

PARADISE October 2001

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EDITORIAL

Scholars' UNITY

It is the direst of times for the Muslim scholars to be united and come forward and assume their responsibility in leading the Ummah to the correct, unbiased, and full comprehension of our Islam. The scholars are the inheritors of the prophets as it has been stated in the Hadith of our Prophet (saw). They have the major role in the unity of the Ummah and its success. When the scholars divide among themselves and become dependent on political agendas or be blinded with certain issues that make them unwilling to hear other arguments and opinions, then the rest of the Ummah will follow suit and become divided (as we see and live) and heart-hardened against others. Islam is a religion of kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, and "open-mindedness". Islam encourages independent thinking and invention as long as it fits in its frame of legality. Islam wants from its followers to always be aware of all the situation surrounding them and be involved in the process of developing and enhancing their communities' well-being. Islam never breached that Muslims should be secluded nor cut their ties with anyone no matter what this one's religion or faith is.

Peace be with you!

The Concept of Taqwa, and Some of its Aspects

"O Ye who Believe! Fear Allah. And let every soul look to what he has prepared to-morrow. Fear Allah, for Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. And do not be like those who forgot Allah, and He made them forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors." 59/18-19

Taqwa is one of the fundamental principles in Islam. It is usually translated as: "fear of Allah, piety, righteousness, or being conscious of Allah, aware of His attributes, His Might and power". It implies self-restraint, guarding oneself from all sins, wrong deeds, and injustice. Taqwa is not a passive idea. It is not merely a feeling or an emotion. Taqwa is an active concept. It is about action, doing of good deeds, positive actions in preparation for the Hereafter, the next life.

We should always be grateful and thankful to Allah for His favors. But these favors should not make us feel superior, arrogant or proud to the extent of kibr. Arrogance or kibr is something hated in Islam. As the Prophet has said, "Whoever has a mustard seed worth of kibr [arrogance] in his heart will never enter paradise."

Kibr is something, which is particularly despised in Islam. It is always identified with the attitude of shaytán, who rejected the command of Allah when ordered to bow to Adam.

When a person is conscious of Allah, aware that He is watching, then that person would not do the things that are displeasing to Allah. It is when we forget Allah that Satan finds the opportunity to approach us, to misguide us, to suggest evil and we then fall into sin.

Throughout our lives, we are in that state of constant struggle between the remembrance and the forgetfulness of Allah. Remembrance of Allah ensures righteousness; forgetfulness of Allah opens the door for sin. Taqwa is therefore a concept having to do with the remembrance of Allah, fearing Allah, protecting us from the wrath of Allah. All of this is related to Taqwa, and all of it represents the goal or the basic principle, which Islam seeks to develop in us; and which, ultimately, is the foundation of righteousness.

If we persevere in our efforts to remember Allah and strive constantly to develop our Taqwa at all times passionately and sincerely we may then achieve a special status of being nearer and close to Allah and be a *waliy*, a friend of Allah. This is the term used by Allah in the Qur'an and the Prophet in his Sunnah. A friend of Allah is one who has developed Taqwa. As Allah said in Surah Yunus: "Behold certainly no fear and no grief shall overcome the awliyaa of Allah, the friends of Allah, those who believe and have Taqwa." 10:63. Allah (swt) also says through the words of the Prophet in a Hadith Qudsi: "My servant does not come closer to Me by anything more beloved to Me than the things which I have made compulsory for him.". Therefore, to come closer to Allah, to achieve the status of friendship, of being a friend of Allah, is through the basic compulsory things, which Allah has prescribed.

By: Br. M. Miran

ACTIVITIES & PROGRAMS

Friday Study Circle: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Two separate study circles for brothers and sisters.

Sunday School and Study Circle: 9:30-1:00

Sunday School for children and Study Circle for adults (men and women).

Short Reminder:

Every Monday and Wednesday after *Isha* Prayer.

Prayer Times at the Masjid

Fajr:	6:00 a.m.
Duhur:	1:00 p.m.
Asr:	4:00 p.m.
Maghrib:	Sunset
Isha:	8:00 p.m.
Jumu'a (Friday):	12:30 p.m.



Fasting During the Month of Sha'ban

This is a month in which our beloved Prophet (peace be unto him) used to observe fasting. In fact, Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said “I never saw the Messenger of Allah fasting for an entire month except in Ramadan, and I never saw him fast more than he did in Sha'ban.” [Bukhari & Muslim].

It was also reported that he (peace be unto him) used to fast all of Sha'ban except for a day or two.

So what is the idea behind fasting this month in particular? Sha'ban comes between the months of Rajab and Ramadan, both of which are months of fasting. Fasting in Ramadan - as we know - is obligatory, while Rajab is one of the four sacred months and thus fasting (part of) it is recommended. So people often tend to ignore fasting during Sha'ban. However, the Prophet (peace be unto him) recommends acts of worship at times and places in which people tend to forget Allah. In the meaning of an authentic Hadith, he teaches us that ‘one who remembers Allah amongst those who do not is like a steadfast fighter among those who are fleeing.’

Another notable advantage of fasting during Sha'ban is that it prepares us for fasting during Ramadan. People who are not accustomed to fasting before Ramadan often find difficulty during the month, especially during the first couple of days.

A question that often arises is whether to fast during the second half of Sha'ban, which is just before Ramadan. One of the scholars' opinions on this matter is that if one has fasted the first half of the month, he/she can continue during the second half; if one has not, he/she should not start fasting in the latter half so as not to become weak prior to Ramadan.

May Allah guide us to the very best of deeds during Sha'ban and rest of the year.

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The Effects of Sins (20 Effects)

by: Imam Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah from His book Al-Jawaab al-Kaafee

ONE: The Prevention of Knowledge: Knowledge is a light which Allah throws into the heart and disobedience extinguishes this light.

Imam Al-Shaafi'ee said: “I complained to Wakee' about the weakness of my memory, so he ordered me to abandon disobedience. And informed me that the knowledge is light. And that the light of Allah is not given to the disobedient”

TWO: The Prevention of Sustenance: Just as Taqwa brings about sustenance, the abandonment of Taqwa causes poverty. There is nothing which can bring about sustenance like the abandonment of disobedience.

THREE: The prevention of obedience (to Allah). If there was no other punishment for sin other than that it prevents one from obedience to Allah then this would be sufficient.

FOUR: Disobedience weakens the heart and the body. Its weakening the heart is something which is clear. Disobedience does not stop weakening it until the life of the heart ceases completely.

FIVE: Disobedience reduces the lifespan and destroys any blessings. Just as righteousness increases the lifespan, sinning reduces it.

to be continued ...

Muslimah

HIC Sisters' Page
 Editor: Sr. Zakiyyah Shakoor



Gratitude to Allah

All praise and thanks are due to Allah who has blessed us Muslims with this great religion, Al-Islam. It is through Al-Islam, that Muslims can find the peace and contentment in life that they seek. How fortunate are we today to be among those who Allah has chosen to walk the path of truth in a world so full of deception. Is it no small wonder that Allah chose you to carry the banner of Islam? Do you hold this banner high? Are you satisfied with Allah as your Lord, the Qur'an as your guide, Muhammad as your Prophet, and Islam, as your Religion? What if Allah had put you on another path in life, one filled with self-destruction, misery, or despair? A life devoted to many gods, or a life filled with corruption, fear, or misfortune. What a miserable life you would lead, and so very far away would you be from true happiness and peace. Do you ever wonder why you were given this great gift, and if you are doing everything you can and should to maintain and hold on to it? Are you using this gift in the manner that is pleasing to Allah? Are you promoting it and sharing it with others?

We have been given a very special gift from Allah (swt), and we must work hard to let Him know how grateful we are. Each and every day, we must show gratitude to Allah (swt) for this, and the countless other gifts we so often take for granted. If we do not show our appreciation, Allah may replace us for another creation who Allah will love, and who will love Him; Then we will be the real losers. We must strive constantly to keep our focus to preserve our position with Allah (swt). Do we think that Allah will keep our feet firmly planted on the path of truth if we do not show Him gratitude? How can we show gratitude to Allah? We can show gratitude by constantly remembering Him, and obeying His commands, by enjoining the right and avoiding the wrong. We can show gratitude by living our life in accordance with Allah's plan, and by following the example of His great Messenger and Prophet, Muhammad (saw). We can show gratitude by sharing Islam with others, by reaching out to the needy, by striving to be the best Muslims as well as the best human beings we can possibly be. We must remember that Allah is watching us and is taking account of what we are saying, and doing with this trust He has given us. When we encourage one another to do good, or discourage one another from doing wrong, we are showing gratitude to Allah (swt).

As Muslims, we must not become complaisant with our religion. We must constantly strive to learn and grow with it. If we are not growing and experiencing renewal each and every day, we may be losing out on some of the benefits intended by Allah. Islam must shine in every aspect of a Muslim's life. It must be evident in our business affairs, our social, family and our community life. We cannot merely dress the part of a Muslim on Fridays, or during Ramadan, or at the E'ids, or when we come in contact with one another. We must wear the garments of Islam and exhibit righteous behavior each and every day of our life. Islam is a total way of life. Muslims are the leaders for this society, and we must set the best example in not only our private life, but our public life as well. As we strive to do the things that are pleasing to Allah, let us remember to keep the focus on Allah (swt) and do the good deeds that will benefit us most in this life and the Hereafter. Let's hold the banner of Islam high for the world to see and be grateful for this great gift Allah has given us.



HUNTSVILLE ISLAMIC CENTER

OPEN HOUSE

**Saturday, 11/3/2001
7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Please join us and invite your friends and neighbors who are interested to know more about Islam and the Muslims.

Refreshments will be served

Interfaith Mission Services (IMS):

Responding to Terror and Violence
Religion's Common Ground

**Thursdays, October 25 - November 15
6:30 - 8:30 PM**

Compass Bank Community Room

- * **October 25th**
Terror and Violence: Roots and Realities
- * **November 1st**
Visions of the Peaceable Kingdom
- * **November 8th**
Forgiveness: The Attribute of the Strong
- * **November 15**
Healing the Wounds: Making Peace a Priority

Compass Bank's address is 114 Governors Drive, just east of Mollie Teal's restaurant and Whitesburg Drive. Park in the back upper level parking deck. Enter the door there. Take the elevator to the fourth floor.

PARADISE

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