

ISSUE 1

Q
MAJD



Rules
Engagement



Short
Message

Qabeelat's Message

Sarah Awan / Omair Rana

Alhumduillah we have completed yet another successful seminar. 'Rules of Engagement' has been our sixth and one of the most awesome seminars in Toronto MashAllah! We were truly blessed to have Shaikh Mohammad Ibn Faqih teach us this ever so important class and from what we've heard, he truly loved his experience in Toronto with QMajd! May Allah subhana wa ta'ala reward the Shaikh and bring him back to Toronto soon inshAllah (Ameen).

QMajd has grown tremendously over the past year since its inception mashAllah. It only seems like yesterday when us Torontonians were anxiously waiting for our first AlMaghrib seminar back in May 2005. Since then, we have truly evolved into a 'Monster' Qabeelah with well over 200 students attending each seminar. What truly makes QMajd so amazing is the fact that we have a dedicated and strong returning student body which takes its Islamic education seriously, and focuses on implementing it in our societies. May Allah subhana wa ta'ala help us achieve our goals (Ameen), for everything we have done, and that we possess is because of Him.

Also, we'd like to thank our awesome newsletter team for their hard work and dedication. May Allah subhana wa ta'ala reward us all and put barakah in our efforts. Ameen.

While you may wonder and/or may admire the cover page, there holds a deep meaning behind what is being portrayed, from the broken window to the child in the background. The title page itself represents the cause and effect of a healthy relationship between two parents, the broken glass represents a broken relationship, and its effects on the ones who are the most fragile, the children. Would you ever place a child close to shattered glass? definitely not, same goes with parenting, if you wish to keep your children away from leaving a scar in their lives, we should make sure we build stronger bonds between our spouses so our children are left scarless, insha'Allah.

Story Behind the
COVER
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WHY GIVE DAWAH?



realize the consequences of our actions. On the Day of Judgment, will we be able to answer Allaah for not conveying the message to the people whom we live with? Work with? Study with? Commute with? Carry out transactions with?

Still not convinced? Let's ponder upon a few verses insha Allaah.

“Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: “O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing.” (Luqman 31: 13)

The GREATEST thulm that a person can ever commit is the one toward the Creator of all that exists!

“Surely Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases; and whoever associates anything with Allah, he devises indeed a great sin.” (Nisaa 4: 48)

Many of us experienced times when we ponder whether or not to give dawah to people around us. Something holds us back. Thoughts cross our mind: *What will I say? How do I approach him/her? Will they think I'm weird? What if I give bad dawah?*

By the time we decide, we miss the opportunity! *Not like they'd become Muslim anyway. Whats the point? I'll just do dawah by being a Muslim.* We prevent the thoughts from arising again. And we may or may not ever



This is the only action that He will not forgive.

“And as to those who believe and do good deeds, He will pay them fully their rewards; and Allah does not love the unjust.” (Al-Imran 3: 57)

They are without the love of Allaah, and committing the greatest thulm, and that prevents them from success.

Should we not try to convey the message to stop the greatest thulm? What happens if we neglect our duty?

“And (as for) these towns, We destroyed them when they acted unjustly, and We have appointed a time for their destruction.” (Al-Kahf 18: 59)

Allaah will seize and destroy the unjust and their town!

Whose towns? Are we not living in their towns? Will we get punished too?

The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “If people see a wrong-doer and they do not take him by his hand (to stop him), then soon Allaah will inflict them all with a punishment from Him.” (Al-Tirmidhi)

How do we help the wrong doers (thaleemoon)?

The Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “Help your brother whether he be the oppressor or the

oppressed.” The companions asked, how should we help the oppressor?. The Prophet (sal Allahu alayhi wa sallam) said, “prevent him from committing thulm, and that is helping him “(Al-Bukhari)

Subhan Allaah, in this case, both the oppressed and the oppressor commit shirk!

So wait, are we responsible for the shirk disbelievers commit?

Then, if they turn away, thy duty (O Muhammad) is but plain conveyance (of the message). (Surah Nahl 16:82)

We are only responsible only for our actions, whether or not we conveyed the message. Based on all these commands from Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta’aala), a person must convey the message as regularly as possible and in the best manner and with the best speech! Let us make more effort to do our duties and to follow the commands of Allaah.

What is considered the best speech?

And who is better in speech than he who [says: My Lord is Allah (believes in His Oneness),” and then stands firm (acts upon His Order), and] invites (men) to Allah’s (Islamic Monotheism) and does righteous deeds, and says: “I am one of the Muslims.” (41, 33)

May Allaah (Subhaanahu wa ta’aala) forgive our shortcomings and accept our deeds in trying to fulfill our obligations! (Ameen!)



Khushu in Salah

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

*I rushed into the room and, checked the time, only 5 minutes left for my break. I guess I should just pray the fardh salah and get out of there in time. **Allaahu Akbar** ... hey this carpet design looks awkward! **Allaahu Akbar**...oh man, should've tied my belt lower, it's too tight! **Allaahu Akbar**...When is the deadline for my project? What was I supposed to do before work? I wonder if my friends are waiting for me at the mall... better call them right after salah. Oh, wait which rakah am I at? Hmm is that three or four. Probably four. May Allah forgive me, I cant remember! **Salamu alaikum wa rahmatullaah**. Did I have wudoo?!! Oh man, I'm already late! I got up and wore my shoes and jolted out of the room.*

Sounds familiar?

Great, plenty of time to get ready. What should I wear? Oh yes, I like this suit: looks nice and it's comfortable as well. I even feel nice in these! Ok, what else. My portfolio, check. My watch, check. Matching shoes, check. Ok let me review some of the notes

just in-case they ask me that at the interview. Check. Better leave now to get their early. Thirty minutes early! No problem, just sit here patiently till they call me in. Oh, wow time almost flew, its my turn! Ok, just be cool, and remember to concentrate on details! Better be careful, he might be my boss. Give him all the answers to get this job..."Yes sir, I'll learn this as well. Yes sir, I have studied these concepts as well as applied them already."...Hmm this isn't bad, I actually know these things! Good thing I reviewed in advance!

Wow, that interview was long! He asked me so many questions. I think I did well. I hope I get the job! I better jot down the things I wasn't able to understand. It will help significantly towards my next interview.

Sounds familiar?

Is it any surprise that most Muslims lack khushoo in salah? As described by the above two scenarios, where does salah lie in

terms of our priorities? We strive to understand and implement everything that might benefit us in this duniya, yet how meager the effort we put in for the *required* duties towards *our Creator!* No doubt, the salah we perform in such lack of concentration and effort, is doomed for rejection! How much do we benefit from our salah? Or has salah in itself has become difficult to establish? Do we even know how to come closer to Allaah? We can come close to Allaah, by following his commands, and amongst the very first command following tawheed is to establish salah.

“Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their salah (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness.” [al-Mu’minoos 23:1-2]

In order to attain khushoo’ we must have knowledge of the main obstacles in our path.

Shaytan’s number one project is diverting us from salah, as the prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) mentioned, the first thing that our religion loses will be khushoo’.

Khushoo’ means calmness, serenity, tranquility, dignity and humility. It comes from fearing Allah in a calm manner; the heart stands before the Lord in humility and submission. Salah is extremely difficult, except for the people who have khushoo’.

“And seek assistance through patience and prayer, and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.” [al-Baqarah 2:45]

How can we attain Khushoo’?

1. Know the benefits of khushoo, to motivate you.
2. Know the disadvantages of no khushoo, fear the lack of it.
3. Avoid anything that hampers your goal of attaining khushoo.
4. Perform every action that helps you reach it!

Here are a few suggestions to start you off!

- Focus what you say and do during salah.
- Ponder on Quran's recitation, and perform dhikr, and duaa.
- Remember you are speaking to Allah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala). Try to worship Him as if you see Him. And know that even though you can't see him, He

can see you.

- The more you taste salah's sweetness, the more salah attracts you; strengthen your iman to achieve this.
- Prepare yourself for prayer properly.
- Repeat the words of the adhaan after the muadhin
- Pronounce the du’aa’ to be recited after the adhaan
- Make du’aa’ between the adhaan and the iqamah
- Perform wudoo’ properly, say *bismillaah* before it and say the du’aa’ after it
- Use siwaak to cleanse and perfume the mouth that will recite Qur’aan in a short while
- Wear your best and cleanest clothes. Allaah is most deserving of seeing us in best forms! Clean, pleasant-smelling clothes are also more comfortable and relaxing, unlike clothes for sleep or work.
- Move at a measured pace during prayer, do not rush!
- Remember death while praying
- Pray as if you won't be able to pray again, ever
- One day, our prayer will be the last one, and we won't know it until death comes.
- Think about the ayaat and adhkaar recited during the prayer and interact with them
- Ponder on meanings of ayat, study tafsir regularly-- otherwise how can you fully enjoy even reading the Qur'an?
- Repeat ayaat (Prophet (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) repeated them at times until morning).
- Interact with ayaat (praise, ask question, seek refuge, ask for mercy, etc).
- Memorize Qur'an and duas for different parts of prayer and think of the meaning during recitation..
- Pause at the end of each ayah.
- Recite in slow, rhythmic tones (tarteel) and beautify your voice in recitation.
- Know that Allaah responds to prayers; He answers each ayah read if you recite it with khushoo!
- Pray with a barrier (sutrah) in front of you and pray close to it to avoid distractions.
- Looking at the place of prostration.



- Vary the surahs, ayaat, adhkaar and du'aas you recite in prayer.

Many other methods exist to help improve your khushoo--gain knowledge about all that benefits your salah and strive harder towards it insha Allaah!

Lastly, the following is a reflection of what we all must strive to achieve while realizing that we will *always* require more knowledge and practice in improving our

salah and ourselves. May Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala) help us perform our salah with proper khushoo' and accept them from us. (Ameen!)

*We have been studying here for hours, I can't wait to relieve myself with salah! Is it time yet? Maaan, still half an hour! All this work makes me really realize that meaning of that hadith, **seek comfort in salah.***

Perfect, it's time! "Hey guys, please

excuse me. I have an obligatory prayer soon. I'll be back shortly, please do not do my section of the assignment, I'll come and take of that myself." They all look up from behind their books, "Sure, Fatima." The rest nodded.

*Finally! Ok, do I have enough time? Yes. Let me do wudoo' first before the rush begins. **Bismillaah.** Alhamdulillah, the water feels great! I feel fresh again. SubhanAllaah.*

Ok, they haven't yet started the salah. I guess I can read my mushaf till then. "Verily with every hardship there is ease." Alhamdulillah. That was so relevant to me! It's like Allaah is talking directly to me through this Qur'an! Alhamdulillah. They are giving the aqamah, finally.

*And I prayed, how soon **the salah ended. Let me pray two more rakats before I go back. Wow, I actually spent 15 minutes! Alhamdulillah that felt so great. I have to return to studies. Allaah, I know I didn't pray enough, for You deserve much more worship than what I offered. I wonder if You will accept it from me. Astaghfirullaah, ya Rabb. Forgive me in my shortcomings. (Ameen)***

Even though I felt sad for not having more time to finish nafl salah, I feel much better then before. The Qur'an reading and salah totally opened my mind and motivated me to try harder for finishing up my work. I left to join the study session.

Ok lets get this done. Hmm hey you know what? I know how to solve this....before we knew it, we were done! The non-muslims asked, "Fatima, what exactly did you do in your prayer? You left so tired and you returned completed hyped up! Did they drug you?" And I smiled, before giving them my answer...

Changing Habits

Sadaf Ishaque's



FROM PROCRASTINATION TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

How often is it that we hear ourselves say, “Oh man, I really need to change that about myself,” yet we end up doing nothing except talk? Is it because we have really no incentive to change that specific behavior? In all honesty, I feel guilty about particular things I do, but I really don't take the steps to change the habit. By attending *Rules of Engagement* I truly feel energized and pumped up and I could not resist but to form a plan of how I would change my behaviors.

After all, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said “Actions are but by intentions and every man shall have but that which he intended...” (Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Therefore, to have the best *adaab* (fine manners), we need to acquire the best of values (*akhlaaq*) and principles required of us from Allah, subhanahu wa ta'ala (Glory be to Him), and we have, indeed, “...in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise

of Allah” (Qur'an 33:21).

So without further ado, here is my personal recipe for Ramadhan.

Step One: Decide on virtues! I decided on four virtues (patience, punctuality, modesty/humility, and truthfulness) that I really wanted to focus on and make part of my daily life. What do I mean by all these virtues?

As sabr: Sabr includes *sabr* from anger--I imagine that's the most common type of patience, although I should also focus on patience in times of distress and hardship, and in times of good fortune. *Remember to close your eyes when you feel angry, and think of the result if you deal with it patiently!*

Punctuality:

In deen: praying salah on time or as soon as I have an opportunity, reading Qur'an ('I said I will read a page therefore I must read it today'), sleeping right after praying Isha.

In dunya: don't waste time on the internet, make a comprehensive plan today for things to do tomorrow in order to save time and maximize productivity. I'm hoping punctuality will result in productivity, khushoo' in Salah, and honesty because I will continuously check with myself if I did what I was supposed to.

Al haya": Very often I forget about hayaa' and I need to try and be consistent in it i.e lowering one's gaze, and talking modestly.

As Sidq: This include telling the truth, not lying, i.e. staying away from 'I'm just joking' statements, and no backbiting allowed, no exaggeration which is just meant to increase tension in certain situations ('I called you a million times'), and being sincere in our hearts, by our tongues and through our actions.

Yes, the ingredients sound wonderful, but where am I going to get them from? And what is my end result going to be?

Step two: Set goals for yourself. Goals have to be S (specific) M (measurable) A (action-oriented) R (Realistic) T (time-bound), and to be successful in my approach, I am going to try and make some smart goals.

Specific: four virtues, divided by one month, means about one week per virtue, although instead of practicing

everything at the same time, just focus on certain virtues for a week at a time. It is generally known that it takes about three weeks to form a habit, so work hard in your three to four weeks.


Measurable: If you don't do well in something, write it down, create a *Ramadhan progress journal*. Share your experiences with yourself and see how you can grow and improve.

Action-oriented:

- a) Make a four week calendar on your white-board explicitly for your project, and write down what you want to accomplish each week. Week one: focus on Sabr and memorize two short surahs (use them in Salah)
 - Week two: focus on punctuality and memorize two short surahs
 - Week three: focus on modesty and memorize three short surahs
 - Week four: focus on truthfulness and memorize three short surahs
- b) Make *du'a* to Allah swt and be truthful to yourself. Why didn't I do what I was supposed to do when I said I would do it? This way I will practice truthfulness and punctuality simultaneously.
- c) Put up *ahadith* or *ayaat* of the Qur'an on your wall about the virtue that you are concentrating on.

Reflect on what *sabr* means to you. Why do you need it? I say to myself, 'when I am not patient, things go wrong anyways and I look silly and arrogant.' Additionally, I realized that *sabr* helps





me increase my 'patient circle' and overall, I know that when I am patient, I have climbed up and become stronger and not fallen down. What is going to help me remember?

Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) said, "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." (Collected by Al- Bukhari)

"O ye who believe! Persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah; that ye may prosper" (Qur'an 3:200).

What does punctuality mean to you and why do you want this virtue? salah should be prayed at its proper time, but you find your self delaying it either because you're procrastinating or you are doing something else, but SubhanAllah, what better deed than reading salah at its appointed time! So how can you remember?

Narrated Al-Walid bin 'Aizar: I asked the Prophet "Which deed is loved most by Allah?" He replied, "to offer prayers at their early (very first) stated times..." (Collected by Al- Bukhari).

We need to work on our punctuality every salah, but for fajr, never mind punctuality, we find it difficult to get up in the first place. Why is it difficult? Is it because we are tired? And why are we tired? Maybe because we didn't get enough sleep? So for that, you can have a fajr buddy and a sleep buddy, where your remind each other to go to sleep, lets say by 11pm every night. That way, you wake up for fajr not as sleepy as you would be usually.

A week into Ramadhan, and a few weeks after I started being punctual in salah, I felt not only am I not so tired when I wake up for fajr, but my salah haswith more khushoo' than before because, I am not rushed. And hey, If you wake up early, you have more time to do other things! For example, I made it a point that I will inshAllah memorize ten short surahs during Ramadhan.

But to be able to actually memorize ten surahs I need to have a plan.

So PLAN AHEAD. Plan the night before what you will do the next



day. Every time I make a plan that I think is viable on the same day as I want to carry it out, I waste a lot of time in just planning and consequently don't fulfill the duties of my plan. So plan ahead but be flexible as well.

How is modesty important to me? Often, we apply it to Muslims, but when talking to non-Muslims, we think it is harder to lower our gaze, but it must be done! We cannot be selective in our approach! So every time I am in a situation where I am talking to someone of the opposite gender, I remember Allah swt and know that Allah swt is watching.

'Umer ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "if a person has little hayaa, he will have little wara (fear of Allah and feeling of his presence, And the one who has little wara, his heart has died."

As sidq: Thanks to RoE (Rules of Engagment), I catch my self saying things like, 'It takes forever to do' or ' there were like a million people there' and stop my self. These are false statements. Nothing takes forever to do and none of the places I've visited held a million people! How can I be truly truthful in my heart when my speech is not? So how can I remember? Again, be mindful of Allah swt, and you certainly don't want to be written down as a liar.

The Prophet said, "Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (i.e. wickedness, evil-doing), and Al-Fajur (wickedness)

leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar." (Collected by Al- Bukhari)

Realistic: Have a strong support system of friends and family. Tell them your goals. Do it together and agree that whenever you catch them or they catch you lying or being impatient, that you will point it to them for the sake of improving each other.

Integrate these virtues in your daily life, no matter what they are. So for example, in my cafeteria at University, they rarely have halal meat and when they don't have it sometimes even the vegetarian choices are not attractive, but I try and say alhamdulillah that Allah swt provided me with food today. How many people die of starvation every day?

TIME: Four weeks only!

InshAllah my plan is due to end when Ramaadhan ends, and so far so good. Of course, I've caught myself not being truthful sometimes, or being impatient, but I jot it down in my Ramadhan progress journal to remind myself not to do that particular thing again. I pray to Allah swt that may He give us the strength to confront our weakness and to change them in to the best of manners, and to strengthen each other and grow spiritually in this blessed month. Ameen.

10 Reasons

Um Aneesa's

WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND...

1. Remember the last seminar? You thought, "Oh that topic? I can miss out on that one."
2. Then you saw the gems and each one was like a wagging finger saying, "I told you so, I told you so."
3. You thought you could attend a 10 week evening course on the same subject.
4. The 10 week course was great, except you had to work late for the last four evenings.
5. So you thought you could catch up by reading about it or listening to audio lectures.
6. Turns out you never had time to do all that intended reading.
7. And you weren't going to be tested on it, so it all kinda just slipped away.
8. You're thinking, "2 entire weekends?"
9. Lucky you.
10. Board the AlMaghrib train before it passes you by!!

AlMaghrib



Rights of PARENTS

BY: ANONYMOUS

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! Bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood." [Surah al Israa, verses 23-24]

In the above two ayaat (verses), Allaah subhanahu wa taala commanded us to be good to our parents right after He, subhanahu wa taala, ordered us to obey none but Him. It shows us how significant this duty is, something that He placed right after worshipping Allaah, subhanahu wa taala. Not only did He command us to be good to them, we are also told of ways in which to treat them.

If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word.

Don't Say 'Ugh' To Them
You are working on a school's project when your mother walks in and tells you to get up and wash dishes. After she leaves, you make faces and grunt. While you are engaged in sulking, your mother walks in again. "Didn't I tell you an hour ago to wash the dishes?" You think in your heart that she just came a minute ago, and you want to say that out loud.



To eliminate such thoughts, don't sit there and think about what she said. If your mother walked in and told you to do something, simply get up and obey her.

Let's look into our history and learn some lessons from it. On one of the regular days, the Prophet salAllahu alayhi wasallam taught in his halaqah in the masjid. He, salAllahu alayhi wasallam, looked at his companions and asked them if anyone amongst them was fasting. Abu Bakr, radhiyAllahu anhu,

Abu Bakr, as-siddeeq, radhiyAllahu anhu, again raised his hand up. The Prophet salAllahu alayhi wasallam said: these four qualities are not present in someone except that they are the people of Paradise. If there was something that Abu Bakr radhiyAllahu found out that would bring him closer to Allaah subhanahu wa taala and the nabi salAllahu alayhi wasallam, he would be the first one to obey it. He was known for this characteristic. Obeying parents is an act of ibaadah. What better way to earn some good deeds than just sim-

subhanahu wa taala will not look at three people. One of them is a person who offended his/her parents. Our beloved nabi, Muhammad salAllahu alayhi wasallam, said: No one should insult or curse their parents. The companions, may Allaah be pleased with them, said: "Who would do that ya Rasulallah?" On that, the nabi salAllahu alayhi wasallam stated, "Shouldn't I tell you about the greatest of sins?" – When you insult someone else's parents and you give them the opportunity to insult your parents. Remember all those "your mom-



was first to raise his hand up. The Prophet, salAllahu alayhi wasallam, asked who amongst them fed a needy person. Abu Bakr, radhiyAllahu anhu, was again the first one to raise his hand. The Prophet, salAllahu alayhi wasallam, then asked who amongst them followed a funeral this morning? Abu Bakr, radhiyAllahu anhu, raised his hand again. The Prophet, salAllahu alayhi wasallam, finally asked, who visited a sick person here today? And

ply obeying them? Who thought washing dishes and doing laundry can earn us some ajr (reward)? Not only you are obeying your parents by listening to them, you are also worshipping Allaah subhanahu wa taala! (And maybe saving yourself some trouble.)

Nor Chide Them Don't yell at them. Don't express disapproval.

On the Day of Judgment, Allaah

ma" jokes? When one person starts them, you feel obliged to reply back with even a dumber 'your mamma' joke. Yeah Think again before doing that now. It's a major sin!

Speak To Them a Generous Word The sheikh told us of a brother who, after taking Rules of Engagement, went home, walked in to his parents' room and apologized to them. And the parents just looked at him, thinking maybe he com-

mitted something really horrible act that he'd apologize like that.

I personally know of people who seem like the sweetest people I may have ever met in life. But then, when you see them at home, their faces remind me of horror movies. We learned of Ali ibn Hussain, may Allaah be pleased with them both. He would never sit and eat with his mother. When people asked him why he did that, he said, "I fear that I may eat something that my mother would want to eat and hurt her." SubhanAllaah! How many times have we thought of saving something for our parents that we knew they like to eat?

Allah subhanahu wa taala tests us by our behaviour towards our parents. If you really are a kind person, then you treat your parents and those whom you live with with kindness. If not, then you really must go back to define kindness.

Narrated Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him), The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) ascended the minbar (for Friday Prayers) and said: "Ameen, ameen, ameen." One of his companions said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, you ascended the minbar and said, 'Ameen, ameen, ameen.'" He said: "Jibreel (peace be upon him) came to me and said: 'If Ramadan comes and a person is not forgiven, he will enter Hell and Allaah will cast him far away. Say Ameen.' So I said Ameen. He said: 'O Muhammad, if both or one of a person's parents are alive and he does not honour them and he dies, he will enter Hell and Allaah will cast him far away. Say Ameen.' So I said Ameen. He said: 'If you are mentioned in a person's presence

and he does not send blessings upon you and he dies, he will enter Hell and Allaah will cast him far away. Say Ameen.' So I said Ameen."

Let's see how some companions applied this command in their lives.

One of the companions was seen crying for his mother when she died. People asked him, "Why are you crying?" He replied, "Why shouldn't I when a door of Jannah is shut on me today?"

Muaadh bin Yahya went to jail with his father and there was a bucket of water for them to make wudhu with and to drink from. His father used to get up in the middle of night to pray. Muaadh bin Yahya warmed the water every night before his father woke up with a torch they had. The guards saw him doing this every night and they confiscated the torch. But that didn't stop Muaadh bin Yahya. He would hug the freezing bucket close to him, to warm it through his clothes. And each day, his father would find the water warm for wudhu. His father was so touched when he found out that he made dua for him.

And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.

'Abdullah bin 'Amr, May Allah be pleased with them, reported: A man came to Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) and sought permission (to participate) in Jihad, whereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: Are your parents alive? He said: Yes. Thereupon he (the Holy Prophet) said: You should put in your best efforts (in their) service.

(Hadith number in Sahih Muslim [Arabic only]: 4623)

Know anyone who wants to go so badly to learn Islam overseas but their mother won't let them? The answer lies hidden in the above quoted hadith. Taking care of one's parents comes before doing jihad in the Path of Allaah subhanahu wa taala!

Umer bin Muqarram once stood up to pray qiyaam at night. His brother, Muhammad bin Muqarram was massaging his mother feet, till it was almost time for Fajr. He (Muhammad) said: I didn't wish to be at the place of Umer; because I thought what I was doing was more rewarding (looking after their mother).

Once, Abdullah bin Umer, may Allaah be pleased with them both, saw a man making tawaaf around ka'bah with his mother on his back. The man asked him, "do you think I'd pay her back with this?" Abdullah replied: "Not even for a one-third of what she went through in bringing you in this world will be able to replace that pain."

Let us benefit from these lessons and make a vow to put everything else behind, (with the exception of faraidh (obligations) we owe to Allaah subhanahu wa taala) when it comes to obeying our parents. Allaah subhanahu wa taala's forgiveness can't be expected while our parents are unhappy with us!



As we prepare to face a new day, we usually find ourselves in a hurry. Our minds churn with details of upcoming assignments or deadlines we need to meet. When ethical dilemmas are mentioned, thoughts of euthanasia, cloning, or abortion immediately cross our minds. If we slow down and analyze our actions, we find that even everyday decisions can become ethical dilemmas. A dilemma refers to a situation in which there are two or more alternatives that require a decision. Ethical dilemmas may take place in the workplace, at

home or on the road. They are those moments when we think: Should I or shouldn't I? Ethical thinking takes place when one asks themselves is this the right thing to do? Opportunities to use this ethical thinking present themselves numerous times throughout the day. As we browse through websites and download information, we may break copyright laws, and ask ourselves, "should I do it anyway?" or "should I stop?" A friend who has taken a similar course may offer their essay. Should I take it anyway, since I'm

In my eyes My Deen My Life. I am My Deen My Life.

I am My Deen My Life. I am My Deen My Life.

Choose a Higher Path...

“ Walk in this World as a Stranger ”

such a hard worker and I'm pressed for time, or do I turn it down and do my own paper? What is the right thing to do? We may find ourselves sneaking away to perform prayers. Should I keep lying to my boss about my actions or do I tell him/her I need prayer time and risk losing my job?

The decisions made on the day to day dilemmas encountered, majorly influence our reactions in times of calamity, and can shatter our iman, if not handled with care. From the infamous hadeeth of the three men trapped in the cave, we derive many lessons. Each of the tree men were presented with two options and each chose the best. The common factor in all of their situations was that they remembered and relied upon Allah subhanahu wata'ala and they were sincere in pleasing Him. The answer to these and other ethical dilemmas lies in obedience to Allaah and when one regards the commands of Allaah as ethical and everything He forbade as unethical. As Muslims, morals and principals govern our lives. Although many, many people believe that virtues are their own benefit, Muslims must act on what is right, irrelevant of how it makes them feel.

Justice and morals come not from man, but from Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala).

For a person to make truly ethical decisions, he or she must establish in themselves the characteristics of akhlaaq. We must strive to be honest in our dealings, and work hard to attain patience. We must also be constantly aware of the injustice we may be causing to those around us. Our pattern of behavior reflects of what we truly believe. The affect of the decisions we make may impact others not only on an individual level, but also on a community level. Our actions create consequences. Do the right thing and choose the higher road.





I never really knew what a good and Islamic code of behaviour was before I took this course. Sure, I tried to be polite, and I worked hard to attempt to have good adab, but I never really knew what it meant. I never knew what a big thing it was to be good to parents, and that it is a duty, not a choice. I never understood that if I disagreed with the parents I was given, I was disagreeing with Allah (swt), because he picked them out for me. When I took this course, it was literally like a slap in the face. I suddenly came to grasp how awful a sin it is to be rude, even unintentionally, and how dangerous anger is and what disasters it can lead to. I realized that I could not be angry with my fellow Muslims for more than three days, and that ties of kinship are HUGE in Islam. But one of the most important things I learned pertains to my salah. I honestly never realized just how very important proper etiquette for prayer is, such as wudu. I am so very glad I took this course. I've tried, and inshAllah I will be successful in changing my behaviours to fit the Islamic Code even more!

"I can never forget the sheikh's emotional Friday night lecture on obedience to parents. The tears rolled out, the hands trembled, and the pen fell as I began to take notes."

"The sheikh's lecture on khushoo in salaah was so motivational and inspiring, filled with amazing stories. For anyone like me struggling with khushoo and concentration in salaah, this was defenitely a gem."

- Anonymus

"TWO THUMBS UP!"

"One of the most spectacular lectures of the year."

An illustration at the top of the page shows two black silhouettes of people in conversation. The person on the right is speaking, and a large white speech bubble with a dashed border contains the text 'WHAT DO I SAY?'. The background is a vibrant green with faint, stylized patterns.

WHAT DO I

SAY?

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT RULES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Before Rules of Engagement – Islamic Code of Ethics arrived at our town; I rethought my decision of enrolling into this course. I thought to myself, “why should I take ethics? And what can it really change about my behaviour?” but how wrong was I! I am so glad that I decided to take this amazing course, Alhumdulillaah. Islamic Codes of Ethics are universal and realistic. Needless to say, the rules apply to each and every individual that exist in this universe, regardless of their age, religion, ethnicity, etc. In the two weekends that I was in this seminar, I learned about things that I had thought I knew. Looking at the life of our beloved Prophet, salAllahu alayhi wasallam, his blessed character, his humility, his concern for the ummah, his love for the deen... filled my eyes with tears and my head dropped in shame. It showed us what it takes to attain Jannah. It taught us about our obligations that we owe to our parents, our kin, our neighbours, our families, our spouses, Muslims, non-Muslims, and humanity in general. It taught us to look at life in a positive manner - to forget about others not fulfilling your rights, but to focus on our own selves and to acknowledge our obligations on others. It gave me a hope that if I fulfill my obligations, then my rights will be taken care of, as someone’s else’s rights are my obligations, and my rights are some else’s obligations. It taught me the meaning of what it really means by Islam being a complete way of life. It taught me qualities that I thought I knew but didn’t really possess. This seminar changed my outlook on this world and it gave better meanings to what life really can be. A life that will now be filled with integrity, compassion and endurance, bi idhnillaah. SubhanAllaah, being so motivated from this seminar and the desire to change my own self and then help others feel the same, we really want to show the glimpse of our beloved rasulullaah, salAllahu alayhi wasallam to the rest of the world out there, inshaAllaah.

- Anonymous

“ I had
a
Dream
NO!
it wasn't a
Dream?..”

By: Anonymous

I had a dream. No, it wasn't a dream... because I wasn't sleeping. You know those visions that you might get while you are trying to figure out something else? And all of a sudden, your brain directs you towards another issue, and you divert all your energy on that particular issue? I ramble a lot. That's why I think I can never be a writer. But I can't write poetry ... or paint. Or even dance or sing to let my inner clouds out. So, I write ... because my mom taught me to read and write well when I was a kid.

I couldn't stop thinking about it.

But what do I mean by it? The thought that I had while I was trying to figure out something else. So, anyways ... I see myself and a couple other friends (their faces a little blurry) walking in a jungle. I just knew that they were my friends. We are laughing, singing songs of the nice weather, making plans of running alongside the riverbank,

just enjoying the day. It's a great day. The sun is shining brightly, and melting away the feeling of boredom we were experiencing since our time off from work. As we walk in the jungle, where the branches of the trees hang over our heads - It is one of those scenes that give you a feeling of adventure, of finding something, of discovering something

and to just get to something – we suddenly get shocked by this black snake, who stings one of my friends. We watch her in all her agony, squirming and screaming, reaching us to help her take out of the pain, but there's nothing we can do to

Then, we take a couple more steps, and all of a sudden, this hole appears in the ground, like a pit, and another friend of mine falls into it. I don't remember if I was left alone or if there was someone else with me. But I am too scared to be held back. I don't even have time to shed a tear or two on

something might happen to me, too. The jungle seems like a scary life-taker to me. I notice this tunnel that can take me across. I bend down, hopeful, to peek at the other side. The tunnel looks big enough to fit me. I can well crawl into it to go on the other side. Any side, but to stay back in this jungle! But then, this green, slimy goo on the inside edges of the tunnel stops me. I halt, somewhat disgusted to go inside. But I have to, if I want to get out. There is no other way to cross this river in between, other than through this tunnel. I take a deep breath and kneel down to crawl inside. As I crawl in that dark tunnel, I hear someone's voice. Or maybe, I just fell asleep (the darkness effecting my exhausted being) and I dreamt someone speaking to me... I don't quite remember. I think about my friends and what happened to them. Why did the snake bit her and not me? Did she wear clothes more attractive to the snake that the snake came and stung her? While I think about all this, my friend who got stung suddenly appears in front of me. I started to scream. Her tongue was wrapped around her neck. As she stared at me with a questioning look, I felt a chill in my spine. I wanted to get out of there. But my friend sat right in front of me, barring my path. I shut my eyes, as a pigeon would do seeing a cat that is about to attack them, and prayed that she would disappear. I called onto God, and asked God to take her away. And when I opened my eyes... she was no longer there. I thanked God and put my head down, scared to move on. I wanted to make a farewell prayer for her. For God to Bless her soul. But then, her life reappeared before me. She was never someone who could be trusted with any secret. If fellow friends entrusted her with



save her. I picked up a stone to hit the snake, but before I could do that, my friend stops screaming. She was silenced by the poisonous snake... And we just walk away, in fear that the snake might sting us too.

their horrific, unimaginative deaths. I run as fast as I can to escape. While running in that speed, unconscious of my whereabouts, I suddenly stumble across this blocked way. There is no way of going ahead, and I can't turn back because I fear

their secrets, her stomach would punch her to spill it out. I realized the dangers of the tongues and warned her. But she ignored me. I felt a little chill inside my body. May God Forgive her. I looked back at my own life and repented, determined to not expose anyone in my life.

I open my eyes, only to find myself in the middle of the tunnel. The end shimmered in front of my eyes, close. I hurried. But, as I picked up my pace, my friend who fell in the pit appeared before me. I flipped out. I don't want to shut my eyes. I can't look at her. I tried to struggle with my hands and feet inside the tunnel to somehow scare her and get her out. But I failed. Her image refused to disappear. I just wished this all to be a bad dream. I cry for her. I scream her name out and tell her to leave me alone. But she remains there, unmoving. I don't know what to do. I try to push her away. But I can't. My heart starts to sink. I ask her to forgive me. I turn to God and asked Him to forgive me. I put my head down. I am embarrassed to even look her into the eyes. I keep crying and asking for forgiveness until the point I thought I couldn't cry anymore.

As I contemplate between my tears about her past life, I wish just for a day, or only for an hour, I could go back and tell her what I knew. I wish I could tell her that pride would bring her to this downfall, that her pride will eat her face away! I wish that I could help her understand. I wish I wished, I wish! I can't find the energy to crawl anymore. My heart feels heavy all of a

sudden. It feels as if the sins of all the worlds rest on my shoulders. I never felt this horrible before. I lean on to the tunnel. My eyes watering, and my heart pounding with grief. I can't think of a better reason for my life to be saved. What if I never made out of that jungle and into this tunnel? What if one of the branches had tightened around my neck and strangled me to death? What if there was a wild animal in that jungle, which could have eaten me; stung me, or a poisonous insect that got inside my body to suck all my blood?

"As I contemplate between my tears about her past life, I wish just for a day, or only for an hour, I could go back..."

I shiver as I think about all these punishments that my mother used to read out to me when I was young, thanks to my curiosity of finding the reward and punishment behind every deed. I think of my mother, who always took time out to teach me what is right and wrong. Who taught me to be a good girl, or else God will never love me.

And as I grew a bit older, she reminded me to teach my friends the same lessons. She constantly told me to stay away from them if I couldn't bring any good to their lives. Whenever my friends came over, she always took them aside and reminded them about God, about our purpose in this life. But they brushed her off as some disillusioned old lady and I stood there and watched the tears in my mother's eyes. I was not strong enough to say anything

to my friends. I tried a few times, but I vowed never to mention anything to them after what happened. I stood there whenever they gossiped about someone or made fun of someone. I did nothing at all. I trembled with fear. What if I died among them? Will I get punished for just being a by-stander? I didn't commit any sin. I didn't make fun of Julie's hair when she started developing cancer. Or looked down upon that disabled kid who joined our school. Is that why God saved me? I thought I figured it out. But then, my mother's voice echoed in my ears: "The weakest form of Iman is when you see the oppression but you don't stop it despite feeling that it is wrong." I don't know whether I'll make out of this jungle alive or not. I don't know what is really at the end of this tunnel. But I am now really scared to go back to the world. Maybe, on the other end of this tunnel, something is waiting for me.

Do you have the opportunity today to change what you can? Do you have what it takes to not hoard on the knowledge that could save someone's life? It was only a thought that surpassed me during the day. But it doesn't mean that this won't ever happen! What if I miss out, too late to take action, to stand up for what really needs to be out there? Why do I see you hesitate, o soul?

THE CAMEL COMPLAINED to

Muhammad

Allahu Akbar,

How perfect my Lord is, *Al-Atheem*
du'aa has brought us to decisions
when caught at crossroads.
It wasn't easy choosing the higher path,
but we did.

And now I choose to cross the road
at green, not between angry drivers.

Sami'Allahu liman hamidah

Allah has heard those who praised and
thanked Him

I came home today on the bus and a man
offered me his seat and smiled.
I smiled at my neighbour and held the
elevator door
open for her. And she smiled, too-
a charity easily afforded.

Allahu Akbar

How Perfect my Lord is, The Most High
I took my mother's hand while we waited
for news – good or bad, it didn't matter
because *Al-Wadud* was there with us.
And washing the dishes, even with essays
to write
doesn't seem like such a daunting task
anymore.

Allah Akbar

My Lord, forgive me my sins.
We pull up our garments on snowy days
for fear of salt-stains,
so I will, too, hold close my garments
on this thorny path for fear of a pain that is
forever,
and for the hope of a joy that never ends.

Allahu Akbar,

Lessen the camel's load.

Asmaa Hussein



CROSSMANIA



ACROSS

- 3 Honesty
- 4 Something that creates doubt
- 5 Love and Devotion
- 9 One of the siddiqs mentioned in Quraan
- 10 Justice
- 11 Whom does Allaah not guide? hint:39/3
- 12 Word for womb
- 13 Leads to al-fujur

DOWN

- 1 Noble behaviour
- 2 Prevents from al-Fahsha'
- 4 Dealing with Allaah
- 6 Relationship with your spouse
- 7 Oppression
- 8 Leads to truthfulness and paradise

ANSWERS AT THE END OF THIS ISSUE



By:
Abu Dujanah

Alhumdulillah, I took many lessons out of the 'Meal For You' experience. I would recommend anyone who can participate to do so.

For the brothers, however, be prepared: it is not fun and games. The neighbourhoods are places we would not visit under any other circumstances, let alone exit your car.

In one instance at Moss Park, we saw a fight nearly break out. We crossed the street to avoid it, and one of the instigators followed us after seeing we were giving out food.

We had to stand our ground, but also be just. African-American with braids in his hair, bright red sweatshirt and dirtied up jeans; he looked me eye to eye, and his words stuck with me... "I'm not always like that. But I am where I am, so I got to be a certain way."

Yaa Rabb! How could an intelligent man put himself on the streets? Is homelessness a choice? By giving out food, am

**If
There
Was One
GOOD
DEED
I DID.**

I encouraging that person to stay where he is?

It felt like everyone was smoking. One mocked, 'say hi to Bin Laden for me'. Another taunted: 'I'm Muslim' and showed a big silver cross on his chest. Yet another, shamelessly rolled a joint and said 'I'm god'. outhubillah. He shut up after we asked him to create something for us. The same whacko then said aliens communicate with him through telepathy. ... M i s g u i d e d .

There were a few who were grateful, yes. There was one very polite woman sitting on a bench. She tried to hide her hunger. She was shy to ask for food, and was so relieved when we came to her. La hawla wala quwata illa billah. Another man who got our last package said he had not eaten for 3 days. La hawla wala quwata illa billah.

The work takes an emotional toll, and therein lays the blessing: It keeps the heart soft. To look into someone's eyes, subhanallah words cannot describe it.

Afterwards a few of us made our way to Younge & Dundas to meet the CDA brothers. A sponsor donated several hundred copies of the Quraan, Allah's last message to humankind, and we helped give them out to passer-bys.

SubhanAllah. So many curious minds, so many open hearts.

The organizer said it was one of the best days he has seen for da'wah.

Oh Allah! If there was one day, one good deed, one sincere fast, one time I strived in your cause... please, let that day count for me, and please accept my deeds, and please forgive my sins, and please open someone's heart from my work. And please bless this organization. Ameen.





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AS COOL AS ICE

AlMaghrib seminars are known for their trademark seminar titles, and “Rules of Engagement” bears no exception. While the title of a seminar sparks interest and captures the essence of the seminar in a brief and succinct way, the seminar subtitle leads you into the topic--in this case, “Islamic Code of Ethics.”

These titles are well thought out, but we students are prone to brevity (and laziness), and thus “Light of Guidance” gets chopped down into a LOG before you know it. But while it may be fishy to refer to ROE, there is a brilliant reason why this seminar should be subtitled as ICE. From the seminar description you may know that I-C-E also stands for three things essential in any discussion of moral treatment in Islam: Integrity, Compassion and Endurance. In order to understand their significance, let us investigate each term in detail.

INTEGRITY

Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: Don’t nurse a grudge, and don’t outbid [your brother] for raising the price, and don’t nurse aversion or enmity, and don’t enter into a transaction when the others have entered into that transaction, and be as fellow-brothers and servants of Allah. A Muslim is the brother of a Muslim. He neither oppresses him nor humiliates him nor looks down upon him. The piety is here, (and while saying so) he pointed towards his chest thrice. It is a serious evil for a Muslim that he should look down upon his brother Muslim. All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honour.” (Sahih Muslim).

The bare minimum in the treatment of people **comprises** treating them justly and fairly, and for that, you need integrity. Allah *subhanahu wata'allah* says, "be just, this is the closest to *Taqwa* (piety/ God-consciousness)" (Surah Al-Maidah, verse 8).

HOWEVER, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO BE JUST WITH THOSE YOU PREFER, OR THOSE WHO DO THE SAME TOWARDS YOU.

Firstly, integrity begins with the heart. If you bear a grudge towards someone, or look down on someone, how can you expect to be fair? Several *ahadith* and Quranic verses couple *Taqwa* with good manners, and as the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The most common thing which leads people to Paradise is *taqwa* of Allah and good conduct" (Al-Tirmidhi) While it is apparent that we should not commit any act of physical injustice towards others, nor oppress them, integrity also implies being the type of honest, trustworthy individual others feel safe dealing with. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "If you guarantee me six things on your part I shall guarantee you Paradise," and you will note that out of these six, three involve integrity in your treatment towards others: "Speak the truth when you talk, keep a promise when you make it, when you are trusted with something fulfil your trust, avoid sexual immorality, lower your gaze (in modesty), and restrain your hands from injustice." (Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1260).

COMPASSION

While treating people justly is the very least you are obligated to do, attaining the highest level of good manners means treating people with the utmost kindness and compassion. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: The Compassionate One [God] has mercy on those who are merciful. If you show mercy to those who are on earth, He Who is in heaven will show mercy on you (Sunan of Abu-Dawood, Hadith 2322).

We should strive to transcend what other people expect of us. Rather than simply reciprocating good, we must initiate it, sustain it, and treat people with gentleness and concern. We should never

consider a "soft-hearted" approach to dealing with others as a defect in ourselves; on the contrary, as was reported by 'A'isha, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Kindness is not to be found in anything but that it adds to its beauty and it is not withdrawn from anything but it makes it defective (Sahih Muslim, Book 32).

We should act kindly towards others and not expect or require anything in return; but realize our reward lies with Allah, who is the Most Kind. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "He who alleviates the suffering of a brother (in this) world, God will alleviate his (suffering) of the Day of Resurrection. He who finds relief for one who is hard pressed, God

If you guarantee me **SIX** things
I shall GUARANTEE you **PARADISE.**

Speak the truth

Fulfil your trust

Keep a promise

Avoid sexual immorality

Lower your gaze

RESTRAIN your

HANDS from INJUSTICE.

(Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1260)

makes things easy for him in the Hereafter.” (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 1245).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “behave well towards other people” (Al-Nawawi’s Forty Hadith, number 18).

A closer look at this statement reveals some key observances. Firstly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) used the word “*Khaaliq*” (قَالَ), which means “behave towards” or “interact with” rather than simply “treat.” If he said instead “*treat other people well,*” this would imply that our responsibility towards other people lies in simply initiating good treatment. But if they happen to be unresponsive to this treatment, what then? What happens if you treat someone fairly, and with compassion, and receive an ill response? Are you no longer obliged to continue this treatment? The word *khaaliq* implies that good behaviour is not limited to the actions **we implement**, but also includes our *reactions* to other people’s treatment. This is where

the “E” in ICE comes in: Endurance. It is not enough to act well when the other party is doing the same; the real mark of good character is having the patience to act well in all circumstances.

Anas reported, “Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) had the best disposition amongst people. He sent me on an errand one day, and I said: By Allah, I would not go. I had, however, this idea in my mind that I would do as Allah’s Apostle (may peace be upon him) had commanded me to do. I went out until I happened to come across children who had been playing in the street. In the meanwhile, Allah’s Messenger (may peace be upon him) came there and he caught me by the back of my neck from behind me. As I looked towards him I found him smiling and he said: Anas, did you go where I commanded you to go? I said: Allah’s Messenger, yes, I am going. Anas further said: I served him for nine years but I know not that he ever said to me about a thing which I had done, why I did that, or about a thing I had left, as to why I

had not done that.” (Sahih Muslim, book 30, Hadith 5724).

JUST THINK ABOUT

THIS FOR A MOMENT –

a ten-year-old argues back to the Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), who has more right over him than anyone, *refusing* to do what he is told, and how does the Prophet (peace be upon him) react? He neither scolds nor admonishes him, nor display any hint of anger. He re-addresses him not with stern reminders, but with kind words and a smile.

To end this discussion, let us look at another benefit that can be derived from the simple phrase, “behave well towards other people.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) purposely used the word “people”, reinforcing the fact that our good manners should not be limited to Muslims alone. To have good manners, we need to act in an appropriate fashion, at all appropriate times, and to all appropriate people.

Sheikha El-Kathiri

Now wasn’t **THAT** PROOF *enough* ?

THIS seminar

is **SO COOL**

...it’s **frozen** !

Amina Khan's

Sheikh
AHMAD

...and the

Backbiting Bint...

From The Diary of Sheikh Ahmad, Private Eye

Saturday, September 16th, 2006
A bolt of lightening cut across the sky, illuminating the figure of one man racing across tundra. Sheikh Ahmad tore across the barren land, not knowing why or from what he was running. Suddenly, he was forced to stop as a small man came into view. He turned, his eyes red and wild like a bloodhound, and his mouth opened in a grin lacking any happiness. His mutilated face became clearer, revealing rotting teeth, clenched angrily as to show the bloody, shredded pieces of meat in between them. His lips were a

sickening brownish colour, still wet from fresh blood. He stepped aside, and the object beneath him became clear; it was a human carcass.

I sat jolted up in my bed, awakened by my sudden scream. I was breathing panting heavily, and sweat covered my forehead. The bright Dhuhr time sun shone through the window, illuminating the nameplate on my dresser, which read SHEIKH AHMAD, PRIVATE EYE. With a bismillah, I picked lift-edup a cup of sparking water which stood beside it, took a sip, and felt

my calmness return to me. Stepping out of my bed, I walked strode to the washroom, deep in thought.

As was my habit when I felt anxious or worried, I always found it beneficial to my health to take a shot nap between Dhuhr and Asr. However, this normal method of calming myself had been failing to work for the past week; since then, my naps only culminated in vicious nightmares, from which I would awake screaming, as I had today. As I stepped out of my bedroom door into my office, I sighed, knowing exactly why I was

so troubled. Presuming that a walk stroll outside would help, I slipped on my jacket and left the house.

There was a cloudy aura of gloom outside, which only dampened my already sloping spirit. Slipping my hands in my pocket, I began to trudge down the road, loosing myself to the thoughts that washed over me.

For the past week, it seemed a sudden outbreak of gossip had plagued our small town, making everyone a possible target of the unfortunate rumors. It had gotten to a point where some were even afraid to leave their houses, worried that they would be seen doing something that would forever mar their reputation. Common word on the street was that all of the rumors were coming originating from one person; a person who lived only to spread mischief and gossip amongst people. I had been striving to find and stop this person ever since the small talk had begun, but the problem was that I wasn't sure whether there was such a person or if it was just another senseless rumor. Together with my sidekick (a young fellow named Abdul-Kareem who had attached himself to me when I solved the case of the Magical Mubtadi') we scouted the streets day and night, working to stop the gossip. We were so concerned because gossip was backbiting; one of the worst sins in Islam. Not only does backbiting break or severely strain friendships and trusts between people, backbiting is completely haraam, and a cause for one to be punished in the grave. However, the search had been so far long and tedious, and its results had been little more than tired feet.

Suddenly, from beneath me, came a whispered, "Psssttt!!" I looked

down, and yelped at what I saw. From a dark manhole by my feet, a pair of eyes peeped out of the darkness, before a flashlight was lit beside them, and a face became visible.

"ABDUL-KAREEM??!!!" I screeched, scarcely recognizing my sidekick beneath disheveled black hair and a sooty face. "WHAT on earth are you doing down there???" Abdul-Kareem pressed a finger to his lips, and motioned for me to come closer. I bent down and stared at him expectantly.

"See, Sheikh, I gotta lie low for a little while. The Backbiting Bint's power has been rising, and I cannot risk my reputation!"

"The Backbiting who?!?" I gasped, my eyes widening in shock. Despite Abdul-Kareem's strange methods of traveling and even stranger methods of making appearances, he was a very good sidekick in that he could scout out the source of a problem anywhere.

"The Backbiting Bint, Sheikh! I found out who was the behemoth behind all of this gossip! She's a young sister who is so sneaky that it is said that she can find out anything, anywhere! Then, she circulates her rumors so far across the land, mixing them with false information, until the person's reputation is destroyed completely, and they have to move relocate to a different continent to begin a new life! I simply MUST avoid her at all costs! Sheikh, you really have to stop her!"

"YaAllah!" I murmured, shocked distressed at by the news, "where can I find this so-called 'Backbiting Bint'?"

"She is everywhere!" mumbled Ab-

dul-Kareem before he disappeared back into the dark manhole, and the light of his torch bobbed out of sight.

With a sigh, I set out to find the person who my sidekick had so vaguely described. Questions swarmed through my mind; how would I know when I found this villain; and how would I put an end to the gossip?

So involved was I in my train of thought that I scarcely knew where I was walking to. So, instead of heading downtown as I intended, I soon found myself in a rundown, gloomy alley.

"Where am I?" I mumbled, having never been to this side of town before. Then again, I am not the type of person who goes slinking around alleys. That's more up Abdul-Kareem's line of investigation. A rickety old sign pole told me that I was on 'Rembrush Street'.

"Sounds ominous," I muttered before continuing.

Suddenly, I heard talking approaching the alley bend I was in, coming from further down. Not wanting to be seen in such a disreputable place, and also because I had a feeling that the gangsters who roamed the alley would know the happenings on the streets, I sought out a hiding spot. I spotted the perfect place; a large clay pot that could hide me comfortably. Seizing my opportunity, I leapt into the pot and closed the lid, leaving only a small crack.

The darkness inside the pot was engulfing, and the inside smelled of earth and soot. However, I tried to ignore my environment and be thankful I had found a hiding place. I began to settle in, when, quite

unexpectedly, I felt a small lump move underneath me and something shifted. With a yelp of surprise and shock, I flung myself out of the pot, and peered in, afraid of what creature I might see nestled in the bottom of the large clay container.

A small, squished face peeped out at me. "Sheikh, I was already hiding in here!"

"Abdul-Kareem?!?!?!?" I gasped, my heart still beating from the shock. "What... why... HOW did you get here?"

Abdul-Kareem leapt out of the pot, and pulled us both into a large cardboard box in the other side of the alley which served as a better hiding spot. "I actually come out here often to hear and understand the situation in the town, because the people in these alleys know it best! Of course, the people in these alleys are also best to hide from..." he whispered.

I was about to reply, when the pack of people from up ahead arrived in front of the box. Abdul-Kareem and I both peeped out of the box, and could see the feet of several of them.

"So," One murmured, "did y'all hear about the 'big thing' tonight?" I narrowed my eyes and listened closely.

"Oh yeah, man," another replied, "I hear that the backbiting Bint has tons of juicy rumors this time." Someone else with a very deep voice asked when was the gathering.

"It's at the Backbiting Bint's house, this evening," was the reply, "everyone's invited," before the punks moved on, shadily mumbling.

As soon as they were gone, Abdul-

Kareem and I burst out of the box.

"That's it!" I exclaimed, "The source of all of the rumors! We must do an investigation this evening, Abdul-Kareem. Do you think you can find out where this so-called backbiting Bint lives?"

"InshAllah," sighed Abdul-Kareem, "but I must be... stealthy." With that, I watched as my assistant uncovered a manhole plate near our feet, and dove inside. With a determined expression on my face, I set off to my house to prepare for the evening's adventure.

True to his word, Abdul-Kareem scouted around and returned to my house that afternoon with news. The backbiting bint lived just a block away from the town square, so she was close by all of the action of the town. Early before her guests began to arrive, Abdul-Kareem and I walked in, pretending to be your average gossipmonger.

Following signs around the house which indicated 'The IPSMG; The Institute for Public slander and Malicious Gossip' followed by an arrow, Abdul-Kareem and I reached the living room. It was a large room, with white walls and a crystal chandelier dangling from the ceiling. Chairs had been arranged in rows in the room, and a large podium was near the front, with a thick stack of papers on it. I would have liked to check them out, but we heard footsteps approaching, so Abdul-Kareem and I dove into the closet and stood still.

From the slits in the closet door, I saw the Backbiting Bint enter the room, followed by a large crowd of people. She walked to the podium, and her guests began to fill

up the rows. She began to speak.

"Alright, everyone, please settle in. We've got a great set of lectures lined up for you today by myself!" She turned on a projector to begin her PowerPoint presentation, and picked up the stack of papers. I could now see clearly that they were labeled 'Notes'.

"Part one," she continued, and the slide was changed to a picture of an old villager's face. "This old guy has gained respect in this community. However, few know the truth about him!" A gasp rippled through the audience. "He seems normal, but has anyone ever noticed he buys his glasses from the DOLLAR store!?" A huge peal of laughter was emitted by the crowd.

My stomach felt sick as the Backbiting bint went on about different people, saying the worst and most degrading things about them. My ears burned, and I felt my face flush. How long would I have to sit here listening to this haraam talk?

Finally, after a long and painful two hours, the Backbiting Bint said, "All right, everyone, let's take a short intermission and return after the break. Refreshments will be served in the kitchen and dining room..." I breathed a sigh of relief as we heard the crowd leave the room.

Leaping out of the closet, Abdul-Kareem and I ran over to the podium. Snatching the notes, I flipped a few pages and scanned a sentence. The Backbiting Bint's comments about people were atrocious!

"We must destroy these!" I said, with an angry look on my face. Abdul-Kareem nodded, when we

suddenly heard the footsteps of the Backbiting Bint approaching he room to check on something.

“No time, Sheikh!” he whispered, “just take them and let’s get out of here! We’ll destroy them later!” Fortunately, sneaking in and out of places was Abdul-Kareem’s specialty; he had had lots of practice on my office. Shoving the window open, he peered down at the two stories below us and scaled down the wall, and landed on the ground, before he motioned to me.

The footsteps were coming closer, and I didn’t hesitate. I leaped through the opening, but felt a sudden snag as the hem of my trench coat snagged on a peg protruding from the window. I tugged, but my coat was stuck hard, and I hit the wall hard as I was left dangling. Abdul-Kareem, with a frantic look in his eyes, yanked at my arm, but despite our best efforts, I was stuck hard. The Backbiting Bint entered the room, and I could hear that she was approaching the window. Suddenly, with a last burst of effort, I yanked the trench coat off the peg and Abdul-Kareem and I stumbled into the bushes beside the house.

“When did I open this window?” The Backbiting Bint muttered from above. However, I breathed a sigh of relief as she shrugged it off, and called in the crowd. “Come on, people, please return to the room, we have a lot of material to cover...” Abdul-Kareem and I rushed out of the bushes, and began to run away from the house.

However, unbeknownst to us, as the Backbiting Bint spoke, her eyes had not left the window. The corners of her mouth turned down, as she

saw Abdul-Kareem and I escape, visibly holding her stack of notes.

The Backbiting Bint narrowed her eyes.

Sunday, September 17th, 2006
I awoke the next morning and saw from my window that it had started to rain. A dark shadow of gloom had been cast outside, and the redundant pattering of the rain dampened my mood. I decided to light the fireplace and read some Quran.

I struck a match, and was about to set it to the logs, when a frantic, “Wait, oooh... hang on!!!!” came from inside the chimney. I stepped jumped back in total bafflement as a figure came rolling out of the chimney, and onto my floor. He stood up, and my mouth hung open at the sooty, ash-covered person I beheld.

“It’s okay, Sheikh, it’s only me!” Came his voice, and the person wiped a layer of ash off his face.

“Abdul-Kareem...?” I mouthed, still bewildered. He nodded cheekily and then proceeded to shake the remaining soot off his body, creating a horrible blackened mess on my carpet.

“Sheikh,” he began, “I came here out of sheer emergency. The Backbiting Bint has gone mad!!! She’s now gone to the town square and her gossip has increased ten-fold!”

“Abdul-Kareem,” I sighed, “The sister is very stubborn. She must be dealt with tactfully. Not only that, I must do something about this carpet...” I shot a reproaching glance at Abdul-Kareem.

Abdul-Kareem’s eyes suddenly widened, and he cried out, “You don’t

understand Sheikh! She’s taken her ludicrous rumours to another level and this time the victim is YOU! She has made up all sorts of ridiculous stories about you and the people are beginning to lose their trust in you!”

My mouth widened, and I could only nod and tell Abdul-Kareem to lead the way.

Bursting out of the warm house, we battled outside and through the heavy rain. I felt the strong wind pushing forcing us back, but we persevered, running through the slippery streets, our sweat being washed away by the rain. I caught a glimpse of Abdul-Kareem in front of me, when suddenly a crash of thunder and lightning sounded ahead, and the rain intensified even more.

As we ran dashed through the streets, I was aware of people glaring at me. One man yelled out, “Hey, Sheikh, why did you poison the grocer?!” Yet another cried, “I know you’re hiding a rhino in your basement!!” I grimaced at the ridiculous remarks, and continued runningsprinting. As Abdul-Kareem and I were passing by the shops leading to the square, I suddenly veered into the meat shop.

“Where are you going, Sheikh? The town square is this way!” Abdul-Kareem called to me.

“I have an idea!” I yelled back, as I pulled yanked open the door.

Inside the meat store, I ran up to the counter. “Butcher Bilal,” I asked the meat man, “please, I need some raw meat, and quickly!” Butcher Bilal stared at me for a moment before beginning to cut chop away at a piece of meat dangling from the roof.

“Alright,” He began, “But Sheikh, why are you boycotting the Butcher Bilal Business?”

“What?” I cried, “I bought meat from your store just yesterday, Bilal!”

“Oh,” said Bilal, pausing momentarily, “that’s right.” He laid the piece of meat on the counter. “But then why did the Backbiting Bint tell me otherwise?”

I groaned in exasperation, paid Bilal, and dashed out of the shop, with a shout of “Gotta run!”

The rain was falling harder than ever, but Abdul-Kareem kept on running as soon as he caught sight of me exiting the meat shop. My lungs throbbed, and I wanted to stop, but I couldn’t, and I didn’t. As we ran, an aunty suddenly stuck her head out of her house, shook her fist at me and yelled, “You thief! Give me back my laundry!!!!”

Finally, we reached the town square, and a horrid sight met my eyes. The Backbiting bint stood on a raised platform in the middle of the square, shouting into a megaphone! Abdul-Kareem drew back to my side, and we both gaped in horror at the Backbiting Bint, who was ranting on.

“And, Sheikh Ahmad can’t even tell his pants and shirts apart! And, when he goes home, he puts a sock on his nose to stifle his snoring!..”

Abdul-Kareem turned his head suddenly towards me. “You do?” he asked.

“Of course not!” I snapped, before

plunging into the sea of people.

“Oh Backbiting Bint!” I shouted, as I drew closer to the crowd. She lowered her megaphone for a moment and replied, “Not now, I’m backbiting you!” before continuing.

“Eat THIS!!!!” I yelled, as I lifted my arm, and flung the piece of raw meat towards her. It curved through the air, and landed straight on the Backbiting Bint’s face with a splatter. It slowly trickled down her face, which now held a look of disgust.

“EWWWWW!” she howled, glaring at me. “What is that, and how dare you throw this at my face! It’s not even cooked!!!!”

“But YOU eat worse than that every single time you backbite!” I yelled, finally emerging from the crowd, “Because every time you backbite someone, it’s like eating the dead flesh of your brother!!!”

“...” The backbiting bint was silent. “... Really?” she mumbled softly.

“Oh people!!” I turned to the crowd, “Do not listen to this nonsense. Be mindful of Allah! The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “One of the greatest of the major sins is to stretch out one’s tongue without right against the honor of a Muslim.”

The crowd began to unsurely mumble, and one uncle stepped up and yelled, “Oh, Bint!! Vy have you been lying to us and saying nasty things????!!” With that, the crowd started shouting, and general shouts of, “Yeah!” “Why?!” “Liar!!!!”

could be heard audible throughout.

“Sheikh,” one man shouted out, “So you mean that, even in our daily lives, if we ever joke about someone when they’re not around... we’re backbiting!?”

“Yes!” I cried, “We usually don’t even notice when we backbite, but it’s just as serious! Brothers and sisters; we MUST watch out tongues and hearts and put an end to this!”

The crowd murmured in agreement, and then started to disperse, until the Backbiting Bint was left in an almost empty square. Hopping down from her pedestal, she said, “JazakAllah Sheikh, I, never knew how wrong my backbiting was!” She wiped the traces from the raw meat off her face, and continued, “what you just said was, totally an EmanRush for me! So, do you want your meat back?”

“No, that’s okay,” I replied, “you can keep it.”

“Great!” She exclaimed, “My mom wanted me to go to the meat shop today, anyways! Speaking of the meat shop, that guy Bilal really smells like a ... -whoops, sorry. I guess not backbiting is, going to take a bit of practice!”

“Just make dua’a,” I knowingly replied.

“Yeah,” huffed Abdul-Kareem from behind me, “make dua’a.” for he was very upset that he had spent the whole week hiding inside a manhole.

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