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Assalaam 'alaykum warahmatullaahi wabarakaatuh

UNITY

True unity is unity of hearts that comes as a result of faith in Allaah and that makes people love each other as brothers and sisters. It is this bond of brotherhood that makes it easy for people to advise, to forgive, to excuse, to cooperate, to help and make du'aa for each other.

“And hold fast all together by Allaah’s rope and be not divided amongst yourselves; and remember Allaah’s favour on you, for you were enemies and He joined your hearts so that by His Grace you became brothers” [Imraan

STRENGTHENING BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

It appears to be the best of times for the Muslim Ummah, in that there has never been more Muslims on the globe. They number approx. 1.6 billion; an increase of over 235% over the last 50 years. With such phenomenal numbers we should be able to accomplish so much. An objective look at the state of today’s Muslims shows a very different picture - one of people defeated and conquered by others - our land, wealth and other resources all in their control.

Our Ummah is truly in dire circumstances As we have allowed ourselves to become divided. We have forgotten the importance of developing and nurturing ties with our brothers in faith. By losing these precious bonds of brotherhood, which made the Companions so successful, we have become a diseased people. Only when we restore these bonds will we be able to cure our disease and begin to regain our former glory.

“The believers are but a single brotherhood” [49:10]. Allaah describes us as one Ummah. We are united by our faith, so we should truly behave as one brotherhood.

When the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madeenah, the Prophet (saw) instructed every member of the Ansaar to house a Mu-haajir (immigrant), to feed and clothe him

as he would himself. The Prophet (saw) understood the importance of developing a strong bond from the onset in order to build a strong and healthy community. His wise action made possible the ties of love and friendship that developed between the two groups and united the various Arabs tribes with the best and purest of bonds - that of faith in one God and His Messenger. If our Ummah is to succeed, we too must strive to love one another for the sake of Allaah.

In order to strengthen our bonds of brotherhood, we must begin with ourselves. If we can change our behaviour with the Muslims we come in contact with, that will insha’ Allaah start a domino effect, which will slowly influence the entire Ummah. To bring about this change, we simply need to put a few basic rules into practice:

THE GOLDEN RULE:

Treat others as we would like to be treated:
‘None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.’
 [Bukhaaree]

We should consistently remember them in our du’aas:

‘The supplication of a Muslim for his brother without his knowledge is an accepted supplication and he will be re-

“Man’s love for the life of this world is shown in the way he greets people. Look at a chaste poor man, nobody talks to him. People greet him as warily as if fearing that he may pass poverty to them. But see how the people welcome a rich man, even if he does not perform Salaah. They stand up with smiling faces, and each one hopes to meet him first. Note the difference between a man who is so great as seen by Allaah and another who does not even weigh a mosquito’s wing - but this is life.”

Sufyaan ath-Thawri

warded by the presence of an angel at his side. Every time he supplicates for his brother, the angel will say 'Aameen, and the same for you too'.

[Muslim]

STAY UNITED:

Whenever possible, it is important for brothers to make their obligatory salaah at the Masjid, in congregation. Not only does this serve to bring the community together, but Allaah joins our hearts when we worship Him together.

We should visit our Muslim brethren when they are ill or afflicted with difficulties.

'Those who help a Muslim in hardship in this world will be protected by Allaah from suffering hardship in the Hereafter.'

[Muslim]

Our kindness and compassion for one another must always be foremost. *'You find the Muslims in their mutual love and compassion, like one body; should any organ of it fall ill, the rest of the body will share in the fever and sleeplessness that ensues.'*

[Bukhaaree]

'If one of you defends the honour of his brother, Allaah will keep the Hellfire away from his face in the Hereafter.'

[Muslim]

STAY ACTIVE

It is beneficial to engage our families in halaal means of entertainment with other Muslim families. It is also vital that we work together for the cause of Islaam. We should constantly invite one another to partake in Islamic projects as it is Islaam and faith which will unite our hearts.

AVOID GOSSIP

We must stop backbiting and work harder to prevent others from doing so also. Backbiting is the surest and easiest way for Shaytaan to sow the seeds of discord among Muslims. We must constantly remind ourselves that it is a major sin, one whose punishment is very severe:

"..Nor speak ill of each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother?"

[49:12]

When we gossip about a person, it ruins that person's image and our own. *'Let him who believes in Allaah and the Last Day either speak good or keep silent, and let him who believes in Allaah and the Last Day be generous to his neighbour.'*

[Muslim]

We all make mistakes, no one is exempt. Just as we would like our faults to be hidden, so too would those around us. If we are aware our fellow Muslim has done something wrong, we should not expose him. In this way, we will be saved from the sin of backbiting AND we will be rewarded by Allaah:

'One who covers up the faults of somebody in this world, will have his shortcomings covered by Allaah on the Day of Judgement.'

[Bukhaaree & Muslim]

AVOID ENVY AND SUSPICION

'Do not end a friendship, do not turn your back on one another, do not hate each other and do not envy one another. As a servant of Allaah, maintain brotherhood. Two Muslims may not remain on non-speaking terms with each other for more than 3 days.'

[Maalik]

"O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much as possible: for suspicion in some cases is a sin."

[49:12]

BE PLEASANT AND HUMBLE

We should always be the first to ask for forgiveness in disputes, for this will quickly end most disagreements. The person who asks forgiveness first will be rewarded by Allaah. Thus there is a double reward!

Never underestimate the power of a cheerful face and polite words. Be ready to greet every Muslim with a smile on your face and greetings of peace on your tongue. *'Your smiling at your brother is an act of charity.'*

[Tirmidhee]

THE MORE WE PRACTICE OUR RELIGION...

In summary, all of the necessary requirements to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood are included in the comprehensive teachings of Islaam. So it is just a matter of our willingness to practise them and apply them to ourselves properly. Stated quite simply - The more we practise our religion, the better our condition will be.

Wida Kamal Hamidi

THE DEEDS MOST LOVED BY ALLAAH

The Prophet (saw) said, *'The Deeds most loved by Allaah are those that are the most constant, regular ones even though they may be few'*.

[Bukhaaree]

Describing his actions, 'Aaishah (ra) once said, *'His deeds were done constantly and on a regular basis.'*

From this, we can conclude the following:

Constant good deeds, no matter how few, truly demonstrate the stability of the heart and confirm that such deeds do not occur as a result of temporary reaction or a transient passion. This is the secret of their great value.

If the few good acts, done constantly and regularly, are dear to Allaah, what of the *numerous* such deeds?

Being aware of ones abilities is one of the reasons behind the regularity of good deeds. Those who are over-confident and always make decisions that are not proportional to their abilities soon give way to despair when they realise they cannot cope with reality, and thus meet with disappointment and frustration.

The secret behind doing few good deeds regularly is that doing so does not fill one with pride nor the feeling that one has done more than required, which may have adverse consequences, to the extent of giving up the deeds altogether.

The constant, regular, righteous deeds demonstrate the shrewdness and foresight of the person performing them. He knows the beneficial deeds are those that are done regularly not abundantly and occasionally. They also confirm his patience and perseverance, for boredom is innate in humans, overcome by observing constancy.

The constant, regular, good deeds, even though they may be small in number, are bound to generate more rewards, because they are more burdensome and fatiguing. People have a natural disposition to hate compulsion. Regularity of deeds is a form of compulsion. One only obtains rewards in proportion to the level of difficulty and hardship of the deeds.

Waleed Rifa'e

RUNNING AWAY FROM THE QUR'AAN

Question to Shaykh Abdul Aziz Ibn Baz (rh):

What is your advice for those who go without reading the Qur'aan for a month, or even many months, and who have no excuse for such behaviour? However, you will find some of them reading those magazines that contain no benefit for them, and following them up closely!

Answer:

It is recommended for every Believing man and woman to recite the Book of Allah often, with due contemplation and understanding. This may be done by using a copy of the Qur'aan or from one's memory. Allaah - the Most High - said:

"This is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that you may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember."

[38:29]

And:

"Indeed those who recite the Book of Allaah and offer the Prayer perfectly and spend in charity out of what We have provided for them - secretly and openly - hope for a sure trade-gain that will never perish. That He may pay them their wages in full and give them even more out of His Grace. Indeed, He is Oft-Forgiving, ready to appreciate good deeds."

[35:29-30]

Recitation of the Qur'aan includes both reciting and acting upon it. The recitation is to be done with contemplation and understanding of it. Sincerity to Allaah is a means of complying with and acting upon the

Qur'aan, and its recitation contains a great reward:

The Prophet (saw) said:

"Recite the Qur'aan. For on the Day of Resurrection, it shall come as an intercessor for its companion."

[Muslim]

The Prophet (saw) also said:

"The best of you is he who learns the Qur'aan and teaches it."

[Bukhaaree]

"Whoever reads one harf (letter) of the Qur'aan shall receive a good deed and ten good deeds similar to it. I do not say that Alif Laam Meem is a harf, but Alif is a harf, Laam is a harf and Meem is a harf."

[Saheeh at-Tirmidhee]

The Prophet (saw) said to `Abdullaah ibn Amr:

"Complete the recitation of the Qur'aan once a month." He said: I am able to do more than that. So he said: "Then complete its recital once in seven days."

[Bukhaaree]

The Companions used to complete the entire Qur'aan once every seven days.

So I advise all the readers of the Qur'aan to increase in their reading of it, with contemplation and understanding it, along with sincerity to Allaah in this - with the purpose of learning and benefiting from the Qur'aan. They should read the entire Qur'aan once a month. If, however, they are able to do more than this without any difficulty, then they should complete it in less than this time. However, it is best not to complete it in less than three days, since this is the least amount of time that the Prophet (saw) mentioned to `Abdullaah ibn `Amr. This is because if it is read in less than three days, the person becomes hasty and lacks thought and concentration..."

[Fataawaa al-Mar`ah (no. 294)]

Ibraaheem (alayhis salaam) was over 100 years old when his son Ishaq was born. His wife was 90 and his older son Ismaa'eel was over 13.

Ishaq (alayhis salaam) married Rifqa when he was 40 years old. She was unable to have children, so Ishaq (alayhis salaam) prayed for her. Allaah answered his prayer and blessed them with twin boys. The firstborn son was known as Al-'Ais. From him descended the Romans. The second son was called Ya'qoob and the Israelites came from his line.

Ishaq (alayhis salaam) favoured Al-'Ais more than . Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) however Rifqa loved Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) more.

One day, when Ishaq (alayhis salaam) was old and his eyesight was too weak to see, he felt like eating a certain type of food. He asked Al-'Ais to go hunting for some wild animal and then to cook it for him. He told him if he did this, he would give his son his blessing and pray for him. Al-'Ais was a hunter and immediately went off to capture an animal.

Rifqa however had overheard the conversation and told Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) what his father had asked his brother to do. She asked him to go to their flock and bring two of the best goats, which she cooked as her husband desired. She then took Al-'Ais's clothes and put them on her younger son. Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam)'s skin was not hairy like his brother's, so his mother covered his hands and neck with the goatskin.

When Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) brought the food to his father, Ishaq (alayhis salaam) asked who he was. He answered, "Your son". His father touched him and said, "The voice is of Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam), but the hands are of Al-'Ais ". He ate the food and then blessed Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam), that he be honourable among his brothers, that his authority extend upon all nations and he receive plentiful provision.

After Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) left his father, Al-'Ais came in from hunting. He prepared some delicious food and brought it to his father. Ishaq (alayhis salaam) asked him what he had brought and he replied that it was the food he had asked for. Ishaq (alayhis salaam) said, "Was is not you who just brought it, and I ate from it and then blessed you?" Al-'Ais said, "By God it was not me". He realised that he had been cheated of his blessing and became so angry that he vowed to kill his brother.

He asked his father for another blessing, which his father gave.

When Rifqa learned of Al-'Ais's intentions, she asked Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) to leave at once. She asked him to stay with her brother in another city, until his brother's anger faded. She also told him to marry one of her brother's daughters. Ishaq (alayhis salaam) called for his

son and asked him to do the same and blessed him.

By the end of that day Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) had left his home. At night, he stopped to sleep, using a stone to rest his head on. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to Heaven. Angels were going up and down this ladder. From above the ladder, His Lord said, "I am the Lord. I will give you and your descendents the land on which you are lying." He also blessed Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam).

When he awoke, he felt happy with his dream. He promised himself that if he returned safely to his father's house, he would build a masjid at that place and whatever Allaah would give him, he would give away a tenth of that in charity. Then he took the stone he had slept on and poured oil on it so that he would be able to recognise it. He called that place Bethel, meaning 'house of Allaah'. This the same place where Bayt-ul-Maqdis (Masjid al-Aqsa) is situated now, which was built by him later on.

Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) arrived at his uncle's house in Haran. His uncle had two daughters; the older was called Liyaa and the younger was Raaheel. Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) fell in love with the younger sister, who was more beautiful and asked his uncle if he could marry her. He agreed, but on the condition that Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) must work with him for 7 years first.

After Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) had worked for his uncle for 7 years, he asked his uncle for his wife. So the uncle gathered the people and gave a huge feast. In the evening, his uncle gave his daughter Liyaa, who was not as beautiful, to Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam). It was only in the morning that he realised he had been deceived. He at one approached his uncle and asked him. His uncle replied that it was not their custom to marry the younger daughters before the older ones and that if he truly loved Raaheel, he had to work for another 7 years and then he could marry her also.

So Ya'qoob (alayhis salaam) worked for another 7 years and then married Raaheel. Marrying 2 daughters was allowed in their times, but later became forbidden. Each sister was given a maidservant from their father.

Liyaa had 4 sons, Rubeel, Sham'oon, Laawi and Hood. Raheel did not have any children, which made her jealous of her sister. She gave her maid to her husband, so that she could have children for her. Her maid gave birth to 2 sons; Daan and Neeftaal. Liyaa saw this and then she too gave her maid to her husband, so she could have more children for her. Her maid then had 2 sons; Jaad and Asheer. Then Liyaa had 2 more sons; Isaakhar and Zaabloon, then she had a daughter called Dinaa.

In total Liyaa had seven children of her own, 6 sons and 1 daughter. Meanwhile Raaheel prayed to Allaah, so she too could have children. Allaah then blessed her with a beautiful son, whom she named Yusuf.

To Be Continued...