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PURPOSE OF FASTING IN ISLAM

by Dr Zahid Aziz (UK)

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil." (The Holy Quran, 2:183)

- The first purpose of fasting is to enable us to develop and strengthen our powers of self-control. This means that we can resist wrongful desires and bad habits, and therefore "guard against evil".

- In fasting, by refraining from the natural human urges to satisfy one's appetite, we are exercising our ability of self-restraint. The more you exercise any ability or skill, the stronger it becomes. Then the power of self-restraint developed through fasting must be applied in normal daily life to bring about self-improvement.

- Seeking food, drink and sex are the basic, most deeply-ingrained instincts of an animal, including human beings. Therefore, in fasting we are tested with having to show control in face of the strongest possible inner urges.

- Fasting is a reminder that real and true human life is something higher than satisfying physical desires. That true life is attained by connecting the human soul with God and by having sympathy for those who are in need in any way, and practically helping them.

- Fasting creates a feeling of nearness to God. We have made a promise with God to refrain from certain actions till a certain time. No one can know if we broke that promise, but it is only God Who can see us all the time. That feeling is intensified in

our hearts. People these days are very concerned about surveillance by human agencies (such as governments). How many are concerned about surveillance from God Who says in the Quran:

"No, but you call the Judgment a lie, and surely there are keepers over you, honourable recorders, they know what you do." (82:9 12)

"And certainly We created man, and We know what his mind suggests to him and We are nearer to him than his life-vein...
He does not utter (even) a word but there is by him a watcher at hand." (50:16 and 18)

- Allah says in connection with fasting in Ramadan:

"And when My servants ask you (O Prophet) concerning Me (God), surely I am near. I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should hear My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way." (2:186)

- God is near in any case, whether we feel it or not. A person can realize this fact through prayer, in particular prayers during the month of fasting when the idea of closeness of God is in the mind of the person fasting. God takes the initiative in answering prayers, and says that man, in response, should answer the call of God, i.e. believe in and act on His teachings. God is holding out His hand for man to grasp. Therefore, closeness to God should not just be a feeling in a person's heart and mind. It must be manifested in action by walking in the right way out of belief in God.

- It is important to remember that fasting in Islam does not just consist of refraining from eating and drinking, but in fact from every kind of selfish desire and wrong-doing. The fast is not merely of the body, but essentially that of the spirit as well. The physical fast is a symbol and outward expression of the real, inner fast. We are saying: "I am refraining from all wrong actions that I desire

to do, by refraining from my deepest physical desires". The Holy Prophet said:

"He who does not give up uttering falsehood and acting according to it, God has no need of his giving up his food and drink."

'You have... brought us closer':

Muslim woman's 'beautiful' message on Christchurch attack touches the world.

19 Mar, 2019

By: Michael Neilson

General/Māori Affairs reporter, NZ Herald
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A "beautiful" message of hope and love following the Christchurch mosque attacks has touched the world.

A Muslim woman, who goes by the Facebook name Jinghan Naan and runs a blog The Radiant Muslim, has gone viral with her powerful open letter directly challenging the man charged with murder following the massacre that claimed 50 lives and injured dozens.

It has been shared over 50,000 times, with more than 100,000 reactions.

"Appreciate that you made the effort to find out the timing of our noon prayer," Naan writes.

"Appreciate that you learnt more about our religion to know that Fridays are the days the men go to the mosques for their congregational prayers.

"But I guess there were some things you, rather unfortunately, didn't get to learn.

"Perhaps you didn't know that what you did probably made them Martyrs."

Naan, who is based in Singapore, continues that he showed the world how Muslims welcome, with open arms, "even people like yourself into our Mosques".

"Everyone and anyone is welcome to be with us."

Rather than divide, he brought the different faiths and communities together to stand with Muslims.

"Appreciate that you made countless New Zealanders come out of their homes to visit the mosques nearest to them with flowers and beautiful messages of peace and love.

"You have broken many many hearts and you have made the world weep. You have left a huge void.

"But what you also have done is brought us closer together. And it has strengthened our faith and resolve."

"In the coming weeks, more people will turn up in the mosques, a place you hate so much, fortified by the strength in their faith, and inspired by their fallen brothers and sisters.

"In the coming weeks, more non-Muslims will turn up at the gates of mosques with fresh flowers and beautifully handwritten notes. They may not have known where the mosques in their area was. But now, they do. All because of you.

"You may have achieved your aim of intended destruction, but I guess you failed to incite hatred, fear and despair in all of us.

"And while I understand that it may have been your objective, I hate to say that after all of that elaborate planning, and the perverse and wretched efforts on your part, you still failed to drive a divide among the Muslims and non-Muslims in the world.

"For that, I can't say that I'm sorry."

The post resonated strongly with many of the more than 6000 commenters.

A woman identifying as Catholic said she stood by "our Muslim brothers and sisters".

"For me to have freedom to practise my religion, I must ensure the freedom for others to practise theirs. We stood in love, in defiance of hate, at our marae yesterday, alongside Muslims, Christians, Sikh, non-religious alike. We all stood for peace."

**CHRISTCHURCH MOSQUE
ATTACKS
LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF
NEW ZEALAND**

Rt. Hon. Jacinda K L Ardern
Prime Minister
NEW ZEALAND

16 March 2019

Dear Hon Prime Minister

As members of Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahori) of Australia (Ahmadiyya Society for the propagation of Islam) we extend our deepest condolences to the families of those brothers and sisters who lost their lives in the tragedy that unfolded in two of the mosques in Christchurch, an otherwise tranquil city of New Zealand. The killing of such innocent and peace-loving people is most shocking and beyond belief.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-I-Islam (Lahore) denounces such acts in the strongest terms.

We pray that may Allah grant the departed souls heavenly abode. We pray for those who are injured and wish them a speedy recovery. We pray that Allah grants the families of the victims the patience to bear the loss.

In any religion, a house of worship is a place of

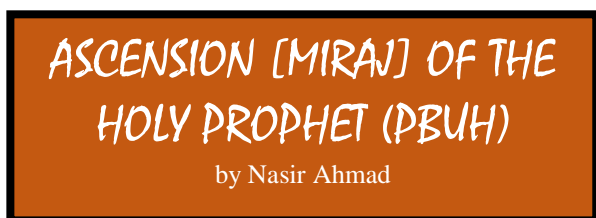
devotion, love, peace and tolerance. It is terribly sad that in two of these houses a heinous act occurred at the hands of someone whose heart is filled with hatred and rage against one group of his fellow human beings.

Such acts of hostility, hatred and violence we condemn most strongly. It is barbaric to attack defenceless people and more so while they are praying.

We also take this opportunity to commend how you, not only as the Prime Minister but as a passionate and loving human being, handled such a difficult situation. May God Almighty bless you. May God bless your beautiful and peaceful country New Zealand.

Sincerely yours

.....
Sadr-Ud-Dean Sahu-Khan
President



Glory to him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Mosque, whose precincts We blessed, that We might show him of our signs! Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing. (The Holy Quran, 17:1)

By the star when it sets! Your companion errs not, nor does he deviate. Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed - One Mighty in power has taught him, The Lord of Strength. So he attained to perfection, And he is in the highest part of the horizon. Then he drew near, drew nearer yet, So he was the measure of two bows or closer still. So He revealed to His servant what He revealed. The heart was not untrue in seeing what he saw. Do you then dispute with him as to what he saw? And certainly he saw Him in another descent, At the farthest lote-tree. Near it is the Garden of Abode. When that which covers covered the lote-tree; The eye turned not aside, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord. (The Holy Quran, 53:1-18)

I have just read to you the English translation of verses from the chapters The Israelites and The Star, relating to the spiritual experience of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, also known as the Mi'raj or Ascension. The words "the heart was not untrue in seeing what he saw." Do you then dispute with him as to what he saw

are quite significant and are a clear indication that the Ascension of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, was spiritual.

Keeping aside the issue of whether the Ascension was with the body or in spirit, it is more important to consider and evaluate the grand objectives attached to it. It mainly manifests the height of spiritual eminence to which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was raised, a position not attained by any prophet in the past and never to be attained by anyone in the future till the end of this world. It is not only a manifestation of the extreme love and close relationship of Almighty Allah for our beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, but it also raised him to the highest pinnacle of eminence and honour which could possibly be imagined by the human mind.

During this Grand Journey, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, visited the seven heavens and then had an audience with Almighty Allah, where even Angel Gabriel dared not step in. This was in a way a most gracious gesture on the part of Almighty Allah, showing His love and affection in such magnanimity to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, granting him a position unique among the comity of prophets.

The most important point in this journey was the Holy Prophet's, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, close contact with the Divine Being and having direct conversation with Him. The question may arise whether a human being can see Almighty Allah with his physical eyes. Here I want to refer to the conversation that took place between Prophet Moses, may peace be on him, and Almighty Allah, when Prophet Moses insisted on seeing Him. Verse 142 of the chapter The Elevated Places, records the conversation in the following words:

And when Moses came at our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: *My Lord, show me Thyself so that I may look at Thee. He said: Thou canst not see Me; but look at the mountain; if it remains firm in its place, then wilt thou see Me. So when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain, he made it crumble and Moses fell down in a swoon. Then when he recovered, he said: Glory be to Thee! I turn to Thee, and I am the first of the believers.*

Evidently the human eye cannot bear even one glimpse of the Divine Glory. How was it possible for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, to witness the full glory of the Almighty Allah on that Grand Journey? Here I want to cite an example. The human eye cannot see the sun with its brilliance and burning light. If it is reflected through a mirror, then the naked eye can see it. So in cases where the human eye cannot see a thing directly, it can see it

through a medium that can show it in a reflective manner. In the case of seeing Almighty Allah and His Glory, kashaf (vision) serves as a medium through which a man can see Him with his spiritual eye. That is why in verse 60 of the chapter The Israelites, Allah says regarding the Ascension: *And We made not the vision which We showed thee but a trial for men.*

The state of dream that is a common experience, is quite different from that of a kashaf. In a dream one acts and feels just as one does in the physical world, but he experiences it while asleep. In kashaf one has the same experience while he is awake. In both cases the nature of the experience is spiritual. In a state of kashaf, one sees divine manifestation and things relating to the other world with one's spiritual sight - a faculty granted by Allah to prophets and saints.

The Companions (rta) believed him and asked details about the Mosque. At that moment, the whole of the Aqsa Mosque was shown to the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in a vision and he answered the questions to the satisfaction of the opponents. The unbelievers thought that the Holy Prophet, peace be on him, was replying from his memory, but, in fact, the whole of the Aqsa Mosque was before him in a state of kashaf. Modern technology can easily explain this phenomenon.

Discoveries in modern science have entirely changed our concept of nature and how it works. Here I refer to an interesting book entitled *Honest to God* written by an enlightened Christian priest. He had requested his Christian audience to take note of modern discoveries and to view certain terms and terminology of religion in a new perspective. New discoveries of science have entirely changed its concept. Now heaven is not what we see above and where we believe God sits and issues orders to the angels and where hell and paradise are situated. Above us is just a vacuum in between different planets in the solar system that has no end. That is why the late President of Russia, Mr. Khrushchev, on firing the first space shuttle, Sputnik, into space, sarcastically said that there was no god in the heaven. It is not surprising that the Quran has used the word *samawaat* that means many heavens, and not one heaven. So, the religion of Islam has no fear from new scientific discoveries.

Last year, Ferozsons, a well known publisher of Lahore, Pakistan, published a book entitled *Quran and Insaan*. The author of the book has compiled verses of the Quran in such a beautiful way that one gets a complete Quranic view of a particular subject. In his Introduction, the author, Safder Hassan Siddique, made the following comments about the Urdu translation of the Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali:

"Translation of the Quranic verses has been taken from the translation of the Holy Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali, because it is, to a large extent, literal and not an interpretation. For this reason, it expresses the Divine Will in a far better way in the Urdu language." (p. 41)

While commenting on verse 1 of chapter 17, The Israelites, in relation to the Mi'raj, the author has made the following comments:

"Ascension of the Holy Prophet was not with his body but his soul. The Ascension took place while his heart was awake. Man's material body is finite but his soul is infinite." (p. 135)

Next I want to quote what The Urdu Encyclopaedia of Islam, published by the University of Punjab, Lahore, says on Mi'raj. Bear in mind that it is based on what the Encyclopaedia of Islam, published by the University of Punjab, Lahore, says on Mi'raj. It should be borne in mind that it is based on the Encyclopaedia of Islam, published from Leiden, Holland.

"Araja is the root word of Mi'raj. Its literal meaning is ladder and in terminology it means height and spiritual perfection. In particular, this word applies to attaining nearness to Allah.... The chapter of the Quran, The Israelites, starts with the words Glory to Him Who carried His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Remote Mosque.... It relates the heavenly journey of the Holy Prophet. This verse has been interpreted in different ways, but this heavenly journey has been regarded as mere ru'ya or vision.... The term applies to the event of the Mi'raj that took place immediately after the cessation of extreme social boycott by the Quraish and the ending of three years confinement of the Holy Prophet and his devoted followers to Abu Talib.... Syed Sulaiman Nadvi has concluded from verse 17 of the chapter The Israelites, that it referred to the command to migrate (to Medina) or the prophecy regarding it.... Regarding the seeing of Allah, Abu Zarr relates on the authority of the Holy Prophet: 'He, Allah, is the Light, how can I see Him?' Hazrat Aisha, wife of the Holy Prophet, has also inferred from the Holy Quran that human eye cannot see the Benign God.... Reference to the obligatory prayers in connection with the Mi'raj is of utmost importance. That is why in some of the traditions, prayer has been regarded as the Mi'raj of believers.... We also find the additional words in the narration of Malik ibn Sa'sa that at the time of setting off (on a journey), he, the Holy Prophet, was in a state between sleep and wakefulness and he was lying in the Holy Ka'bah.... Some of the Arabic books regarding Mi'raj were translated into Latin during the thirteenth century of the Christian era. The Italian poet, Dante, based his well known poem, The Divine Comedy, on ideas borrowed from these books and described his visit to Paradise and

hell... Whatever fanciful accounts have been stated by non-Muslim writers about Mi'raj are conspicuous by their ridiculous superficiality. They have greatly exaggerated the different versions found in Islamic traditions about the details of the event and in their own way have regarded it as scholarly criticism but which can only be regarded as prejudicial."

Let me make it clear at this point that the Ahmadiyya interpretation always gives utmost importance to the Holy Quran. Then comes Bukhari if it supports the Quran, and then Muslim and then other books of Hadith.

You have already seen in the quotation from the Urdu encyclopedia of Islam that the Holy Quran regards the heavenly journey of Mi'raj as having taken place in the state of ru'ya or vision. Bukhari states that the Angel Gabriel came on another night when the heart of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, saw and his eyes slept but his heart did not sleep. Such are the prophets, their eyes sleep, but their hearts do not sleep. Gabriel accompanied him and carried him to heaven (Bukhari, 61:24). The concluding words of another hadith that speaks of the Mi'raj are: And he (the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) awoke and he was in the Sacred Mosque (Bukhari, 98:37). In still another hadith, the words describing the condition in which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was at the time of ascension are : While I was in a state between that of one sleeping and one awake (Bukhari, 59:6).

Maulana Muhammad Ali was right when he said the following about the significance of Mi'raj:

"It is quite true that the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was not asleep but was in a state of vision when Mi'raj took place. The Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was actually carried to the Holy Presence and he was shown great wonders, but it was with the spiritual eye that he saw those wonders, not in body and with the physical eye, for things spiritual can only be seen with the spiritual eye. In fact, the vision had an important significance. He saw it at a time when his condition was, to human seeming, of utmost helplessness, and he was shown a great future ahead of him. But his opponents, as usual, did not believe in such visions and laughed at him."

Similarly, another Ahmadi scholar and commentator of the Quran, the late Dr. Basharat Ahmad, has given a beautiful explanation of various scenes shown in that wonderful vision with reference to authentic books on interpretation of dreams.

For instance, when one sees in a vision that he is riding a burraq, it means that he will attain great honour. He will acquire honour during the journey.

He will return to the place from which he left with honour. So, it referred to the migration of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, from Mecca to Madina. It also meant that to whichever place he goes, he will be greatly honoured and he will return to it with even greater honour. So it happened with the conquest of Mecca.

Brothers and Sisters, Mi'raj or Ascension of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, must be interpreted as referring to the eminence which the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was to achieve and to the greatness to which Islam was to reach. It is a matter of the greatest honour that we are the followers of that greatest of prophets of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

On this auspicious and blessed day we all should pray to Allah that He may enable us to act upon the sunnah of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, in building our character, in being just and equitable in our conduct and behaviour with others, in fulfilling our obligations and in safeguarding the rights of others.

May Allah grant us His blessings, and forgiveness, for enriching our lives here on earth and in the hereafter.

Amen.

PRIDE

by Imam Kalamazad Mohammed

And when We said to the angels, Be submissive to Adam, they submitted, but Iblis (did not). He refused and was proud, and he was one of the disbelievers (2:34).

And the angels submitted, all of them, but not Iblis. He was proud and he was one of the disbelievers. He said: O Iblis, what prevented thee from submitting to him whom I created with both My hands? Art thou proud or art thou of the exalted ones? He said: I am better than he; Thou hast created me of fire, and him Thou didst create of dust. He said: Go forth from hence! Surely thou art driven away: And surely My curse is on thee to the day of Judgement. He said: My Lord, respite me to the day that they are raised. He said: Surely thou art of the respited ones. Till the day of the time made known. He said: Then, by Thy Might! I will surely lead them all astray, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones. He said: The Truth is, and the truth I speak – that I shall fill hell with thee and with all those among them who follow thee. Say: I ask you no reward for it; nor am I of the impostors (38:73-86).

In the above verses we read why Satan was rejected by Allah (istakbara) and also of his avowed intention to mislead whomsoever he can from the progeny of Adam.

[Istakbara comes from kabara which means he or it was or became great (big or large) in body and in years and in estimation or rank or dignity and takabbara and istakbara signify he magnified himself, behaved proudly or insolently. In some places in the Holy Quran, e.g., I shall turn away from My messages those who are unjustly proud in the earth. And if they see every sign, they will not believe in it; and if they see the way of rectitude, they take it not for a way; and if they see the way of error, they take it for a way. This is because they reject Our messages and are heedless of them (7:146), there are several connotations to the above words: "he endeavoured and sought to become great; he boasted of qualities he did not possess and feigned such qualities; he considered himself as the most excellent of the creation, and as having rights which others do not have" (Lane's Lexicon).]

Part of Satan's technique lies in his appeal to the vanity, self-conceit and pride of man in exciting egotistic desires in him and holding out promises of greatness and majesty in this world's life – things which, according to the whisperings of Satan, can be achieved by man's efforts alone and without any reference to the will or power or permission of Allah, Most High, as the following verses testify:

But the devil made an evil suggestion to them that he might make manifest to them that which had been hidden from them of their shame, and he said: Your Lord has forbidden you this tree, lest you become angels or become of the immortals (7:20). He said: My Lord, as Thou hast judged me erring, I shall certainly make (evil) fair-seeming to them on earth, and I shall cause them all to deviate, except Thy servants from among them, the purified ones (15: 39-40).

And incite whom thou canst of them with thy voice, and collect against them thy horse and thy foot, and share with them in wealth and children, and promise them. And the devil promises them only to deceive (17:64).

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has warned us of the sin of pride, the worst evil that man can commit, for it eventually leads to rebellion against Allah and disbelief in and rejection of Him.

"He who has in his heart as much faith as a grain of mustard-seed will not enter hell, and he who has in his heart as much pride as a grain of mustard-seed will not enter paradise" (Sahih Muslim).

He has also given us a clear definition of what constitutes pride:

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: "He in whose heart there is as much as a grain of pride will not enter

paradise," and a man remarked: "A man likes his garment to be beautiful and his sandals to be beautiful." The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied: "God, Most High, is beautiful and likes beauty; pride is disdainful what is true and despising people" (Sahih Muslim).

In his translation of Mishkat-ul-Masabih, Maulana Fazlul Karim gives a description of the three kinds of pride:

- Pride in relation to Allah, whereby man rejects his Creator
- A feeling of superiority over the messengers and prophets of Allah which leads to their rejection, persecution and even slaughter
- Pride in relation to all men; that is, feeling better than all others

He also lists seven objects in which pride is taken:

- Learning
- Divine service
- Ancestors and acquisitions
- Beauty or good looks and other physical accomplishments
- Wealth
- Strength and power
- Followers, helpers, students, disciples, relatives, wives and children

He also gives us some of the causes of pride – self-conceit, malice, enmity and show.

Throughout his writings, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Mujaddid of the 14th Century Hijrah, has blessed us with much enlightenment on this subject, and in the following extract he places before us some practical examples and gives us special words of advice.

"So I advise my Jama'at that they should avoid pride, for in the eyes of God, the Lord of Glory and Honour, pride is a most abominable thing. But perhaps you may not know what constitutes arrogance, so take a lesson from me, for I speak through the spirit of God.

Every person who looks down on his brother because he is more learned, or more intelligent or more skilful is guilty of pride, because he does not regard God as the source and fountainhead of all intelligence and knowledge, but assumes an air of superiority regarding himself. Does God not have the power to make him insane and to make his brother whom he considered inferior, greater in intellect, knowledge and accomplishment?

Arrogant, too, is the person whose wealth, power and glory make him contemptuous of his brother, for he has forgotten that it was from God that he received his rank and dignity. He is also blind for he does not know that the Omnipotent God can bring upon him an unexpected calamity that can bestow upon his brother, whom he regarded as lower than him, more wealth and riches than he had.

Proud, too, is the person who is vain over his physical health and strength or his beauty and elegance or his power and strength, and he mockingly and derisively applies to his brother a name tinged with disdain and exposes his bodily defects to all and sundry. He is ignorant of God, Who, in the twinkling of an eye, can visit him with such bodily infirmities that may make him worse than his brother, and He may bless him who was despised before with strength for a long period of time so that there is not decrease nor unsoundness in it.

Similarly, the one who relies on his own powers so that he is remiss in making du'a (supplication) to Allah, is also a proud person for he has not recognised the Source of all power and strength and ascribes greatness to himself. So, dear friends, remember all these things and from no point of view should you become proud in the eyes of God and let yourself remain ignorant of it.

A person who superciliously corrects a brother for using a word wrongly also partakes of the sin of arrogance.

He who is reluctant to listen politely to the words of his brother and turns away his face in contempt is also guilty of arrogance.

If a person has a poor brother residing with him and he looks down on him that, too, is a manifestation of pride.

If someone looks with scorn and contempt at another who is making supplication to God, then he, too, has a share of pride in him.

He who refuses to render obedience to the messengers appointed by God is also party to pride, as is the person who does not ponder over their words and does not study their writings assiduously.

So strive hard to prevent even an ounce of pride from entering your heart so that you may escape destruction and that you and your family may attain salvation. Bow down to God and, however much it is possible to show love to another in this world, do so, and as much as possible fear your Lord to the limit of your capacity. Purify your heart and your motives and have compassion for the needy and the destitute" (Nuzulul Masih, pp. 402-403).

We must not believe that arrogance is the affliction of only the unbelievers and outright sinners. This is such an insidious evil that not even the saints of Allah are spared the subtle laser-like infiltration of Satan into the innermost recesses of their hearts. The following two incidents in the life of Hazrat Hasan Basri will serve to illustrate this point.

"Hasan was so humble that he considered himself inferior to all. One day on the bank of the River Dajla he found a man seated with a young lady and a bottle of wine in front of him. The thought crossed his mind: 'How depraved is this man!

Would that he were like me.' Just then a boat appeared in the river at a distance from him, and gradually began to sink in deep water. The man immediately jumped into the water and of the seven men in the boat who were drowning, he saved six, and then looking towards Hasan said: 'If you are superior to me, then in God's name save the seventh man. You save only one man, whilst I have saved six.' Hasan could not do so. The man then addressing Hasan said: 'Sir, this woman seated by my side is my mother, and that bottle yonder contains water. This scene was enacted to put you to test.' Hasan fell on his feet and said: 'Just as you have saved six people, save me also from drowning in the waters of pride and vanity.' He replied: 'May God fulfil thy desire!' Hasan felt as if his desire was fulfilled. Since then he became so humble that seeing a dog one day he remarked: 'O Lord! For the sake of this virtuous dog, accept me as Thy slave'" (Tadhkiratul Auliya, pp. 12-13).

"Once Hasan went to Habib 'Ajmi at the time of evening prayers. Hasan heard 'Ajmi mispronouncing a word during the prayer. He considered it improper to say his prayers with him, and therefore said his prayers separately. During the night he dreamt the Lord saying to him: 'Hasan, if you had stood behind Habib 'Ajmi and said your prayers, you would have earned Our pleasure, and that single prayer of yours would have borne thee greater benefit than all the prayers taken together which you have offered in your lifetime. You tried to find fault with his pronunciation, but looked not into the purity and excellence of his heart. Know it that We cherish a contrite heart much more than merely correct pronunciation of words'" (Tazkiratul-Auliya, pp. 17-18).

What can we do to prevent this disease from overpowering us? The Holy Quran is filled with advice for us and so, too, is the Hadith, and a practical elaboration of one of these techniques is given to us by Imam Ghazali as he teaches us the correct attitude to adopt if we are to guard against this deadly malady.

"Every one who considers himself better than one of the creatures of God, Most High, is arrogant. Indeed, you ought to realise that the good man is he who is good in God's sight in the mansion of eternity; and that is something unknown to man, postponed to the end. Your belief that you are better than others is sheer ignorance – rather you ought not to look at anyone without considering that he is better than you and superior to you. Thus, if you see a child, you say: 'This person has never sinned against God, but I have sinned, and so he is better than I'; and if you see an older person, you say: 'This man was a servant of God before me, and is certainly better than I'; if he is a scholar, you say: 'This man has been given what I have not been given and reached what I did not reach, and knows

what I am ignorant of; then how shall I be like him?' If he is ignorant, you say: 'This man has sinned against God in ignorance, and I have sinned against Him knowingly, so God's case against me is stronger, and I do not know what end He will give to me and what end to him.' If he is an infidel, you say: 'I do not know; perhaps he will become a Muslim and his life will end in doing good, and because of his acceptance of Islam something of his sins will be taken away, as a hair is taken from dough; but as for me – God is our refuge – perhaps God will lead me astray so that I become an infidel and my life ends in doing evil, and then tomorrow he will be among those brought near to God and I shall be among the punished'" (The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali, p. 146).

May Allah help us to heed the invaluable advice and teachings given to us above so that our hearts may be fortified with the love of the Almighty in order that we will be able to face and triumph over whatever may befall us in life, and yet be of use to mankind – something that pride naturally obviates. And may we never become like those unfortunate ones who reject religion and go so far as to oppose it and of whom it is mentioned in the Holy Quran: Hastening forward, their heads upraised, their gaze not returning to them, and their hearts vacant (14:43).

Instead, let us all strive to be like those described in this verse of the Holy Quran:

But Allah has endeared the faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience. Such are those who are rightly guided – a grace from Allah and a favour. And Allah is Knowing, Wise (49:7).

BASHSHAAR

(Bringer of Glad Tidings)

Layout & Design: Farhaz Khan

IF YOU WANT TO FEEL RICH, JUST COUNT
ALL THE THINGS YOU HAVE THAT MONEY
CANNOT BUY.

BEING JUDGMENTAL

Being judgmental can be damaging to our relationships. The trouble is, many of us have been raised to be judgmental. Many legitimate religious groups seem to encourage this behaviour, but we need to follow the example of our Holy Books.

Jesus, for example, didn't judge sinners; he ate with them, he befriended them, he accepted them, and he reprimanded those who self-righteously judged them. As we read in Mark 2:15 (NKJV):

"Now it happened, as he (Jesus) was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many, and they followed him."

The Quran also condemns judging others, as we read in 49:11-12:

"O you who believe, let not people laugh at people, perchance they may be better than they ... Neither find fault with your own people, nor call one another by nick-names. Evil is a bad name after faith; and whoso turns not, these it is that are the iniquitous.

O you who believe, avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is sin; and spy not nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it!"

The truth is, none of us has the right to judge another. We are all imperfect in one way or another.

If there is one thing we want you to take away from this devotional on judgment, it is simply that we hope you are encouraged to stop assuming why people do what they do. When someone does something which hurts you, find a way to ask them about it. You'll save yourself a lot of pain and suffering if you can get to the bottom of the issue from the start. That is much better than judging how you think they think, because this may involve a lot of misunderstanding.

Sources:- Miracle Channel

- The Holy Quran

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New Zealand whilst submitting themselves to Allah (SWT) during Friday prayers
(Jumuah), and our thoughts & prayers for those families who are still grieving
their losses.**