ ”

Let's not risk our Worship; we must save it from such abominable practices as having dreadlocks/Rasta/jointed hair/false hair/ unkempt hair by always being mindful of its acceptance. It is narrated:

Abd al-Rahman b. Auf said that he heard Mu'awiya b Sufyin during the season of Hajj. (saying) as he sat upon the pulpit holding a bunch of hair in his hand which was (previously) in the hand of his guard: O people of Medina, where are your scholars? I heard Allah's Messenger (pbuh) forbidding this and saying: That the people of Bani Isra'il were ruined at the time when their women wore such hair.

Ata ibn Yasar (RA) narrated: “A man came to the Prophet with unkempt hair and an untidy beard. The Prophet pointed to him, as if ordering him to straighten his hair and beard. He did so and returned. Thereupon the Prophet observed, ‘Is that not better than one of you coming with his hair unkempt, as if he were a devil?’ ” (Related by Malik)

Ibn Umar narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Shave it all or leave it all.” (Abu Dawood...)

NOTE: Ibn Umar's narration refers to the hair, but not the beard.

We ought to keep our Salat safe from performing actions before or at the same time with the Imam, instead of doing so after Him. Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) said, “Does he who raises his head before the Imam (in Prayer) not fear that Allah will change his head into a head of a donkey?” (Tirmidhi)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “If one of you yawns in prayer, let him suppress it as much as he can; this is a gateway for the Devil.” (Ibn Maja, as related by Abu Sa'id –ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “When one of you rises in prayer, let him not close his eyes.” (Tabari, Kabir, Ibn Adi, Al-Kamel, as related by Ibn Abbas –ra)

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "When one of you prays, let him put something in front of him; if he cannot find anything (but a stick), let him put a stick in front of him; if he cannot find a stick, let him draw a line on the ground..." (Abd Al-Razzaq)

Just beware! It is not an elephant, a lion, or a tiger that destroys your Religion, is it?

I think we need to always remember and consider the following Statement of Allah, needn't we?: "So woe to the praying ones, Who are unmindful of their prayers." Q. 107:4-5

Your Knowledge and understanding of the Shari'ah is the intellectual base of your "Deen", so safeguard it against ignorance in knowledge, intellectual arrogance, evil promptings, intellectual freedom or Free thought, or corrupt teachings or fixed theories by being intellectually refined, with the tendency to think and act on Knowledge of Guidance. Preserve your frame of reference, the Shari'ah.

Let's conserve our knowledge and understanding of Islam by moving more towards Islamic Teachings, particularly the Qur-anic Arabic with its English Translation, as well as the civilised Traditions of The Prophet (pbuh).

Shield your Worship from pointless acts of disrespect to the Shari'ah by revering the Divine Message as a Sacred Book. Hold in the highest regard the Last Scripture by greatly respecting and appreciating its Sacredness. Purify yourself by performing ablution, handle it with utmost care, study or recite it in a slow but pleasant tone, and then listen to it in reverent silence.

Preserve your "Ibadaat" by keeping Allah's Commandments safe from placing them on your TV sets, radios, or computers while watching movies, listening to music, or viewing other religiously unacceptable programmes, which are the very violations of revered standards of Scriptural Sacredness, not forgetting those of norms of human decency.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Whoever fails to attend Friday payer for three (consecutive) times without any excuse, Allah will seal his heart." (Ibn Abu Shaiba, Ahmed, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, as related by Abu Al-Ja'd Al-Dumari)

Let's protect our recitation of the Holy Qur-an against hypocrisy in Faith by being duty bound to carry out what has been enjoined on us and to avoid what has been forbidden to us. We should, after having believed in the Message, willingly and eagerly but sincerely listen to, read, or study it, and then go by it. Otherwise, we might be on the verge of being engulfed in hypocrisy.

The preceding facts are supported by the following narration: Hadrat Abu Musa (RA) narrated that Rasulullah (pbuh) said: "...The like of a munafiq (hypocrite) who does not read the Qur-an is like a wild gourd, which has a bitter taste and no smell. And a munafiq who reads the Qur-an is like a raihan (sweet-smelling flower), which is fragrant but has a bitter taste."

The Prophet (pbuh) says, "When I recite aloud (as a leader in prayer), do not read anything of the Qur'an, except the Fatiha." (Abu Dawud, as related by Obada Ibn Al-Samet –ra)

We need to protect our "Ibadaat" against using any part of the Book in addition to magic symbols (undoubted basis of "atumi"—modified magic symbols) or formulae for, say, protection purposes. We are forbidden to use certain Chapters or Verses of the Qur-an in addition to "atumi" (stars, moon, sun, skeleton, Arabic numerals and alphabets, etc.) to prepare "tablet water," a variation of magic potion.

The most important thing to remember is that such modified magic symbols, the occult power representing hidden names of jinn, humans, or angels, are the invention of human devils in collaboration with the spirit devils (jinn). (For more information, see "Which Way? – The Two Ways in Perspective!" by the same author)

Let's preserve our Worship by keeping our Mosques safe from Allah's enemies, whose actions and inaction hinder Believers from praying, reciting the Holy Qur-an, or remembering Allah in them. For example, discerning Muslims often prefer observing Salat in Masjids where deviant practices such as wearing dreadlocks, ear rings by males, or greasy, filthy garments or those with pictures of human beings and animals on them or designer shirts with uncertain images, producing music as call tone in mobile phones; and use of talismans and "sacred" white cloth are strictly prohibited to doing so in those in which these pointless acts of defiance are comfortably tolerated.

It is indeed true that birds of a feather flock together. And that exactly is the case of "occult malams" and their followers, the like-minded enemies of Islam who strive to thwart its progress. It is connected, "And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the masjids of Allah, that His name should be remembered in them, and strives to ruin them? (As for) these, it was not proper for them that they should have entered them except in fear; they shall meet with disgrace in this world, and they shall have great chastisement in the hereafter." Q. 2:114

Thus allowing only deviants to patronise a Mosque explains its ruination.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Keep your mosques free from your little ones, your crazy people, your buying and selling, your quarrelling, your noises..." (Ibn Majah, as related by Wathela –ra)

We really have to safeguard our Deen by keeping not only our Salat, but also our Fasting, Pilgrimage, Zikr, and Sacrifice, among others, safe from all acts of deviance against the Divine Command in respect of Worship so as to be guided by a sense of Worship.

Of course, one is said to be guided by a sense of Worship if and only one understands Worship and then acts in ways that are consistent with the acceptable standards of intellectual preparedness including knowledge and understanding of Worship, as well as mind cleansing; of spiritual preparedness including knowledge and understanding of Faith, as well as heart cleansing; of moral and material preparedness including knowledge and understanding of moral principles such as decency, tranquility, personal or oral hygiene and environmental cleanliness.

Certainly, the foregoing facts are what it takes to measure up to True Worship. So reasonably, we don't have to expose our Worship to such forbidden acts as "Shirk," hypocrisy, and arrogance, as well as wearing of dreadlocks or Rasta or unkempt hair or garments with pictures of humans and animals on them, do we?

We really have to be mindful of the possibility of our Salat being rendered not only null and void, but also deficient, by serious violations associated with its observance. It is reported on the authority of Ammaar ibn Yaasir (RA), who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) saying, 'Verily a man leaves after completing his prayer and nothing has been written for him except a tenth of his Salat, a ninth, an eighth...or half of it.'" Abu Dawood

The Prophet (pbuh) says, Allah the Glorious says, "A servant of Mine, to whom I have given a healthy body and to whom I have granted good livelihood, and who does not come to Me in five years, is really deprived." (Baihaqi, Ibbn Habban, Sa'id Ibn Mansour, as related by Abu Sa'id—ra)

By now I think you haven't undermined your efforts, have you?

Fatwa of Ibn Baz on ma'mum's recitation of Suratul-Fatiha behind an Imam

The correct opinion on this is that the recitation of Al-Fatihah is obligatory on the Ma'mums, in both Jahri and Sirri Salahs (Prayers recited out loud and subvocally), according to the general meaning of the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "There is no Salah for those who do not recite the Opening of the Book (Surah Al-Fatihah)." He (peace be upon him) also said "Maybe you recite behind your Imam?" We (the Companions) said, "Yes." He said, "Do not do so, except with the Opening of the Book (i.e. Al-Fatihah), as there is no Salah (Prayer) for those who do not recite it." (Related by Imam Ahmad with a sound Isnad [chain of narrators]).

It is prescribed for a Ma'mum to recite it during the pauses left by the Imam and if there are no pauses, they can recite it even while the Imam is reciting it, and then listen to the Imam's recitation.

As for the Hadith: "The recitation of the Imam counts as recitation for those praying behind him." it is a Hadith Da'if (a Hadith that fails to reach the status of Hasan, due to a weakness in the chain of narration or one of the narrators) that can not be used as evidence, as we are informed by the Hadith scholars. Even if it is a Hadith Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish), it will be regarded as a general rule that specifically excludes the recitation of Al-Fatihah. May Allah grant us success.

Let's face it; reciting Suratul-Fatihah within oneself, but not to even the next person's hearing, is silent recitation, which is exceptional and devoid of any distraction or disturbance to the Imam's loud recitation. The following Qur'anic Verse with Tafsir attests to this fact:

"So when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy {i.e. during the compulsory congregational prayers when the Imam is leading the prayer (except Suratul-Fatiha, and also when he is delivering the Friday-prayer Khutbah}." (Tafsir At-Tabari) Q. 7:204

Even though the foregoing Scriptural Words were revealed in respect of "REMAINING SILENT WHEN IMAM RECITES," the above-mentioned Hadiths are just a qualification to that Verse; that is "Except Suratul-Fatiha".

.....

"And remember your LORD within yourself, humbly and with fear and without loudness in words in the mornings, and in the afternoons and be not of those who are neglectful." Q. 7:205

CHAPTER 3

MORALITY AND ITS SAFEGUARDS

“Narrated Abu Umamah (RA): ‘Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) said...And [I (also) guarantee] a home in the highest part of Paradise for a person who has a high standard of character.’ ”

3.1. MORALITY

Morality simply refers to conformity to the rules of right conduct; that is thinking and acting in ways that are consistent with such religious values as justice, love, compassion, honesty, patience, tolerance, generosity, good neighbourliness, modesty, bashfulness, and gentleness.

Francis Hutcheson of the University of Glasgow, Adam Smith’s mentor, divided morality into four parts, namely: ethics and virtue; private rights and natural liberty; familial rights (called Economics); and state and individual rights (called politics).

3.2. SAFEGUARDING MORALITY

Safeguarding Morality is shielding it from immorality and amorality. In particular, it refers to protection of ethics, principles, virtues, decency, and honesty, among others, against decadence, self-indulgence, wickedness, corruption, vices, dishonesty, or indecency.

This means strict avoidance or sincere repentance of or strong rejection to such morally dishonest and indecent practices as slander; pre-marital and extra-marital sex; pornography; sexually offensive movies, music, and dance; bribery; stealing; indecent exposure; jointed hair/Rasta/dreadlocks; pictures of animate creatures; and the Cross.

The need to provide sufficient safeguards against moral decadence in order to defend our Deen is paramount. Of course, preventing our rights to life; family ties; marriages; friendships; businesses, production of goods and services; education; charity; leadership; intellectual, physical, and emotional wellbeing; communal responsibilities; neighbourliness, and sense of cleanliness; among other things, from being ruined by self-indulgence, corruption, excesses, or wickedness is extremely important, as far as Islam as a way of life is concerned.

Safeguard your Morality by preserving your right to life. Don’t ever think of killing yourself, regardless of the circumstance. Remember, committing suicide is a major act

of immorality, which is an act of disbelief. It is proclaimed: “And spend in the way of Allah and cast not yourselves to destruction with your own hands, and do good (to others); surely Allah loves the doers of good.” Q. 2:195

And of course, you don't have to kill another person without a just cause. The following Verse of the Holy Qur-an provides us with clear evidence: “And do not kill any one whom Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause, and whoever is slain unjustly, We have indeed given to his heir authority, so let him not exceed the just limits in slaying; surely he is aided.” Q. 17:33

Let's always keep our family ties from being destroyed by rivalry, misunderstanding, hatred, fault-finding, persecution, or prejudice by holding fast to mutual love, understanding, tolerance, patience, peace, etc.

We must save our conjugal relationships from forced marriages, premarital and extramarital relationships, pornography, indecent exposure, lustful glance and touch, mingling with people of the opposite sex, movies, music, and so on by conforming to the following safeguards, the acceptable standards of marital life: choosing the right spouse, enjoying decent premarital and extramarital relationships, wearing the hijab, being guided by the spirit of mutual love, mercy, and respect, as well as patience.

Protect your family against the Hellfire by keeping yourselves safe from permissive parenting. Be faithful to your religious obligation of teaching your children obedience in general, but not merely indoctrinating them in Salat, by repeatedly putting them right on violations of norms and at the same time by leading exemplary life, demonstrating love, patience, tolerance, compassion, generosity, cleanliness, decency, and honesty, among others.

Make sure they always think and act in accordance with the set standards of behaviour in Islam. Let them understand that accepting the Truth without disputing it and acting according to its dictates is the way forward. And indeed, keep your family safe from the ill effects of TV, Radio, and Computer by strictly controlling them.

Remember, our young ones have been indoctrinated by the TV in particular to believe that excessive desires and animalistic passions are a normal thing. Consequently, adherence to such deviant behaviour as exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex, hugging, or kissing them is the order of the day. Thus violation of religious norms is increasingly becoming the norm. What a retrogressive move!

Indeed, the need to conserve our Deen by raising well-brought-up children, the future ambassadors of Islam, is paramount, isn't it?

We really have to preserve our moral values by keeping them hidden from such secular, libertarian principles, the anti-religious values, the insensible behaviour.

Shield your friendship from misunderstanding, mutual rivalry, evil fondness, lies, envy, hatred, or hypocrisy by always thinking and acting in ways that are consistent with set patterns of Righteousness (Faith-cum-morality) such as being with a good company, mutual respect and understanding, good advice, and decency.

Shield your responsibility as a host by respecting your guests, magnanimously receiving them without offending their sense of decorum by avoiding entertaining them with profane music, dance, or movie, either in your car or residence. Let them feel at home by satisfying them, instead of challenging them or indirectly or otherwise telling them that they bring themselves there. Please, respect what your guest dislikes in order to demonstrate your humility, thereby protecting your civilised life, the hallmark of your Deen. Honour your guest!

Safeguard your Deen by conserving your business, or production of goods and services. Protect your transactions against unjust dealings, bribery, or corruption by being the embodiment of justice, acting within the narrow confines of the Divine Law, the Shari'ah. Indeed, your business dealings are part of your religious duties, so preserve them.

Keep your wealth and charity safe from being ruined by injustice, negligence, show of righteousness, reminders of your generosity, miserliness, extravagance, or ungratefulness by dealing justly, spending moderately, neither too little nor too much, openly and secretly, with the ultimate intention of pleasing Allah and Allah Alone.

Safeguard your leadership against mismanagement. Shield your power and authority from such pointless acts of defiance against Allah's Commandments as injustice and arrogance by acting within the Bounds of the Divine Law, particularly with justice and humility. Remember, you are accountable to your Lord, your Master; therefore, provide adequate safeguards against irresolution, unfairness, discrimination, corruption, bribery, abuse of power, lack of responsiveness to your followers' genuine basic needs, inequality, and so forth by being resolute, just, incorruptible, compassionate, merciful, etc.

Protect your followship against pursuing the personal whim of your group leaders by not emulating their bad examples or impulsive attitudes such as exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex or hugging them, or their condonation of such deviant practices as wearing dreadlocks/Rasta/jointed or unkempt hair and praying with pictures or drawings of human beings and animals.

Shield your obedience to your religious leaders from blind followship by resisting the urge to transgress the Islamic spiritual and moral bounds, regardless of the stance of your group leadership. Remember, Islamic Principles rise above anything else.

We ought to preserve our health. We should, as a matter of fact, prevent our intellectual, physical, and emotional wellbeing from health hazards. We need to shield our minds from such impediments to clear conscience as smoking and drinking, not forgetting evil promptings or suggestions connected to being in association with the devils. We must also keep our eyes, legs, hands, liver, lungs, etc, from harm, injury, physical attack, or diseases. And indeed, we have to protect our spiritual and moral chamber against not only spiritual diseases like hypocrisy, arrogance, and envy, but also against a build-up of fatty deposits (cholesterol, etc.) on the walls of the coronary arteries, smoking, high blood pressure (hypertension), or lack of exercise.

It is necessary to shield good neighbourliness from discrimination, intolerance, inequality, religious or political or tribal bias, the preconceived notion about others, etc., by strictly adhering to at least the humanitarian principles of friendliness, kindness, cooperation, helpfulness, consideration, hospitality, respect, or care. Conserve your Deen by keeping the above-mentioned qualities of a Believer from ruination, for The Prophet (pbuh) said, “He is not a believer. He is not a believer. He is not a believer. He was asked, ‘Who is he?’ He replied, ‘He whose neighbour is not safe from his harm.’ ”

Cleanliness is next to Godliness; it is half of Faith. Therefore, protect your hygiene, sanitation, purity, or spotlessness against such spiritual, moral, and material blemishes as environmental pollution and bodily filth by conforming to the Islamic principles of cleanliness. Remember to safeguard your Religion by always thinking and acting with manners that are in agreement with an impressively high standard of decency in Islam.

We need to prevent our chastity from being muddied by indecency by wearing hijab, by not mingling with people of the opposite sex, by not exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex, by not meeting non-mahram (someone you can marry; someone you should cover yourself in front of) in an enclosed place, by avoiding lustful glance and touch, by not watching Hausa, Dagoni, Japanese, American, Chinese, Ghanaian, or horror movies, not forgetting Series.

Let's not dispute reasonable argument; none of these names can validate a movie which is characterised by such religiously unacceptable behaviour as kissing, hugging, sexual intercourse, fondling, indecent exposure, and drinking. All these are haram under such a circumstance, and watching them is equally haram. We must always remember and consider this.

We have to reiterate that the wisdom behind the Command of lowering the gaze is to shield our eyes from lustful glances; and that is the limit set by Allah, saying:

“Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do.” Q. 24:30

“And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful.” Q. 24:31

Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah: “I asked Allah’s Messenger (pbuh) about the sudden glance (that is cast) on the face (of a non-mahram.’ He commanded me that I should turn away my eyes.’ ” Sahih Muslim 5372

If the first but unintentional look at the indecent is Allah’s limit, then transgressing this bound by buying, selling, fixedly watching, or promoting such movies is even more serious than the usual lustful glances outside movies. The following Statement of Allah vividly explains the recompense of those who act outside the bounds of the Shari’áh, the Islamic Law: “And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and goes beyond His limits, He will cause him to enter fire to abide in it, and he shall have an abasing chastisement.” Q. 4:14

Save your gentleness from roughness by acting with kindness, tenderness, mildness, or calmness. The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Keep to gentleness and avoid harshness and coarseness. Gentleness is not found in anything without adorning it, and it is not withdrawn from anything without shaming it.” (Muslim)

We need to preserve our patience by keeping it hidden from anger, hatred, trials, persecution, etc.;

our justice by safeguarding it against anger, hatred, discrimination, craftiness, envy, tribalism, and bias, among others;

our love by keeping it safe from hatred, anger, prejudice, envy, and so on;

our humility by saving it from arrogance -- looking down on others, intentionally showing no respect, rejecting the Truth, disputing Guidance, etc.;

our sincerity by shielding it from hypocrisy -- pretense of Piety and of Righteousness -- betrayal of trust, hating The Prophet (pbuh) and his Traditions (i.e. the beard, salaam, etc.), deception, teasing believers, rudeness or embarrassing people, thwarting the progress of Islam, among other things;

our bashfulness by protecting it against nudity, indecent exposure, and other similar acts that transgress moral bounds;

and our truthfulness by preventing it from falsehood – cock-and-bull story, deceit, lies, fabrication, trickery, forgery, craftiness, or moral dishonesty.

Our pace and balance can reveal our attitude, so keep them safe from uncontrolled walking, raising shoulders, unreasonably admiring ourselves, or intentionally showing no respect. Allah (swt) warns, “And swell not thy cheek (in pride) at men, nor walk in insolence through the earth, for Allah loves not any arrogant boaster.” Q. 31:18

Let’s shield our night/sleep from the Devil’s aggressive stance by sleeping on the right side, if not possible then on the left or back, but not on the stomach.

Ya’eesh ibn Tihfah al-Ghifaari reported that his father said, “I stayed as a guest with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), with those of the poor whom he hosted. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) came out in the night to check up on his guests and saw me lying on my stomach. He prodded me with his foot and said, ‘Do not lie in this manner, for it is a way of lying that Allah hates.’”

According to another report, the Prophet (pbuh) pushed him with his foot and woke him up and said, “Do not lie like this, for this is how the people of Hell lie.” [Reported by Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi, and Abu Dawood]

We really have to conserve our sleep by resorting to this supplication: Bismika Allahumma amootu wa ahya (In Your Name, Oh Allah, I die and I live); and upon waking up, say this: La ilaaha illallaahu Wahidul Qahhar, Rabbul Samaawati Wal-Ardi wa maa bainahumal Azzeezul Ghaffaaru (There is no god but Allah, the One, the Victorious, Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving).

The following narration has added force to the safeguards against Satan’s tactics of using tools of laziness and procrastination: Abu Huraira reported, “The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, ‘The Shaitan ties three knots at the back of the head of anyone of you when he goes to sleep, striking each knot and saying ‘you have a long night ahead, so sleep.’ If he wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot is undone. If he does

Wuduh, two knots are undone. If he prays, all the knots are undone, and he starts the day energetic and in a good mood. Otherwise, he starts the day in a bad mood and feeling lazy.’ ” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Protect your time-consciousness in relation to Allah-Consciousness against negligence of religious duties, forgetfulness in respect of Allah’s Remembrance, procrastination with respect to acceptance of Guidance, repentance of wrong-doings, and acting on Guidance. Allah states, “I swear by the time, Most surely man is in loss, Except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.” Q. 103:1-3

Remember the high level of Islamic consciousness of the society of the era of bliss, the Best Ummah of the time of Rassullullah, the Messenger of Allah, and the Sahabah, his disciples, as stated in the following words: “...Upon hearing the adhan, the merchant would instantly put aside his scale or leave it on the ground as it is and rush to the Masjid. Likewise, the blacksmith would leave his hammer on his anvil...and immediately make his way to the Masjid.” (Osman Nur; Society of The Age of Bliss, page 72--73)

As a consequence of such praiseworthy quality of the Sahabah, the following Verse was revealed: “Men whom neither trade nor selling diverts from the Remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of Prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about.” (an-Nur, 37)

We really have to provide adequate safeguards against such contradictory defining terms of Globalisation, the alleged World Constitution, as disenchantment with Religion and homogenisation of culture or cultural diffusion by committing ourselves to intellectual Jihad, to indoctrination of our young ones in Islamic Values so as to internalise them, making them as important, natural part of their character, and of course to reinforcement of compliance.

Indeed, we don’t have to blindfold ourselves after we have been endowed with the Light of Guidance. Do we have to resort to retrogression, the old, bad thing, the hallmark of the global villager, the victim of primitive civilisation? Of course No!

Should we look urban in appearance but rural in conduct? Even the village woman who exposes her breasts or wears transparent garments or singlet (typical of women, usually worn in private) in the household or in the village should be called to sanity, the sensible behaviour.

What then do we say of an urban woman who copies the rural woman, going an extra mile to wear miniskirt and bake her head in an oven, the hair drier? What a retrogressive civilisation!

I hope you do not risk your reasoning faculty, sight, hearing, etc., do you?

We must protect our speech against gheebah (backbiting), buhtan (slander), nameemah (malicious gossip), insults, and other abusive languages by refining our talk, for such are forbidden in Islam. Allah (swt) states: “O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.” Q. 49:12

It was narrated from Abu Huraira (ra) that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: “Do you know what gheebah (backbiting) is?’ They said, ‘Allah and His Messenger know best.’ He said, ‘Saying something about your brother that he dislikes.’ It was said, ‘What if what I say about my brother is true?’ He said, ‘...then you have backbitten about him, and if it is not true, then you have slandered him.” (Muslim)

But the person wronged is allowed by the Shari’ah to publicly lay blame on the wrongdoer, other than that they have no right to point fingers at or abuse them, referring to them as thieves, drunkards, etc. If not wronged, the least we can do is to sincerely admonish such wrongdoers, since they have not offended us. What a civilised way of life!

The following Qur-anic Verse has left nothing to the imagination: “Allah does not love the public utterance of hurtful speech unless (it be) by one to whom injustice has been done; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing.” Q. 4:148

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Two people who insult each other will have the sin of what they say, but the sin will be entirely upon the one who initiated it as long as the wronged party does not transgress bounds.” (Sahih Muslim – 2587)

Indeed, “There is no good in most of their secret talks except (in him) who enjoins charity or goodness or reconciliation between people; and whoever does this seeking Allah's pleasure, We will give him a mighty reward.” Q. 4:114

Keep your intellect safe from not only such impediments to clear conscience as smoking and drinking, but also from craftiness (cleverness in dishonest way) by always thinking and acting on Knowledge of Guidance, but not on the dictates of your

intellect. Shield your intellectual refinement from free thought or intellectual freedom by having your free will limited by Allah's Will, Guidance.

Let's face it; if praying with or in the midst of pictures of humans and animals and conversing in the toilet or bathroom while answering the call of nature or urinating are strictly forbidden and are generally accepted as such, then needless to say that praying with or in the midst of pictures of the parts of the body or having such images in front of our garments or talking on phone in such places is equally prohibited, let's bear it in mind.

We ought to safeguard our commonsense against unreasonable expectations or illogical reasoning, oughtn't we?

If watching pornography is haram, is watching a pornographic film of a married couple justifiable? Protect your commonsense against secular reasoning, the libertarian, but not religious, way of thinking. Be religiously inclined!

We really have to conserve our Deeds of Faith in respect of Deeds of Righteousness, the very praise-worthy qualities that bind us, in order to be guided by a sense of morality.

In fact, if we are truly guided by a sense of Worship, especially Prayer, then we stand an obvious chance of being guided by a sense of morality, with the tendency to think and act in ways that are in agreement with the set patterns of behaviour in Islam, as Piety finds expression in Righteousness.

Of course, sincere Prayer is always shown in such commendable qualities as love, patience, justice, and generosity, since that prevents evil and indecency. It is stated: "Establish Prayer, for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds." Q. 29:45

Preserve your Righteousness so as to enjoy a blemish-free reputation, the hallmark of the True Believer.

Let's always remember and consider this.

CHAPTER 4

DIGNITY AND ITS SAFEGUARDS

4.1. DIGNITY

In ordinary usage the term “Dignity” denotes respect and status. With respect to human dignity, Immanuel Kant held that “free will” is essential; human dignity is related to agency, the ability of humans to choose their own actions.

Human dignity denotes self-respect, high esteem, or distinction. It is by Faith and indeed by excellence in such Deeds of it as Prayer, Fasting, and Zikr, as well as justice, compassion, and patience, not forgetting clear conscience, that we can be distinguished from others, but nothing else.

Every human being has an innate right to respect and ethical treatment, so have we the inborn tendency to have Faith in our Creator; but then, failure to have our free will limited by our Creator’s Will, Guidance, distorts our natural right to honour and just treatment, leading to low self esteem or deprivation of sense of pride.

The following Qur-anic Verses have attested to the foregoing facts: “Certainly We created man in the best make. Then We render him the lowest of the low. Except those who believe and do good, so they shall have a reward never to be cut off.” Q. 95:4-6

And indeed, “Abasement is made to cleave to them wherever they are found, except under a covenant with Allah and a covenant with men ...this is because they disbelieved in the communications of Allah....this is because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.” Q. 3:112

It is important to note that the well-chosen ones, especially the Prophets (pbut), have had Honour, which is in grades, bestowed on them by Allah (swt). It is evident: “Those Messengers! We preferred some of them to others; to some of them Allah spoke (directly); others He raised to degrees (of honour); and to Isa (Jesus), the son of Maryam (Mary), We gave clear proofs and evidences, and supported him with Ruh-ul Qudus [Jibrael (Gabriel)]... Q. 2:253

Others, other than the well-chosen, have earned honour on account of Faith and of excellence in such Deeds of Faith as Prayer, Fasting, and Zikr, as well as justice, compassion, and patience. The following historical background attests to the fact that honour is earned through Faith, but not merely through amassing wealth or occupying a lofty position: “And from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said...**Surely I believe in your Lord**, therefore hear me. It was said: Enter the garden. He said: **O would that my people had known of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones!**” Q. 36:20-27

The most important thing to remember is that one is said to be honourable in the Sight of Allah if and only one measures up to the set standards of Piety and Righteousness by being guided by Faith, by sense of morality, by clear conscience, and indeed by sense of decorum, but not merely by ones admiration or social, economic, political, or religious standing, rank, position, category, or class, let's bear it in mind!

4.2. SAFEGUARDING DIGNITY

By preventing your Tenets of Belief from Kufr, you are honoured in the Sight of Allah, thus escaping from humiliation or abasement, both in this World and in the Hereafter, for your deeds are acceptable and you are saved from the Hellfire. Indeed, if you are guided by Faith, then you are a dignified person. What a distinguished personality!

Having provided sufficient safeguards against moral decadence, wickedness, corruption, or dishonesty, we might be walking on the side of angels, saved from cutting of hands, injury, or loss of eye (s) for stealing; from beating for fornication or stoning to death for adultery; from sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS, gonorrhea, and syphilis for promiscuity, fornication, or prostitution; from insult or counter abuse for abusive language; from curse or killing for homosexuality and lesbianism; from imprisonment for stealing, murder, or corruption, especially in non-Islamic state; from killing or imprisonment for murder; from imprisonment and/or beating for rape; and from drunken stupor and reeking alcohol for drinking alcohol; from madness or insensible behaviour for smoking wee, among other things.

But if the stigmatisation, humiliation, imprisonment, or embarrassment is not as a result of committing any degrading act, then one's innocence is sufficient as one's sense of pride, before Allah (swt) and Believers. Prophet Yusuf's (AS) imprisonment exemplifies such a circumstance. He, like John the Baptist, was honourable in the Sight of Allah and His Party of Believers.

By protecting our conscience against such stumbling blocks to clear sense of right and wrong as smoking and drinking, we are likely to think reasonably and then act sensibly. Indeed, if we are truly guided by clear conscience, then we stand a clear chance of feeling a pang of remorse for attempting to or for having committed a sin, thus unable to persist in committing such a sin.

Well, if one doesn't feel guilty for openly or otherwise defying Allah's Commands, then one should know that one is not guided by any unambiguous understanding of the distinction between right and wrong, and probably not being on Guidance.

For instance, if one's conscience, the judgment of the intellect that distinguishes right from wrong, allows one to continuously watch or listen to sexually offensive movies or music, especially with one's children, then one should know that one is not guided by clear conscience, and probably one is being overpowered by the Devil. May Allah forbid!

Imaging a right-minded person admonishing you the parent with your children to stop watching or listening to such sexy but insinuating movies or music, what will be your position in the family? The elderly or the childish? So protect your honour!

Your sense of maturity is your dignity, so save it from infantile behaviour by resisting the urge to converse in the toilet or bathroom, while responding to the nature's call or bathing or urinating. Protect your adulthood against such babyish practices as wearing a pant or 'boxer,' or exposing the breasts (particularly females), navels, and thighs before your non-mahram (someone you can marry), in whose presence you are obliged to cover those parts of the body.

Your obedience to your Creator gives you a sense of worth. Therefore, to conserve your dignity as a Believer in Islamic Monotheism, just protect your Imaan against such Faith destroyers as Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, and Ancestral Sacrifice; your morality against acts of immorality like stealing, murder, indecency, dishonesty, and injustice; and your conscience against smoking, drinking, and operations of the Devil and the devils (demons/jinn).

Reasonably, if we use Allah-Consciousness as a shield against pornography, movies, music, fornication, backbiting, stealing, gossip, malice, lies, smoking, drinking, slander, murder, suicide, bribery, and other morally dishonest and indecent practices, by wholeheartedly accepting the Truth, by strictly avoiding sins or strongly rejecting religiously unacceptable behaviour, and by resolutely holding on to righteous deeds, then surely we are on course, enjoying blemish-free reputation.

Conclusively, we can now say in no uncertain terms that real honour is earned on account of Piety and Righteousness. The Final Message has added force to the

foregoing discussion in the following Words: “O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” Q. 49:13

CHAPTER 5

THE DA'WAH DIMENSION OF SAFEGUARDING ISLAM

Having internalised the original Islamic Values, making them as important, natural part of our lives, the next logical step to take is to share such Principles with others. We therefore have to add another dimension to the preceding safeguards against faithlessness, false worship, and immorality; and that of course is well thought-out Da'wah, the invitation to the Will of Allah, Guidance.

This act of sharing the Message of Islam is an Order from Allah, the significance of which can be seen in the Holy Qur-an, for example: "You are the best of the nations raised up for (the benefit of) men; you enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong and believe in Allah..." Q. 3:110 Moreover, "O you who believe! be careful of (your duty to) Allah and seek means of nearness to Him and strive hard in His way that you may be successful." Q. 5:35 Also, "And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong, and these it is that shall be successful." Q. 3:104 Besides, "And who speaks better than he who calls to Allah while he himself does good, and says: I am surely of those who submit?" Q. 41:33 Further, "Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way." Q. 16:125

The following Prophetic Statements have further lent credence to the significance of Da'wah, a clear manifestation of Imaan:

"Whoever directs someone to do good will gain the same reward as the one who does good."

"Whoever calls to guidance will receive the same reward as the one who follows him without any decrease in the reward of his follower."

"For Allah to guide someone by your hand is better for you than having red camels."

Camels were considered the most valuable property in ancient Arabia, and the red variety was the most prized of all.

"Convey from me, even if it be only a single verse."

At this juncture, in pursuit of our collective, rather than individual, goal of safeguarding our "Deen" and "Darajaat," we ought to strictly adhere to the set standards of enjoining

good and forbidding evil, firmly and reasonably using the mouth, the hand, and the heart in doing so, instead of being comfortable with irresolution, the inability to make up our minds to put deviants right on serious violations of Islamic Principles.

Strictly speaking, forbidding evil with our hands, tongues, and hearts is a clear manifestation of Imaan. Ibn Mas 'ud (RA) relates that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "No Prophet that Allah sent before me in a nation but had from among his nation disciples and companions, who went by his way and obeyed his orders. These were followed by successors who professed what they did not practise and practised what they were not ordered. He who struggles against them with his hand is a believer; he who struggles against them with his heart is a believer; and he who struggles against them with his tongue is a believer. Beyond that, there is not a grain of Faith."

It therefore stands to reason that resorting to liberal interpretation of "Kitabullah," the Book of Allah, such as the interpretation of the meaning of the following Statement of Allah: "Invite to the Way of your Lord with wisdom..." (Q. 16:125) as a way of deterring people from correcting serious breaches of Islamic Norms such as wearing dreadlocks/Rasta, exposing pictures of human beings and animals, watching movies, and listening to music in the Mosque is beyond all reason in that such leaning is founded on secular, libertarian principles, but not religious.

Of course, the inability on the part of our leaders to make up their minds to check the spread of secular, libertarian values such as pre-marital sex, alleged Islamic music and movies (Hausa, Dagbane, etc.), other movies (horror, Japanese, china, series, etc.), pornography, exchanging handshakes with people of the opposite sex or hugging them makes matters worse than before.

Let's not confuse irresolution with wisdom; allowing violations of Islamic Norms to go unchallenged defies logic, since we are obliged to prevent such deviant behaviour as wearing dreadlocks/Rasta/jointed hair/wigs from becoming standard practice. For instance, people wearing dreadlocks or garments with pictures of human being and animals on them or with tattoos on their bodies are permitted to enter the Mosque to pray under the pretext that they are not leading the congregation, a fact that seriously undermines our effort towards safeguarding our Religion. That is unfortunate and indeed an affront to the integrity of our leadership.

The danger in egging deviants on is that as their number increases, we tend to risk our Worship, for they being in our midst might render our Prayer, supplication, or invocation unacceptable. Believe it or not, even the presence of one of them can have a negative impact on our Acts of Devotion. The following narration is a historical background to such a possibility:

"It was narrated that in the days that Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh) wandered with Bani Israel (Children of Israel) in the desert, an intense drought befell them. Together, they raised their hands towards the heavens praying for the blessed rain to come. Then, to the astonishment of Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh) and all those watching, the few scattered clouds that were in the sky vanished, the heat poured down, and the drought intensified.

It was revealed to Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh) that there was a sinner amongst the tribe of Bani Israel (Children of Israel) who had disobeyed Allah (SWT) for more than forty years of his life.

"Let him separate himself from the congregation," Allah (SWT) told Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh). "Only then shall I shower you all with rain." ...As Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh) and the people of Bani Israel (Children of Israel) waited for the sinner to step forward, the clouds hugged the sky and the rain poured. Prophet Musa / Moses (pbuh) asked Allah (SWT), "O Allah, you blessed us with rain even though the sinner did not come forward."

And Allah (SWT) replied, "O Musa, it is for the repentance of that very person that I blessed all of Bani Israel (Children of Israel) with water."...?" [Saheeh al-Bukhari]

Let's not escape from reality; the truth is that the sinner's repentance was accepted because he was not in the process of committing the sin. But in the case of a Rastafarian, acceptance of repentance is not possible in that he is wearing the dreadlock whiles praying. The question now is: Can a fornicator's repentance be accepted whiles he is in the act of fornicating? Reasonably, he has to finish performing the act before repenting of it, hasn't he?

We really have to confront our thoughts or reasons with Guidance, the acceptable standards of Piety and Righteousness in Islam. Truly, in order not to allow our logic to be muddied by our inordinate desires, we need to put aside our own expectation and take it from the Qur-anic standpoint that Allah's Forgiveness and Mercy are on account of repentance, let's bear it in mind. It is corroborated: "Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." Q. 3:89

My respected brothers and sisters in "Deen," let's be faithful to our religious obligation of not only absorbing Islamic values, making them significant, natural part of our lives, but also of relaying Guidance to others, encouraging them to uphold the Truth, to do good, and to respect and preserve Islamic Values, not forgetting those of human decency, and at the same time putting deviants right on violations of such Norms. That of course is the way forward.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, it is imperative to reiterate that we can only safeguard our religion and dignity by shielding our minds from such impediments to clear conscience as smoking and drinking, as well as the devils' evil suggestions or promptings and such secular, libertarian principles as free thought or intellectual freedom; and our hearts from false desires or chronic diseases of the heart like envy, hypocrisy, and arrogance.

With that, we are likely to have our free will, the ability to choose our own actions, limited by Allah's Will, Guidance, with our mouths/tongues, ears, eyes hands, legs, and private parts, among other things, obeying the dictates of such sound, refined intellect and strong, sincere heart, since there are connections between the two, or better still between thoughts and emotions.

Of course, a sound mind has the potential to suppress off-putting thoughts, and a pure heart of Faith to hold back unreasonable feelings. And because false desires and negative thoughts are aroused by the Devil, Faith and clear conscience are what it takes to control emotions and actions, resulting in sensible behaviour, and vice versa.

Whiles clear conscience connects to positive emotions, facilitating positive actions, distorted conscience links to unhelpful desires, smoothing the process of insensible behaviour.

However, for a person who is not guided by Faith but has clear conscience, their intellect may suppress unconstructive feelings aroused by the Devil, thus contrasting negative thoughts with positive ones, resulting in positive actions. Indeed, clear conscience is of the essence.

It is encouraging to note that for the Believer who is of little Faith (weak Believer) and whose conscience is somewhat distorted, their conscience, the judgment of the intellect that distinguishes right from wrong, allows them to express negative but minor emotions, thus unable to fully control their actions.

As for those of absolute Faith (Strong Believers), who are guided by clear conscience, they are able to resist the urge to take delight in not only such sectarian, pagan practices as Soothsaying, Demonic Protection, and Ancestral or neo-Ancestral Sacrifice, but also in secular, libertarian principles such as pornography, sexy but insinuating movies and music, and indecent exposure.

No wonder the True Believer can control their own emotions and actions. What a sense of decorum, the controlled behaviour!

Indeed, all those who have adhered to Kitabullah (the Book of Allah) and the Traditions of The Prophet (pbuh), the very structure of civilised life, are guided not only by Faith, but also by a sense of Worship, of Morality, of decorum, and indeed by clear conscience, with the tendency of being faithful to their communal obligation of sharing the success of Glory (Guidance) with both Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly those at the other end of the religious spectrum.

Remember, in Utter Darkness of Ignorance of Guidance, Even Those With Eyes Can't See; And so, With The Light of Knowledge of Guidance, We Don't Have to Blindfold Ourselves, Do we?

Needless to say, because there is Light and many have eyes and have not closed them and therefore can clearly see the road ahead, even the blind stand a clear chance of being led to the Right Path, a fact which indicates that we can't plead ignorance of our actions and inaction. Indeed, Guidance is of the essence. What a welcome restorative!

Truly, you can't have it both ways; you wouldn't have it any other way too; except that same way, and that is all the way!

Long live Islam and long live Sense of Islam. Islam all the way; Islam the only way.

Wa' akhuru da'wana anil Hamdu Lillahi Rabbil aalamiin!
(And the last of our prayers is Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.)