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How to Remain Obedient to Allah?

YOU must have read several times somewhere that “ALLAH IS WATCHING YOU”. How many times have we thought about its real meaning? Most of the time we just see the power of this sentence and admit it as a candid truth but we rarely think about its literal meaning. It’s a big warning to us. It does not mean we are sinners and someone wants to warn us. It means how much time we spend to seek the blessings of Allah and how much we satisfy our self.

Cost and benefit analysis

Let’s try to understand this fact with a worldly theory that is called the cost and benefit analysis. In this world you’ll see for every work how much it costs you and how much benefit you get from it. Being a Muslim we should apply this technique in our whole life. We must not divide our life into two parts; one worldly and one religious. If we do so it means we are challenging the basic philosophy of Islam. Our religion asks us to be fully engaged in this world but with a heart fully filled with the recital (zikr) of Allah. It is not bravery to stay away from this world and remain separated. The test of our piousness starts when we live among people. So while living in this colorful world it is so difficult to be watchful of this sentence, Allah is watching us. If we keep

this in mind we remain obedient to Him and think several times before doing an activity of no use. For this we just have to see how much that activity would cost us and how much benefit we will derive from it. Displeasure of Allah is the cost we can never afford because any activity against His orders is a catastrophe for us.

This world is nothing but an illusion

We engross in the worldly affairs so much so that we mistakenly believe in this world and forget the hereafter. Its reasons are two;

- We keep on setting goals over goals for worldly achievements
- We set a benchmark for worldly success in isolation

As a result we first think about completing our education, then getting a job, then getting married and so on and so forth. Our desires never end but our life ends eventually. We cannot defer death. But we can easily defer our desires. So we should do the work which we can do. Secondly, we set purely a worldly benchmark for success and forget that this is not the eternal success. For this we should read the success stories of pious Muslims of Islamic history and make them our ideal to follow their lifestyle while living in this modern world.

How to Spend a Simple Life?

SIMPLICITY is the soul of beauty. It has long lasting positive effects on your life. We always gain by it and lose less or even nothing. But it is very difficult to adopt it. In this age of materialism and fanfare it is a challenge to spend a simple life. Being a Muslim we want to adopt a lifestyle without any pomp and show. But owing to rising level of materialistic competition we have to be less rigid sometimes. This happens at our workplace where corporate culture demands a showy lifestyle. Similarly in our community we have to follow some trends that are not prohibited in Islam but equally are not very simple.

Here are 5 tips to spend a simple life that make you free from various undue worries and problems.

What I can afford permanently

Adopting a new style or adding a new formality in your lifestyle doesn't mean you have to do that once. Worldly temptations make you do this first and after that force you to continue it. This is the habit of this world. That is why before making any decision of adding a financial burden just to keep pace with current trends you must decide can you afford it forever or just doing so owing to influence of the surrounding. In that way you can get rid of a superfluous thing with a logical reason.

Can I do this without any opportunity cost?

Opportunity cost means the cost of forgoing one thing to get another. This cost may be in pleas-

ure, satisfaction or mental relief that you have to leave to get another thing in place of it. So whenever you have to follow a new trend of society just see what you have to forgo for this. For example if you have to join a gathering that is arranged good for nothing so just evaluate the cost of your waste of time by going there. This will stop you blindly following the unnecessary trends of the society.

What is its moral benefit?

If you have to adopt an extra thing in your life just consider how much it would strengthen your moral power. If it is just a matter of show and nothing else it means it will not add any real value in your life.

What are its long-term benefits?

To spend a simple life you must see the long-term benefits of any activity which you want to join. If this is simply one-time pleasure that will not add any real joy in your life you may skip it without any second thought.

Where this will lead me?

Will the new thing which you want to adopt lead you towards eternal success? If it is so grab it quickly. Otherwise you must think; what is its impact on your moral, ethical and religious life.

The above 5 tips can make you spend a simple life if you make them your mindset and you need not to recall them whenever society influence you to adopt a new fashion or trend.

7 Tips to enjoy your meal being a Muslim

A strong Muslim is better than a weak Muslim because former can be more helpful to spread the message of Islam. He can also influence others with the strength of his character to invite attention of others towards Islam. Here weakness does not mean the one because of the age factor. Old-age is a reality and everyone has to face it. However, if one gets weaker in earlier age, he must think its reasons and become a healthy Muslim. Your way of eating your meal counts a lot to make you maintain your good health.

With the holy name of Allah

Never forget to start eating food by reciting Bismillah. It will not only add barkat (abundance) in your food but you will enjoy your food with all the blessings of Allah.

Eat equal to half of your hunger

You can fully enjoy eating but never resort to over-eating. Moreover, eating half of the hunger is the most desirable way of eating in Islam. There is no restriction on enjoying Halal food in Islam but balanced attitude in every work will always benefit you. So enjoy all the blessing of Allah and eat both vegetables and meat in your daily meal.

Drink water before eating

It is an old saying if you drink water before your meal it is gold, if you drink water while having your food

it becomes silver and finally if you take water after finishing your food it is nothing or maybe become harmful for your health. The main benefit of drinking water before starting your food is that it normalizes your hunger and consequently you eat less.

Fully chew each morsel

Don't make haste to swallow the morsel and fully chew it first. This will make you digest it easily. Good digestion of food provides you more energy and lesser fats.

Get relax while eating

Don't do any type of activity like listening to Radio, watching TV or browsing over your laptop while eating food. Discontinue every activity and give full time to your meal. In this way you will eat your food while skipping anything that you must not put into your mouth like sharp bones or any other thing like that. Similarly you will eat slowly and consume its energy.

Pay thanks to Allah

After finishing your food do thank to Allah (alhamdulillah). This will ensure abundance in your Rizq (sustenance) in future and you will never face its shortage. Being Muslim this must be the belief for all of us.

Just after finishing the meal

Don't do any physical exertion after completing your lunch or dinner.

Meaningless Work

Rasul Allah (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said: “It is the excellence of a man’s faith that he gives up meaningless work.” [Tirmidhi, Ahmad]

List all your activities and label them to see which belong to the category of meaningless. If the activity is not taking you towards a meaningful goal for any of the roles that arise from your ideology (e.g. Muslim, parent, son/daughter, self, breadwinner, daee, etc), then it would be to your advantage to replace it with more meaningful activity. Anything that does not bring you closer to Jannat and distance you from the Fire is meaningless in the long run, and will cause you to regret when it is too late why you bothered to waste your time with it.

5 TIPS

to avoid backbiting

Backbiting (talking bad about someone in his absence) is one of the worst sins in Islam. Perpetrator of this sin is called like a person who eats the meat of his own dead brother. With this explanation you can understand how much it is prohibited in Islam. But it is generally observed that in social gatherings it is quite common to blame or call bad someone who is not present there. Many people can't avoid doing this. Here are 5 tips to avoid backbiting and also stop others from doing so.

Let's talk about us

This should be motto of your communication either individually with a person or in a group if you really want to avoid backbiting. Instead of directly asking others to avoid backbiting you should engage them so much so in communication about those who are present that they don't have chance to talk bad about those who are not present.

Don't prolong the communication

If you think you have talked to somebody as much as it was necessary it means now you should wind up your meeting. Either in a party or in one-to-one communication doesn't drag the communication just to pass the time. If you don't have any productive topic to talk just wind up or get engaged in any other positive activity like reading the newspaper, working on lap top or something else.

Introduce new topic promptly

If you feel your listener is getting bored with your speech or someone is trying to talk about someone who is not present you may introduce another topic to discuss and help people avoid backbiting. If people are fed up with talking about politics just talk about the last night cricket match in which your country performed so well. However, the best topic is to talk about Allah and his Messenger (SAW).

Give value to praise

Whoever praises someone you should appreciate it. Not only this, but rightly add into praise to keep continuing the positive activity of praising somebody. In short promote the culture of praising a person who is not present in the gathering. In this way people would come to realize that if someone is not present he can be praised as well.

If someone is really bad

You should not stop somebody from backbiting if he intends to tell the negative aspect of a person who is not present there but you may deal with that absent person in the future. So you should listen to such factual narration and also do it whenever you feel necessary to tell your friends about some bad attributes of a person who is not present, but only if this talk affects you.

**A Muslim who
meets with
others and shares
their burdens is
better than one
who lives a life of
seclusion and
contemplation.**

How to control your sight while living in a free society?

Casting a look at namehram woman is strictly forbidden in Islam. Namehram women mean all women except your wife, mother, sister, daughter, maternal and paternal aunt. This order is given to help you keep your thoughts pure and free from any mean consideration. That is why Muslim women are asked to observe parda (veil) to cover their body from head to toe and simply keep open the face to look and walk. In this regard both man and woman are asked to talk and interact with namehram in the following ways;

- Always keep eyes down while talking to each other
- Women are specially directed to keep their voice plain without any feeling
- Both are asked to talk whatever is must or unavoidable to talk
- It is desirable to talk to each other in presence of another person that must be mehram to woman

In the Islamic society it is not so difficult to control sight where either women move out from home with parda or at least they keep themselves fully covered without any objectionable dress. However, in a free and secular society it is little challenging to control your sight. Here this task has a double challenge;

- To obey the orders of Allah and don't cast a look at namehram
- To reflect your identity as a Muslim by controlling your sight and influence others about Islam

To control your sight in a free society it is necessary to first maintain your upkeep to let others know that you are a Muslim. Secondly if someone notices you while you are crossing a namehram keeping your sight down you need not to clarify your act. Yes if someone asks you about your way of behaving with namehram at workplace then you can let that person know about the Islamic teachings.

However, you are allowed to look around if you think it may be harmful for you to move while keeping your eyes down. For example if you are crossing a busy road and happen to cross a namehram or you have to walk in a densely populated area where there is crowd of both male and female at such places you can look your way to avoid colliding anyone.

In a free society Muslim women must take special care while moving out from home. If they do a job their upkeep should be fully according to the teachings of Islam to let others know you are a Muslim. Secondly if you have to go to any crowded place it is better to go with your male counterpart to avoid any deviation from Islamic teachings. In short being Muslim we should survive in a free society by fully abiding by orders of Allah and without disturbing others living around us.

How to encourage kids ask about Islam?

The first word of the Holy Quran is Iqra that means read and learn. It shows the importance of learning in our religion. In the beginning of Islam a few companions of Holy Prophet (PBUH) devoted themselves for the learning of Islamic teachings and confined themselves in Masjid Nabvi to fully benefit from his company. They later proved to be the most learned scholars of Islam and still their references are taken as an evidence of proof in case of any matter that needs debate.

Being followers of a religion that stresses on knowledge we should develop the habit of learning in our kids from the very beginning. To build the curiosity in our kids initially we should:

- Let them ask questions
- Answer their questions according to their standard
- If they ask any wrong question we must rectify them
- We should reply to their questions then and there
- We should appreciate their habit of asking question

After they become confident to ask whatever question that comes into their minds we should bring their curiosity towards Islam. For this purpose we should ask such basic questions to them.

- Who created this world?
- What is the purpose of creation of this world?
- Who created us?
- Who are we?
- What is Islam?
- Who is a good Muslim?

Eventually they would ask the subsidiary

questions related to Islam. If they ask a question about any matter we which is not appropriate for their age, even then we should try to satisfy them with a proper answer. It is wrong to stop those asking questions about details regarding any issue, however it is not wise to provide them with the answer if it is not age related. To give the best answer to the questions for our kids about Islam we should:

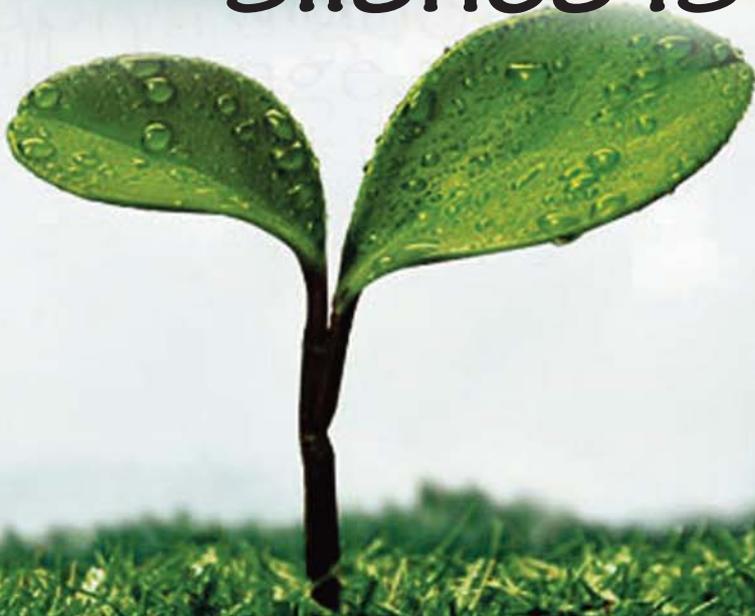
- Give practical examples from the life of the companions of Holy Prophet (PBUH)
- Relate the discoveries of science with the teachings of Islam
- Give them examples from present day

Moreover we should not reply all the questions ourselves. Sometimes we should forward the question of one kid to another one to develop confidence in them. For this we should:

- Keep the surrounding environment stress free and casual
- Make them understand the issue in a lighter tone
- Talk about paradise more to make them fond of achieving it
- Not give sermons just give them advice and tips

In this way we would be able to make our kids avid learners. For the formal learning we can send them to any Islamic education center after their growing up. We must remember that we have to provide our kids both religious and worldly education on equal footing.

“It is better to sit alone than in company with the bad; and it is, better still to sit with the good than alone. It is better to speak to a seeker of knowledge than to remain silent; but silence is better than idle words”.





How to remain active on social media as Muslim?



Social media has become necessity for all. Not only for business promotion but also to make good friends and share with them joys and sorrows there is no better place than it. However, being a Muslim we have to adopt certain precautions to use it while following the Islamic teachings. Islam does not ask us to be isolated from the bad world. It just orders us to remain away from its badness but never stay away from the perpetrators of badness. So we have to remain active on social media as practicing Muslims.





SECURITY FIRST

After registering in any social media account first make your security settings strict. Don't allow anyone to put any image or quote on your profile without your permission. Use your right to show about yourself whatever you want and also categorize your profile to make it shown to the public, friends and family members. In this way no one can forcibly encroach on your privacy and you will enjoy social media according to Islamic teachings.

MAKE OTHERS FEEL YOUR PRESENCE

To remain active on social media as a practicing Muslim you must not be silent over it. Express your thoughts and views and share them with the public if sharing-stuff is appealing for others. In this way you can bring others on the right path. Don't avoid people. Yes if someone has objectionable behavior, you have the right to block that person with your security settings.

DECORATE YOUR PROFILE PAGE

On any social media account you should create your profile with Islamic images, quotes and verses to make others know your mindset. In this way visitors of your profile will get to know about you and your aptitude. He or she will not try to disturb you if you are not his or her kind of person. Secondly it will also make like-minded visitors notice you and be friends of yours.

DON'T BECOME BIASED

If you see any hate speech against Islam you need not to react in the same way. Try to remove the misperception of that person about Islam. Yes if someone directly attacks our religious beliefs then you have the right to not only condemn that person but also you must block and report that person to admin of your social media account. Most of the social media accounts offer the opportunity to report about any person who unduly harass or disturb you.



Knowledge for Material Gain

It was narrated that Abu Hurairah (radi Allahu anhu) said that the Messenger of Allah (sal Allahu alaihi wa sallam) said: "Whoever seeks knowledge that should be sought seeking the Face of Allah, but he only seeks it for the sake of some worldly gain, he will not smell the fragrance of Paradise on the Day of Ressurrection." (Hasan) [The Book of Knowledge: Sunan Abu Dawud]

This hadith reminds us to acquire knowledge for the pleasure of Allah alone. If a religious scholar acquires it to make it a means of worldly gains, then it turns into such a serious crime that such an alim/scholar will not even smell the fragrance of Jannah, although its fragrance can be smelt from a very great distance. This means that he or she will not enter Jannah along with the saved. May Allah (subhana wa ta'ala) save us from such an end.

However, if a scholar gains wealth or other worldly gains through it without that being his or her intention, then it is a different matter. In that case, it is not harmful for him or her, as long as he or she uses the wealth or power gained, in a manner pleasing to Allah. (Courtesy: Daily Hadith)

This E-Magazine is a monthly publication as a new initiative brought to you by the Ideal Muslim team. Ideal Muslim is an organisation headed by Mufti Mohammed Kamil Sheikh (Med, MCMI) aiming to enhance the quality of people's lives by providing practical tips and advices on all areas of life, giving the readers the opportunity to become Ideal Muslims. The organisation also operates Islamic Weekend Schools across London and actively teaches the future generations' practical living techniques in a fun and enjoyable manner.

**We appreciate all feedback,
constructive criticism. Please share
your thoughts with us at:**

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