

Challenges to Our Imaan

Valuable Treasure of Imaan & Calamity of Kufr

From the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth, we learn that the most valuable treasure is Imaan and the greatest calamity is kufr (disbelief). Everlasting success is the result of Imaan while everlasting loss is the consequence of kufr (disbelief).

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states:

- * Verily (the true) Deen by Allah is Islam. (*Aal-Imraan: 19*)
- * Whoever searches for a Deen other than Islam, never will it be accepted from him. And, in the hereafter, he will be ruined. (*Aal-Imraan: 85*)
- * Whoever among you turns away from his Deen (Islam) and then dies being a disbeliever, his good deeds will be ruined in this world and the Aakhirah. Such people are the inmates of the Fire; therein will they remain forever. (*Baqarah: 217*)
- * Verily, those who have rejected Our laws, soon will We enter them into a dreadful Fire. Therein (there condition will be such that) when their skins have become scorched (and burnt out), We will immediately replace the skin so that they suffer the punishment (forever). Verily, Allah is most Powerful and the Wise. (*Nisaa: 56*)
- * Those who have adopted Iman and practiced righteousness, soon will We enter them into such Paradises under which flow rivers. They will dwell therein forever. Therein will be pure wives for them. We will enter them into a dense shade (of coolness). (*Nisaa: 57*)

Fundamental Challenged Beliefs that need to be Fortified

Hereunder a few important beliefs will be mentioned which are being attacked at times openly, and at other times subtly. We need to guide ourselves, our families and the ummah against these evils.

1.) Belief in Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى was always in existence and will always remain in existence. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is the Ever-Living. The whole universe was non-existent. When Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى created the world, it came into existence. In many verses of the Qur'aan, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى declares that He has created the world. The world did not come into existence by itself or by any Big-Bang. The perfect

administration and regulation of the universe speaks for itself, by testifying that our Creator and Supervisor is an extremely Knowledgeable, Wise, Powerful and Mighty Being.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى created man in the most perfect of forms.

Hadrat Adam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was created by Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in Jannah from sand without the agency of human parents. He تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى was the first man. He had no mother and no father. His wife, Hawwa رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was created from him. All human beings are from their progeny. Man appeared on earth in a state of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical perfection. Man is not the product of any evolutionary process, which regards apes as the ancestors of man. To believe in Darwin's theory of evolution will cause a person to lose his Imaan.

Darwin's theory - It is clear from history and from the religious literature of different groups that belief in the existence of a Supreme Being has always existed in the people. In every age, and in every people, it has been accepted that this world has a Creator, and that He has great power. Therefore, the call and teachings of the messengers who were sent to different people at different times, stressed the Oneness of that Deity. They did not feel the need to stress the actual existence of a Supreme Deity. The reason for this is that for almost the whole of mankind, His تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى actual existence is an accepted fact, and the existence of a Creator of the universe is as natural and self-evident a fact as a person's own existence. Therefore, this error has never been very widespread among mankind. However, in recent times, the atheistic movements have been very successful in promoting their ideologies. An immense change is occurring on university campuses. The popularisation of atheistic publications and propaganda through social media, combined with fervent activism, have increased an environment of intellectual challenge and peer pressure. Any Muslim who is not equipped with the adequate spiritual, intellectual and theological tools to address these challenges can be misguided onto the irrational path of denying the Divinity. Atheism is not merely a figment of imagination, which is not based on any proof whatsoever, but a sinister tool of Shaytaan to lure people away from the truth.

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says in the Quran, "Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى created the heavens and the earth as required, and so that each soul may be rewarded for its earnings, and they shall not be wronged. Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity. And Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, knowing him as such, led him astray and set a seal

upon his ears and his heart, and cast darkness over his eyes. So now who will bring him onto the path beside Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى? Do you not ponder? They say, “There is nothing but our life of this world. We die and we live, and nothing but time destroys us.” They have no knowledge thereof. They are merely guessing. When Our clear verses are recited to them, they have no proof except that they say, ‘Bring forth our forefathers if you are truthful.’”
(Jaathiyah: 22-24)

It should not be necessary to make a case for the existence of a Divine Being, who created the heavens and the earth, and everything in it, including mankind. The evidence is so obvious, that one is amazed that anybody could think otherwise. Unfortunately, many people are still in denial, despite all the evidence being presented to them. The evidence is basic common sense, logic and is also backed by solid scientific material. That all this be rejected, should be something to be amazed at. From the inception of mankind, there has been a battle between truth and falsehood. This battle will continue. Many people get swayed by the arguments put forward by those who reject the existence of a Divine Being, and argue that mankind came into existence through a process of evolution. Many of these adherents are scientists (who ought to know better). They are so enthralled by scientific “progress!!!” that they refuse to acknowledge the Divine Hand behind the running of the universe.

Atheists, playing on the ignorance and impressionability of young people, try to exert their influence over them by pseudo-scientific arguments. These ideologies are ingrained in the school syllabus and propagated by mass media. In universities, these ideas are given further impetus. The youth, through lack of information and lacking in skills to answer those who believe in evolution, are often left confused. Therefore, it is of great importance that parents keep an eye on what their children are studying and to strengthen their Imaan from the beginning. *(Adapted from: A silencing reply to atheism)*

2.) Belief in the finality of the Nubuwwat of Rasulullaah ﷺ

Sayyiduna Muhammad ﷺ is the final Nabi and Rasul. After him, no new messenger will appear. If a person lays claim to be a Nabi, one should never dare ask him for proof. If one does so, he will lose his Imaan as this is a clear indication that he has some doubt in the matter. One should be wary of such groups like the Qadiyanis, etc. They do a lot of social welfare work and slowly inject their incorrect beliefs into the unwary masses.

3.) Belief in Akhirah

This entails believing in the life after death. People will be questioned in their graves. Those who successfully answer will be granted comfort whilst those who cannot answer will be subjected to severe punishment. After the world is destroyed, all people will be resurrected in the hereafter to account for their deeds. Those who believed will be admitted into Jannah forever, whereas those who die on disbelief will remain forever in Jahannam. Jannah and Jahannam have already been created, wherein there are physical as well as spiritual enjoyments and punishments. Today, many doubt the life in the grave and recompense in the Hereafter, whereas Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, "And they (the believers) have complete conviction in the Hereafter." (Baqarah: 4)

4.) Belief in the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

We should possess love and entertain good thoughts regarding every one of them. To think or talk evil of them is open transgression of the law of the Qur'aan. There is fear of kufr regarding such a person. Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Whoever speaks ill of my Sahaabah, upon them is the curse of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the angels and all the people." (Tabaraani). If we come to know of any disputes that took place between them, then we should attribute it to some misunderstanding. We should not speak ill of them. Their differences were based on their piety, love for the truth, fear of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and differences in ijtihaad (deduction). Those who erred will receive one reward whilst those who were correct will receive two rewards. No person has a right to criticize these errors e.g. to rebuke Muawiyah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ is prohibited as he was a Sahaabi, a scribe of the Qur'aan, as well as a close family member of Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ i.e. the brother-in-law of Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

5.) Belief in Islam as being the final religion and way of life

Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى states, "Today, I have completed for you your Deen, I have completed My favour upon you, and I have chosen for you Islam (total obedience) as your Deen (way of life)." (Maaidah: 3)

Firm Unapologetic Belief Vital

A Muslim must have faith in the following matters which are clearly spelt out in the Qur'aan, leaving no place for interpretation or logic:

a.) Capital punishment for murder, adultery, fornication, robbery, etc.

The Islamic system is the most perfect system which is the only solution to the world's problems afflicting man today. If a person claims that these sentences are barbaric, then his Imaan is at stake.

b.) Inheritance

The Qur'aan clearly prescribes portions for heirs. They have not been left to man's discretion. Generally, women-folk are deprived of their share completely, or are given a fraction of their actual share, to keep them happy. The rest is then usurped by the men-folk. The Qur'aan sounds a severe warning to those who do not abide by these rules. As for those who mock or deny these portions, feeling them to be unjust, then he falls out of the fold of Islam.

c.) Hijaab and Modesty

This refers to the Islamic system of repelling immodesty and immorality; by guarding the gaze; segregation of males and females; covering of one's satr (private parts) at all times; women covering their bodies in appropriate clothing which conceals their shape and contours; women speaking in coarse tones to non-mahram males when necessary; women concealing their faces when emerging from their homes; severe punishment for the commission of adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism; and the promise of great reward for chastity. Islam is completely opposed to all forms of immodesty, immorality and depravity.

Today, an effort is made to promote the acceptance of homosexuality and lesbianism in the media, schools, etc. The way these disgusting actions are painted are causing many of the youngsters to change their stance on these issues. Remember why the nation of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام were destroyed. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى mentions their incident in many places in the Qur'aan. At one place, He says, "And (We also sent) Lut. 'Behold, he said to his people, do you do what is shameful even though you see (that it is wrong)? Would you really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, you are a grossly ignorant people!' But his people gave no other answer but this: They said, 'Drive out the followers of Loot from your city. These are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!' But We saved him and His family except his wife: We destined her to be of those who lagged behind. And We rained down on them a shower (of stones). And evil was the shower on those who were admonished (but failed to heed)." (Naml: 54-58). At yet another place, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says, "Do you approach the males of humanity, leaving the women Allaah has created for you? But you are a people who transgress." (Shu'raa: 165-166)

Had homosexuality been normal, we would have found it amongst the sahaabah, tabieen, etc. but we do not find it when reading about their lives.

It is normal for a male to marry a female and be attracted to a female and vice versa. It is not normal for a female to be attracted to a female and a male attracted to a male. It is against nature. Once Abul Aswad رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ brought a letter which he showed to one of his students and said, 'I bear witness that this letter was dictated by Ali bin Abi Taalib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ to Abul Aswad, "When men (i.e. homosexuals) will sexually satisfy themselves with men and women (i.e. lesbians) with women, then earthquakes will occur, faces will become transformed and stones will rain down from the skies.' Rasulallah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said, "May Allah curse him who does what the people of Lut عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ did." (*Ibn Hibbaan*) He صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ has also said, "Lesbianism by women is adultery between them." (*Tabaraani*)

d.) Polygamy

The Qur'aan Sharif has granted man permission to have up to four wives. There is no need to acquire permission from the first wife in doing this. Many Muslims mock at this Qur'aanic injunction, or try to re-interpret it to appease Western people, who ban bigamy in their countries, but regard adultery as a past-time and right of the spouse.

e.) Jihad

The object of jihad is to for 'elevation of the word of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى' and to establish the government of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى in order to preserve the sanctity of the divine commandments of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, to prevent the wretched from making a mockery of these commandments, and to ensure that the devotees of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى are able to take His name unperturbed by external influence. If the government of the day wishes to eradicate immoral habits, indecent customs and destructive thoughts of its populace without the authority of a political structure and system of government, it is beyond the reaches of probability. Good advice is effective for people of unsullied disposition. Regardless of how sincere your advice may be, it will never make an impression on people of obstinate dispositions. Two types of jihad have been mentioned in the Qur'aan. One is defensive - when the disbelievers attack you, then you should repel them. This is fard-e-ayn. The second is offensive – to launch an offensive attack when the forces of kufr pose a threat to the freedom of Islam. (*Refer to Seerate Mustapha v. 2 for a detailed explanation on Jihad*) The enemies of Islam fear even the name 'jihaad'. They have made great efforts to undermine its importance in Islam. One of Mirza Ghulam Qadiyani's aims was to remove the fervour of jihad from the hearts of the Muslims. On the

other hand, one of the aims of Maulana Qasim Nanotwi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ in establishing his Madrasah was to create enthusiasm in the hearts of people for jihaad and to prepare them for it. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “When you will abandon Jihaad, Allaah will place over you disgrace, which will not be removed from you, until you return to your deen.” (Abu Dawood)

f.) Slavery

Slavery existed before Islam. It was found in all previous religions and faiths. Just as governments of the world mete out punishment to rebels and political prisoners and strip them of their freedoms, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has meted out the punishment of slavery to those who rebel against His law. Islam thus did not abolish it, since it is a divine punishment for rebellion (kufr) against Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. Islam retained the concept, but eradicated the injustices and evils associated with it. There is a world of difference between slavery found in the Western world and slavery in Islam. The West cause a commotion regarding the concept of slavery found in the Qur’aan, but fail to state that it is found in their scriptures. Today, they too practise individual slavery discreetly (prostitution, child labour- all backed by governments), as well as political slavery, wherein they force entire nations into bondage. (Seerat-Mustapha, v.2)

g.) Status of Women

The Qur’an declares that man has a position and rank above women. This is completely contrary to the clamour of the West for ‘equal rights’, ‘emancipation of women’ and ‘women’s rights’. Men are obliged to fulfil their duties towards women and they have been commanded likewise. Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has created both men and women differently in many aspects, so that they could fulfil the duties assigned to them in their respective environments. Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to his beloved daughter, “O Fatimah! Fear Allaah. Fulfil the compulsory duties (faraaid) of your Sustainer and do the work of your house-folk.” (Bukhari, Muslim) Women fulfilling household duties, remaining obedient to her husband, upbringing of children are amongst her fundamental duties so that a well- balanced society is created. Herein lies her honour. Today, the modern way of life dictates that she must leave the confines of her home, fulfil outside duties, be obedient to her bosses and superiors and leave her children to be nurtured by others. She must attain university degrees to be successful. In Islam, a woman is an object of honour to be concealed and respected, and not an object to be exposed, humiliated and used most indecently, merely to fulfil man’s carnal instincts.

Gender Equality

One of the primary factors that has caused much confusion in the West is that of gender equality. In essence, according to this concept, men and women are equal, hence any job done by a man can be done by a woman. Outwardly, it seems very slick and attractive, but in reality it is absurd. Maryam Jameela, a revert to Islam, has explained it perfectly, "Equality of men and women is meaningless in Islam. It is like discussing the equality of a rose and a jasmine. Each has its own colour, beauty, shape and perfume. Men and women are not the same. Each has their own features and characteristics. Their roles are not competitive but complimentary. Each has duties in keeping with their nature." Even statistics oppose the idea of gender equality. Studies show that prior to 1950, men suffered more mental and psychological problems compared to women. For every seven men diagnosed as mentally ill, only two women were diagnosed with the same problem. After 1950, the figures changed to 22 women for every two men. This was precisely because of their change of roles. Women were forced to leave their homes and enter into factories and offices. They were now subjected to self-analysis and competition. They were overburdened by being forced to work outside the home as well as inside. They had to make it in a man's world by using all their natural feminine qualities (beauty, gentleness and provocative dressing), as well as by adopting masculine qualities (physical strength and aggressiveness) which are unnatural to their makeup. Forcing women into the commercial world led them to combine forces which are diametrically opposed to each other, throwing them into psychological turmoil. Gender equality makes absolutely no sense. If women are granted leave from work for 6 months maternity leave in a gender equal society, it is fair to ask why men are not allowed the same privilege. Does this not give women an unfair advantage over men? Again, logic teaches us that every woman cannot be equal to every other woman. A nurse cannot be equal to a montessori teacher. They cannot simply reverse their roles. When members of the same gender are not equal, how can we expect opposite genders to be equal? The contribution of men and women to history has also been different. Great generals of Islam such as Khaalid ibn Walid رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Salaahuddeen Ayyubi رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ and Muhammed ibn Qasim رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ were all men. Names of women are completely absent from this list because they do not match the physical strength of men. On the other hand, if all the greatest men of the world combine their skills, they will never be able to match the qualities of an ordinary mother because men lack the compassion of women.

We know for a fact that men and women are different physically, anatomically and biochemically. Their biological makeup and genes cause women to have feminine qualities and men to have masculine qualities.

Due to the multi-dimensional nature of life, in some areas men are stronger than women, while in others, women are stronger than men. Human existence and success in life requires both rigidity and tenderness. We require strong generals, perceptive statesmen, and astute administrators just as we require caring mothers, loving wives and efficient housekeepers. A woman excels in those fields which conform to her feminine nature such as nursing, teaching and dealing with children because she has been endowed with feelings of love, sympathy, compassion and caring. She is gentle and tender. Her loyalty is beyond measure. She unselfishly sacrifices her pleasures and luxuries for others. She nurses her family even if she is ill; she feeds them even if she has to remain hungry; and she forgoes her sleep for their benefit. Human psychology also teaches us that a woman is more emotional than a man. This suits her role as a homemaker because emotional sentiments are required for the upbringing of children. In a home situation, a woman is not expected to respond to her child's call after intellectual thought and rational pondering; her response has to be prompt and instantaneous and she fits this mould perfectly. In contrast, in the outside world of business, politics, war, international relations, industrial planning, security, etc. men have to deal with situations based on their physical and mental strength. For this reason, men are by nature more aggressive, assertive and adventurous. In spirituality, men and women are both equal in Islam. They both have brains, hearts and intellects to differentiate between right and wrong. Each of them has the capability of acquiring the highest stages of spiritual perfection and their purpose on earth is the same, namely to obey and please their Creator. The Qur'aan and Sunnah state that both men and women are responsible for reforming and improving the morals of the society they are part of. They both need to encourage good, forbid evil, practise on good morals, display good character, educate others and spend in charity. However, despite their overall purpose in life being the same, their rights and responsibilities are different. There is a balanced distribution where men and women complement each other in their roles. Men need to earn a living and women need to manage the home and raise the children. This is a perfect system because justice demands that the gender that has been chosen by nature to rear children should be relieved of duties in society such as earning. To force a woman to earn a living in the economic field,

together with shouldering the responsibilities which nature has exclusively chosen for her, amounts to abuse and injustice. A morally upright system is that which grants the woman all her rights in her own natural sphere. It allows her to develop to her full potential and progress towards success within her own domain and at her own pace. When a woman is forced to live like a man, her potential for spiritual development is compromised because she can only gain closeness to the divine by functioning within the framework that her Creator has chosen for her. Interestingly, even the sphere of activity of the beautiful maidens of Paradise will be different from the men. They will not be in the public space, but they will dwell happily as the Qur'aan states, "in sheltered tents (pavilions)." (*Rahman: 72*)

In keeping with a woman's unique position, in Islam, many laws of worship apply differently to her. She is exempted from all outdoor religious obligations such as attending the Masjid for the five congregational Salaah, Jumu'ah, 'Id, Janaazah Salaah and jihaad. She is exempted from performing salaah and fasting during menstruation and when bleeding after childbirth. She is exempted from fasting if it has adverse effects upon her during pregnancy and while breast feeding.

Islam advocates complementarity with men and not competition. In all of these aspects and others, the reason for the differentiation is within understanding of a person of sound mind. Up until the occurrence of feminism, a woman not being allowed to work, asked to dress modestly, and made to travel with a guardian etc., was looked at as an act of honour, respect and dignity towards women. Today, it has been termed as unjust. Every difference, in actual fact, is of benefit to women.

The Islamic system is not based on selfish individualism. In Islam, women do not serve men, nor do men serve women. Rather, we serve Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى by helping each other and giving to each other based on human needs, with the understanding that humans are not all the same. Islam provides a clear, natural and just solution to ensuring justice for all humans, and has no need for feminism's vain attempts to reinvent the wheel that Islam set in motion over 1400 years ago. (*Adapted from Muslim women and modern challenges*)

Belittling and Mockery of the Deen (Istih'zaa and Istikhfaaf)

Istihzaa means to jest or mock any teaching, belief, concept or advice of Islam. Istikhfaaf or istihanaah means to regard lightly or insignificant any

affair, teaching, belief of the shariah. In the famous book of beliefs, Sharhul-Aqaaid, the following is mentioned, "Istihanaah is kufr (disbelief) and istihzaa of the shariah is kufr because these are signs of rejection (of Islam)." "It is similarly kufr if a person laughs with pleasure at a statement of kufr made by another person."

Every teaching, belief and attitude of Islam is linked with Allaah ﷻ. Hence, the beliefs, practices, teachings, places and personalities of Islam are all objects of honour and respect. The slightest amount of disrespect is intolerable. Some people mock and jest with the beard; the miswaak; the Sunnah method of eating and dressing; some will find fault in taqdeer; some will brand Islamic ways as outdated and incompatible with the times; some make a mockery of the Ahaadith and the authoritative tafseer (explanation) of the Qur'aan. By doing so, one destroys his Imaan.

Today, with the cell-phone, messages contrary to Islamic beliefs are sent around. At times, a mockery is made of Deen. If a person has to forward these messages or even find them amusing, his Imaan can be in danger. Therefore, one should take great precaution in these matters.

Participation in the Religious Festivities of the Disbelievers

As for those festivals based on religious grounds, it is a severe sin for a Muslim to participate in any way whatsoever, since these festivals are regarded as specialities and distinguishing features of that religion.

Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه said, "Stay away from the enemies of Allaah, the Jews and Christians in their festivities, the day when they gather together, because the anger of Allaah descends on them. I fear that it may afflict you." (*Shuabul-Imaan*)

Hadrat Abdullah ibn Amr رضي الله عنه stated, "Whoever stays in the lands of the foreigners and celebrates their New Year's Days (the festivals of the disbelievers) and behaves like them until he dies, he shall be resurrected with them on the Day of Resurrection." (*As-Sunanul-Kubra of Bayhaqi*)

If a person does not merely take part, but: a.) regards these actions to be meritorious, or even permissible. b.) perpetrates any action of kufr or shirk c.) regards the emphasised and clear warnings in the Shariah to be unjust and unreasonable; then his participation is not merely a sin, but leads a person to disbelief.

It is not allowed for Muslims to congratulate the non-Muslims on their holidays or festivals.

“Giving congratulations on the special events that are specific to the disbelievers, such as congratulating them on their holidays by saying, “Blessed holiday for you,” or other similar greetings, is considered forbidden by the agreement of the scholars. Even if the one who states it is free from any aspect of apostasy, it is still a forbidden act and it is the same as congratulating them upon their prostrations to the crucifix. In fact, that is one of the greatest sins in Allaah’s sight. That is a greater sin than congratulating them for drinking wine, having illegal sexual intercourse and so on. Many of them who are not very religious do such things and they do not know how evil what they are doing really is. Whoever congratulates another human for any sin, heresy, or act of apostasy has exposed himself to the punishment and anger of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. The pious people from the early scholars would avoid congratulating the oppressors when they received positions of authority or the ignorant when they were given judicial or teaching positions in order to avoid the punishment of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and falling from His Grace. If a person would be compelled to go to such people to repel any evil that he expected from him, only to speak well to him and to ask Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى to guide him, there is nothing wrong with that.” (Ahkaam Ahlidh-Dhimma (vol. 1, page 205)

Our fuqahaa have issued strict rulings against adopting and imitating the practices of the Kuffaar on such occasions. The fuqahaa state that if one participates in the celebration of the Kuffaar out of respect for their holy days and celebrations, he will become a kaafir. If one participates in a celebration without respecting and honouring their celebration, he will not become a kaafir. However, this action will be makrooh-e-tahreemi and impermissible. The great jurist, Abu Hafs al-Kabeer رَحِمَهُ اللهُ، said, “The one who after worshipping Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for fifty years gifted an egg to a disbeliever, in reverence for the Kuffaar celebration, will become a kaafir and lose the reward of all his righteous deeds.” (Ad-Durrul-Mukhtaar vol. 6 page 754, Qaadhikhan vol. 3 page 362)

Solutions & Protection from all Evils around us – 8 Principles

In Surah Kahf, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى mentions miraculous events that had occurred with the ‘lads of the cave.’ There was evil all around them, but because they were firm on the correct beliefs, Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى’s assistance was with them. Maulana Manaazir Ahsan Gilaani رَحِمَهُ اللهُ in his explanation of Sura Kahf highlights the following eight principles (extracted from the 4th ruku of this surah), which if one were to adopt in any era and any environment, no matter how

threatening to his faith it may appear, he too would find himself, In-sha Allaah, in a 'spiritually protected cave'.

These Eight principles are briefly enumerated below:

1.) Let the Name of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى Govern One's Every Action

The phrases (لا اله الا الله) 'There is no deity but Allaah', (ما شاء الله) 'This is what Allaah desired', (ان شاء الله) 'If Allaah desires, it will happen', (لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله) 'There is no might and power to do anything save with the will of Allaah', etc. despite being light on the tongue and short in wording, but its weight in meaning and reward shall easily outweigh the heavens and the earths. It is these phrases that stab the shaitaani system that exists around us right in the centre of its heart and denies the shayaateen the recognition that they continuously crave for. Great effort is made today that man affords credit to everything and anything except the Being of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. We are living in a world of 'cause and effect.' Man's examination in this world of 'cause and effect' is that after seeing an effect caused so many times by the same means, will he then fall for the lie that the means itself has caused the effect, or will he still manage to see through the smokescreen of the means and observe the Hidden Hand of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى operating from behind. To pass this most difficult exam, man needs to continuously remind himself that behind every 'means' is The Creator of 'means'.

2.) Adopt a Prescribed Course of the Zikr of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

When one finds himself in an environment which blinds him from viewing the Divine Power and Majesty of Almighty Allaah, and which drowns him in the admiration of 'apparent means'; an environment which makes one totally negligent of the existence of His Creator and robs his tongue and mind of attributing the affairs that exist around him to the Divine Doings of his Creator; an environment where the phrases, 'if Allaah wills - (ان شاء الله)', and 'this is what Allaah had willed' (ما شاء الله) are never heard, if one wishes to rise above such an environment and remain a flag-bearer declaring the Greatness of his Creator in the lands of negligence, his first effort should be to initiate a course of reciting daily a stipulated number of Azkaar (phrases declaring the Greatness and the Majesty of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى). This zikr is a dose of spiritual medication and vitamins. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ in great detail discussed the illnesses of the heart and soul and prescribed its remedies. All these

prescriptions were then summarized and put forward in the following words: “For everything there is a polisher, and the polisher of the heart is the remembrance of Allaah!” (*Ad-Da’awaatul-Kabeer of Bayhaqi*) Through zikr, a state of the consciousness of Almighty Allaah’s Presence shall be developed, which is known as Taqwa. One shall still falter and err, since man is prone to error, but his strong level of Taqwa shall quickly bring him back to his senses and direct him back onto the straight path. Together with this, one should engage in fervent duaa. Rasulullaah ﷺ said, “Dua is beneficial in everything. It is efficacious in warding off misfortunes which have already descended as well as misfortunes which are about to descend. Therefore, the servants of Allah should be steadfast in making dua.” (*Tirmidhi*) Hudhayfah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, “There shall come a time when none shall have safety besides the person who makes a du’aa like a drowning person does.” (*Hilyah*)

3.) Revive One’s Imaan by Pondering Over Inspirational Incidents of the Selected Slaves of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

Essential for the upliftment of one’s spiritual levels is that one reads, listens and ponders over Imaan-inspiring incidents of the past as well as the present. Sheikh Junaib Baghdadi described such incidents as being from amongst the armies of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, through which Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى strengthens the hearts of His friends. Due importance should be given to daily Ta’leem in our homes.

4.) Make Tilaawah a Vital Part of your Daily-Life

The Noble Quraan is a living miracle. It is the uncreated Word of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and encompasses Divine Current. Shaitaani forces aim to poison the heart, through the medium of the eyes, the ears, the tongue and one’s thoughts. Nudity, pornography, music, etc. is utilized for this purpose. Their poisonous effects, drip by drip, seep into the heart and blacken it, first on the surface and then from within. The Qur’aan Shareef also targets the heart, except that its course to the heart is not via any organ, but rather direct. The eyes, the ears, the tongue, and the hands enjoy the honour of making contact with the Qur’aan Shareef, but for its entry into the heart it finds no need for any of these organs. In a manner befitting of a king it enters directly into the heart and initiates an immediate clean-up of the filth that exists within. It purifies and rids the heart of all shaitaani toxins, just as medicine rids the body of viruses and bacteria. It is for this reason that the Glorious Quraan benefits its reciter as well as the one listening, even though they do not understand its meaning. Unlike other speech which is directed first to the mind to

comprehend and understand, the Noble Quraan directs itself straight to the heart. Yes, for maximum benefit and enjoyment to be attained, understanding and deep pondering over its meaning is essential.

5.) Staying in the Company of the Righteous and Pious

Essential for protection of Imaan and one's spiritual progress is that one associate with some selected servant of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. It is a general rule that the company of the pious has a magnetic effect in drawing one towards piety. Note that 'pious company' occasionally is not sufficient. Rather 'a strong relationship coupled with frequent meetings' with those individuals whose hearts have been blessed with a unique attachment to Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is required. Rasulullaah صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "Man adopts the way of life of his companions. One should thus ponder well over who he takes as his friend." (Abu Dawood) What is however essential is that one establishes some sort of a relationship of Islaah (spiritual reformation) with one who is found staunch upon the Shariah, and upon whom the pious and the Ulema have shown trust. Spending time in the path of Allaah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is extremely beneficial as well.

6.) Shun the Habits, Lifestyles of the People of Kufr

It is imperative to understand that for the company of the righteous and pious to have its true and desired effect one must be prepared to draw away from evil company and to shun their ways and habits. Included in evil company is the television, video games, novels, magazines, etc. The internet and the cellphone, when used incorrectly are also included in the definition of evil company.

Today, the fine details of the lives of movie and sports stars are broadcasted, increasing one's admiration for such people manifold. Their marriages bring us enjoy; their divorces make us sad; their success on the sport's field make us celebrate; and their loss pushes us into depression. Their cars, their houses, their clothing and attire, and their every move are entrenched within our hearts. Some even go to the extent of calling these people their 'idols.'

Hadrat Maulana Yusuf Sahib رَحِمَهُ اللهُ made this dua,

اللَّهُمَّ أخرج اليهودية و النصرانية من قلوب المسلمين

O Allaah! Remove Judaism and Christianity from the hearts of the Muslims.

7.) Be Proud of Your Islam and Invite Towards It

In luring people towards a lifestyle of kufr, one of the prime ingredients utilized by the agents of the shayaateen is to create amongst the Muslims an inferiority complex, making them shy to practice upon their faith. Through this complex, Muslims would unfortunately start adopting trends promoted by western, secular states, in the understanding that through these trends their image in the eyes of others shall be enhanced. In contrast to this, Allaah ﷻ orders that one should instead view his Islaam with an eye of pride, and should feel pity when looking at those deprived of this Divine gift. One should in no way feel shy of his faith. Rather, understanding the greatness of what he has, he should, without any complex, encouragingly invite others towards it as well.

It has been most beautifully said: "If one is not an inviter (to what he values), he shall end up being invited (towards what others value)." What the majority understand as a norm should never be one's concern, rather one should take pride in being looked at as 'a stranger to the modern era', since it is he alone whose praises flowed from the blessed tongue of Rasulullaah ﷺ when he said, "Verily Islam began as a stranger, and a time shall again come when it shall be regarded as strange. Glad tidings be to those that are treated as 'strangers'!" (*Ibn Majah*)

8.) Let the Fear of Jahannum and the Hope of Paradise Keep you Focused on your Goal

We should never allow the world to make us forget what is still to come. Nay, this is a world of tests and exams. Being wealthy here is no sign of Divine Acceptance, and nor is poverty a sign of rejection or being of lower status. True honour is not in how the world views one, but rather in how one shall be seen tomorrow, in the Hereafter. There, if one finds himself facing the fire, all the praises of this world shall be of no worth. And if one finds himself blessed with the comforts of Paradise, all the torments, criticism, oppression and insults of this world shall not be able to lessen his pleasure in the least bit. (*Adapted from Surah Kahf – The ongoing battle between spiritualism and materialism*)

May Allaah ﷻ let us live with Imaan, die with Imaan and be resurrected with Imaan.

(HB 61)

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