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Meditation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا

عَذَابِ النَّارِ

And there are some among them who say: Our Lord! grant us good in this world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the punishment of the fire. **2:201**

The aya illustrates the harmony of the body and the nafs. The material and the spiritual, the dunya and the aakhira - We cannot choose one over the other.

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا

الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ

وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَهُمْ فِيهَا أزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it, and they shall have pure mates in them, and in them, they shall abide. **2:25**

To bring Janna to earth by making this physical world a comfortable home for spirituality – in other words being at peace by finding a purpose or deeper meaning to life.

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي

عِبَادِي وَأَدْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him), So enter among My servants, And enter into My garden. **89:27-30**

- It is first necessary to be able to understand the body and the nafs. When our existence is seen only from the five sensory point of view, physical survival (health, wealth and external power) appears to be the only form of success and the survival of the fittest comes into play. The basis of life becomes fear and power to control the environment and those within it appears a necessity. It affects every aspect of our life – relationships between siblings, spouses, friends, community members..... The perception of this external power is shaping our lives and we perceive power as that possessed by a few to be able to control the majority. Money is a symbol of external power - those who have the most have the ability to control their environment and those within it.... But anything that you fear to lose - a home, a car, an attractive body, a sharp memory, a spouse, a friend are all symbols of external power. Competition for this sort of power – to allay the fear – is the root of all our conflicts – inner and outer and often engrossed in this competition we are convinced that this is all there is to life. One of the main qualities of Ahlul Janna is no fear and no sadness.

Many ayaat **وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ** 2:38,62,112,26,274 3:170,

5:69 6:48 7:35,49 10:62 42:13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْتَلْتُمْ
إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

“O you who believe! What (excuse) have you that when it is said to you: Go forth in Allah's way, you should incline heavily to earth; are you contented with this world's life instead of the hereafter? But the provision of this world's life compared with the hereafter is but little.” **9:38**

Historically when call of jihad issued for Tabuk – 30,000 gathered but some wavered because of 3 reasons – i) Length of journey ii) Season of harvest iii) Dread of Roman army (large and organised).

- Anecdote of widower who went on a business trip returning to his village and finding it looted and burnt down by bandits. Only son could not be found so claimed burnt corpse of child as his son. Cremated and carried ashes in velvet pouch convinced it was his son. Some years later child who had been kidnapped escapes and comes to fathers new cottage. Despite pleas is turned away – father and son never meet. Sometimes, somewhere, we believe in something as the truth so much so that when ‘the truth’ comes and knocks on the heart we do not let it in. We get stuck in a paradigm (a way of thinking which traps us into believing something which does not exist).
- Imam Sadiq (A.S.) doing tawaf and saw a known atheist – What are you doing here? I have come to see you circle around stones (mocking Imam). Imam replied “If it turns out that you are right and I am wrong then we have both enjoyed life the way we perceived peace but if I am right and you are wrong then I win and you lose.”

- We have developed extensive knowledge of the body – developed means and ways to get the best out of it in all respects – yet it is the instrument of the nafs – If the cook is sick, does it help to repair her cooker? What an appliance produces depends not only on the state of the appliance but also on the user. Even the best of ovens cannot produce a cake if the cook is ‘not with it’. If she does’nt look after it; it will spoil. A repair at that level will not cure the breakdown in the first place. It is the health of the nafs that is the true purpose of the human experience. The nafs is that which directly reflects our connection to Allah and energises and guides the body.
- If we ponder deeply it leads us to a power that aligns our thoughts, emotions and actions with the divine. This power cannot be bought, inherited or hoarded. It is a power of one who has understood his/her nafs. One who has no fear, does not make anything or anyone a victim.....
- If we desire to know our nafs – the first step is to recognise it’s existence. Have you ever cried or saddened for no apparent reason or experienced a moment when despite turmoil of life there’s a sense of awe and peace – that is the manifestation of the nafs .
- Once we acknowledge it’s presence, than the next step is to allow yourself to think – What is the nafs? What does my nafs want? In other words who am I? Where do I wish to go? How do I anticipate getting there? This thinking is classed as meditation which basically means to be able to consciously direct your attention to alter your state of consciousness. Contrary to popular belief it does not mean making your mind blank nor is it difficult. Allah in the Qur’an says:

وَاذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا And remember the name of your Rabb and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion, **73:8**

- Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: “One who has recognised him/herself has recognised his/her Rabb” This is the essence of meditation.
 - i) The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “An hours thinking (meditation) is better than a nights standing in prayer”. Hassan Al-Sayghal asked Imam Sadiq (A.S.) how one should begin. Imam replied: “One should ask oneself when one passes ruins of an old building – Where are the residents? Who constructed the building? Why do they not speak?”
 - ii) Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: “All good is contained in 3 traits. Observing, Being Silent and Talking. However, if one does not learn from observation then he/she is in error. If one does not think whilst silent then it is ignorance and any talk which is devoid of the remembrance of Allah is in vain.”
- Practical Tips for meditation.
 - Silence – 2 types of silence – general/particular. Relative silence means to refrain from talking to people in excess to what is absolutely required. (Imam Sadiq – “Silence is a part of wisdom. It is a sign of every virtue) Particular silence means to refrain from talking during verbal remembrance of Allah.
 - Abstaining from food – Imam Sadiq “The believer enjoys hunger. For him hunger is the food of the heart and soul.”

- Solitude – 2 kinds of solitude – general/particular. General talking to only when absolutely necessary. Particular solitude is keeping away from others in times of ibada
 - Vigil – Wake up before dawn as early as he/she can. 51:18
 - Continued Tahara
 - Daily recitation
 - Eradication of evil thoughts – 7:201 . (Astaghfirullah, Ya Fa'aalu, Yaa Baasitu, Auzhu Billah, Laa Mawjuda Illallah)
- Psychology has a concept of “willing suspension of disbelief” For a short while suspend your beliefs if any on what success is and allow yourself to consider the divine definition of success. How we can bring Janna down on earth. Remember, we will break our heads against divine laws but we will never be able to break divine laws.

Self-recognition

Having thought about the question – Who am I? we need to look at a few home truths first. . Let's follow a 7 step programme –

- i) **Face the truth** – Challenge your beliefs right now – Remember that the laws of Allah are like the law of gravity – they simply are there – you don't have a vote.
- ii) **Accept that you are accountable for yourself** – no-one forced you to be what you are – you made the choice, you said the words, you thought the thoughtsand more important you get what you give.
- iii) **Recognise the difference between reality of success (Ahlul Janna) and your perception** of it.
- iv) **Free yourself from the bonds of hatred, anger, jealousy, cruelty, arrogance and resentment** – Recognise the power of tawba and forgiveness.
- v) **Don't be drawn into anything you cannot change.**
- vi) **Identify what you really want and search for a role model and study every aspect of his/her life**

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

“Indeed for you in the messenger of Allah is the most perfect example”33:21

- vii) **Know that you have within you everything you will ever want and need to be what you want to be**
– Plan a strategy and focus

We must recognise that we have to take responsibility for ourselves. No excuses. I am what I have made myself and what I perceive of life is an inside out perception. “Wherever I go, there I am” There is only one you and you take it wherever you go. Anecdote of mouse who discovered a circus tent full of wonderful mice. Loved it –

Recommended it to an acquaintance who hated it – all grumpy angry mice. The tent was one which had mirrors everywhere –

- No excuses of – I can't help it! It was ordained! I was made this way. We believe in a concept of freewill. Part of the understanding of 'Adala which means very simply putting something in it's place. All Muslims incidentally believe in 'Adle Ilaahi but there is a difference in interpretation. To understand 'adala we have to first look at events after the wafat of the Prophet (S.A.W.) – The Muslims came into contact with many other civilisations and philosophies – some which directly attacked Islam – a group of 'Ulema got together to discuss theology – Ilmul' Kalaam. 3 major groups arose – **Ash'aris** and Mu'tazalis. Ash'aris were the followers of Abul Hasan Al-Ash'ari who believed that 'Adl was not a reality (absolute–zhaati) but was relative (nisbati). He believed that whatever Allah does was 'Adl as opposed to Allah does what is 'Adl. In other words he believed that if Allah wished to send a mu'min to jahannam it was 'adl and if he wished to send an evil doer to Janna then that too was 'Adl. Among his students some 'Ulema left in disagreement and were labelled **Mu'tazali** coming from the word 'Itizaa meaning to abandon. Their leader was Wasil bin'Ataa . Their theory was that 'Adl was a reality and Allah acts according to 'Adl. Mu'tazalis teachings were very close to the school of Ahlulbayt. Politically the Ash'aris called themselves Ahlus Sunna wal Hadith for they said they relied on the Sunna of the Prophet (their interpretation) and gained ground for the mass psychologically accepted them. Mu'tazalis lost ground for their name suggested that they had abandoned the Sunna.
- The Umayyad dynasty justified all their actions declaring that Allah pre-determines all happenings and acts. E.g.

Hajjaj ibn Yusuf said when dying that 'I did that which Allah had ordained'. Seeped through to us, we say – could'nt help it.....

- If Allah did do something that was kabeeh (bad) and/or unjust then 4 possibilities arise: 1) That He did it knowingly which would make Him unjust (Dhalim). 2) That He did it unknowingly which would make Him ignorant (Jahil) 3) That He had been forced to do it which would make Him reliant on another/others (Mohtaj) 4) That He did it out of jest or amusement which does not make Him Wise (Hakim). Since Allah is not Dhalim, Jahil, Mohtaj or unwise, then the question of doing something unjust does not arise.
- We therefore come to the question - "Is humankind free in their actions?" The question was addressed to Imam Musa ibn Ja'fer (A.S.) when he was a young child. He replied: There are only 3 possibilities – 1) The human being is fully responsible for his/her actions 2) Allah is fully responsible for the human being's actions 3) Both the human being and Allah are partners in the responsibility of actions. If Allah is the originator of the actions then there cannot be any question of punishment for sins and that would be unjust for Allah says:

وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

"And your Rabb is not unjust to anyone." 18:49

If both the human being and Allah are partners in sin than that too is gross injustice that the weaker partner is punished for an action committed together. So the only logical argument is that the human being acts according to his/her own will. "What is the degree of 'jabr' (force) and 'tafweezh' (Freedom of choice)?" The question was asked to Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) Raise one leg and then another – he told the questioner who

said he could not raise the other leg. Imam Said: That is the extent of freedom.

- We must understand that sometimes we as human beings make our judgements, we base our thoughts on our relative thinking. The first cause is Allah (Illate Awwal) . Every cause and effect from there on is a set divine symmetrical order. In this symmetrical order, there is nothing but goodness. He created the whole of creation as a package- What we see as evil, bad, wrong or ills, it is because there is a disturbance in the horizontal earthly order. Injustice is the absence of ‘adl, sickness an absence of health, a shadow is the absence of light..... Who causes the absence of good? Allah says:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ

بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا الْعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Fasaad (mischief) has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what humankind has done.....”30:41

- Allah will no interfere by changing His laws for His laws are set

فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللَّهِ تَحْوِيلًا

“.....never shall you find in the course of Allah any alteration.....”35:43

So where do we apportion blame? Example of knifing someone – doer apprehended not manufacturer of knife – immediate cause apprehended – not distant cause... Plant from garden centre – one looked after, one not looked after therefore weak, no flowers – same stock of plants – I interfered horizontally Allah is not responsible for it.... He Knows but that does not mean He

caused it e.g. knowing something is wrong does not necessary make us do it or not do it.

- **Qadar** is measure – there are both absolute measures and changeable measures – the laws of gravity is qadar, rizq is qadar (measures), umr (length of life) is qadar. **Qadhaa** is order, judgement, destiny – it is dependant upon the interaction between qadar and the individual's capacity and action. Qadha is therefore the seal of qadar.
- Imam Ali Zaynul Aabedeen (A.S.): “Qadar and action are to one another like nafs and body for the nafs without a body cannot manifest itself and a body without a nafs is a picture with no movement. If they combine then there is strength and usefulness. This is how action and decree are.....”

What is Janna?

- Once we have accepted that we are accountable for ourselves and that we make our own destiny we also have to accept that what we are within will manifest itself however hard we try. Only get orange juice out of an orange whatever method you use to squeeze it.
- The next step is to look at the divine percept of success – Ahlul Janna and compare it with our perception recognising the difference.
- Firstly what is Janna? Two English words are often used to translate it into English – Paradise and Heaven. In the Qur’an, Allah uses the word Janna in 67 ayaat in 3 ways.
 - 1) Without being associated with the definite article Al (The) e.g. Suratul Baqara 2:265,266, 17:91, 25:8, 34:15,16, 6:141, 50:9, 78:16. This refers to the gardens of earth.
 - 2) Mentioned with Al (The) but with earthly descriptions e.g. 2:35 - abode of Adam (A.S.), 7:19,22 – contains leaves and food, 20:117-121 – described having the essentials of life – food, water, shelter. This is the janna of Prophet Adam (A.S.) and Sayyida Hawaa lived which is an earthly Janna in a mountainous region in which rivers flow and animals live.
 - 3) Mentioned with Al (The) but with non-earthly descriptions. E.g. 3:133 – it’s width is equal to the skies and the earth and– rivers underneath, perpetual food and shade. 37:43.
- We will look at the qualities of Ahlul Janna as described by the Qur’an – in essence those who strived to reach their full potential as human beings in the Qur’an and whom The Creator

calls successful. أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

..the dwellers of the Janna are they that are the achievers. 59:20

- No gender bias

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ يُظْلَمُونَ تَقْدِيرًا
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا

And whoever does good deeds whether male or female and he (or she) is a believer-- these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly.
4:124

- The achievement of success is never beyond one's capacity

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And (as for) those who believe and do good We do not impose on any soul a duty except to the extent of its ability-- they are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide.7:42

- News of Janna given at point of death.

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَيِّبِينَ يَقُولُونَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Those whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: Peace be on you: enter the garden for what you did 16:32

Qualities of Ahlul Janna from the Qur'an

- Incidentally Ahlul Janna is what those destined for Janna are called on the earth whilst when in Janna they are called Ashabul Janna (That is why Imam Hassan and Husayn are Sayyidush Shabbab Ahlil Janna meaning they are leaders of people on this earth)

| Quality | Ayaat |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>EIMAN</p> <p>GOOD DEEDS</p> | <p>وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ</p> <p>And (as for) those who believe and do good deeds, these are the dwellers of the garden; in it they shall abide. 2:82</p> |
| <p>STRIVING</p> <p>SABR</p> | <p>أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ</p> <p>Do you think that you will enter the garden while Allah has not yet known those who strive hard from among you, and (He has not) known the patient. 3:142</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|---|---|
| <p>DOES NOT REJECT SIGNS OF ALLAH</p> <p>NO ARROGANCE</p> | <p>إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا لَا تُفَتَّحُ لَهُمْ أَبْوَابُ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْحَيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُجْرِمِينَ</p> <p>Surely (as for) those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of Janna shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle; and thus do We reward the guilty 7:40</p> |
| <p>NO HATRED, ANGER, JEALOUSY, RESENTMENT.....</p> | <p>وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غَلٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ الْأَنْهَارُ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا أَنْ هَدَانَا اللَّهُ</p> <p>And We will remove whatever of ill-feeling is in their breasts; the rivers shall flow beneath them and they shall say: All praise is due to Allah Who guided us to this, and we would not have found the way had it not been that Allah had guided us 7:43</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|--|---|
| <p>CERTAINTY IN PROMISE OF ALLAH</p> <p>NO INJUSTICE</p> | <p>وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدْ وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ</p> <p>And the dwellers of the garden will call out to the inmates of the fire: Surely we have found what our Lord promised us to be true; have you too found what your Lord promised to be true? They will say: Yes. Then a crier will cry out among them that the curse of Allah is on the unjust. 7:44</p> |
| <p>NO HOARDING</p> <p>NO DELUSION</p> <p>NO BELITTILING OF THE RIGHTEOUS</p> | <p>بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا أَمَا آغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا يَنَالُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ</p> <p>Of no avail were to you your hoarding and your behaving haughtily: Are these they about whom you swore that Allah will not bestow mercy on them? Enter Janna; you shall have no fear, nor shall you grieve. 7:48-49</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|--|--|
| GOAL – JANNA FIGHT WITH LIFE IN HIS WAY | <p style="text-align: center;"> إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ </p> <p>Surely Allah has bought of the believers their persons and their property for this, that they shall have the garden; they fight in Allah's way, so they slay and are slain; 9:111</p> |
| NO HUMILIATION (Have self-esteem) | <p style="text-align: center;"> لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ </p> <p>For those who do good is good (reward) and more (than this); and blackness or humiliation shall not cover their faces; these are the dwellers Janna; in it they shall abide.10:26</p> |
| HUMILITY | <p style="text-align: center;"> إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَخْبَتُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ </p> <p>Surely (as to) those who believe and do good and humble themselves to their Lord, these are the dwellers of the garden, in it they will abide 11:23</p> |
| TAQWA | <p style="text-align: center;"> مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وَعَدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ </p> <p>A likeness of the garden which the righteous are promised 13:35</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|-----------------------|---|
| TAWBA | <p>لَا مَن تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا</p> <p>Except such as repent and believe and do good, these shall enter the garden, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly in any way 19:60</p> |
| NO VAIN TALK PEACE | <p>لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلَامًا</p> <p>They shall not hear therein any vain discourse, but only: Peace 19:62</p> |
| SABR TAQWA | <p>الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ</p> <p>Those who are patient, and on their Lord do they rely 29:59</p> |
| OCCUPIED | <p>إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغْلٍ فَاكِهِونَ</p> <p>Surely the dwellers of Janna shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy.36:55</p> |
| PEOPLE ORIENTED | <p>وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا</p> <p>And those who are careful of (their duty to) their Lord shall be conveyed to Janna in companies 39:73</p> |
| ASKS FOR FORGIVENESS | <p>سَابِقُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ</p> <p>Hasten to forgiveness from your Lord 57:21</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| FULFILLS PROMISES | <p style="text-align: right;">يُوفُونَ بِاللَّذْرِ</p> <p style="text-align: right;">They fulfill vows 76:7</p> |
| CONSISTENT | <p style="text-align: right;">إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ</p> <p>(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of Janna which you were promised. 41:30</p> |
| SABR | <p style="text-align: right;">وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا</p> <p>And reward them, because they were patient, with Janna and silk 76:12</p> |
| PROVIDES ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH | <p style="text-align: right;">وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا</p> <p>And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: We only feed you for Allah's sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks 76:8-9</p> |

| Quality | Ayaat |
|--|---|
| RECOGNISES RIGHTS OF PARENTS & CHILDREN | <p style="text-align: center;"> وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجُبَّةِ وَعَدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ </p> <p> And We have enjoined on man doing of good to his parents; with trouble did his mother bear him and with trouble did she bring him forth; and the bearing of him and the weaning of him was thirty months; until when he attains his maturity and reaches forty years, he says: My Lord! grant me that I may give thanks for Thy favor which Thou hast bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do good which pleases Thee and do good to me in respect of my offspring; surely I turn to Thee, and surely I am of those who submit. These are they from whom We accept the best of what they have done and pass over their evil deeds, among the dwellers of Janna; the promise of truth which they were promised. </p> <p>46:15-16</p> |

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) as an ideal

- The next step is to build a profile of the psyche of one who is ahlul Janna. It is the only profile that will match the essence of the nafs. Anecdote of tiger-pig (A pig who influenced by the media coverage on excellence of tigers wanted to be one and went through all the aesthetics to be one only to found he would not fit in – after all he was a pig)

الْأَبْدَانُ كَرِ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

...now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. **33:28**

- We are in essence evolutionary beings (irtiqaii) moving towards the revelatory (tanzili).

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمْ يَا مُوسَى قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

(Firon) said: And who is your Lord, O Musa? He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its potential). **20:50**

- The only revelatory model is in the form of Rasulallah who is the best benchmark to work with.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ

وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Certainly you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much.

- We are made out of earth. Earth has the qualities of being honest is that whatever is planted in it will grow the way it was planted (sadiq). It also is a trustworthy (amin) as a concealer and finally it takes an imprint (khalifatullah).
- We will therefore today look at the seerah of the Prophet (S.A.W.). The word seerah is derived from 'saair' meaning movement. In essence it means the method and the manner

by which the Prophet (S.A.W.) behaved in different circumstances.

- This is the man whom the Encyclopaedia Britannica calls the most successful of all religious personalities of the world. A man who moved not only empires, dynasties, legislations and armies but millions of human beings in the one third of the then inhabited world. More than that he moved beliefs and nufuos (souls). His ambition was entirely devoted to one cause – that the human being would recognise his/her true potential and recognise their Rabb through themselves.
- Often due to media manipulation or preconceived ideas we fail to recognise real truths. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “If you have a pearl in your hands and people call it a peanut, it will remain a pearl.”
- He was born an orphan but belonged to the noblest of tribes. His genealogy was accepted as the most righteous yet he would say: “No honour is nobler than humility and kindness (rahma) ” Imam Ali (A.S) has said: “Humility is the product of knowledge, self-conceit poisons the mind impedes progress and ruins greatness. Humility is one of the nets spread by real greatness whist boasting comes from small minds.” The Prophet (S.A.W.) called Rahmatul lil Aalemeen by Allah. His opponents created enmity with him, wronged him, spoke ill of him and harassed him – yet he would say: “Oblige your brother by warning him, correct him by showing favours and giving favours.
- He was always the first to greet others, avoided sitting at prominent places in gatherings so much so that visitors had trouble identifying who he was. He visited the poor and the sick. No housework was too low or undignified for him. He was especially fond of children yet when it came to bravery there was no parallel. He instructed that no war was to be

initiated unless one was attacked first and if the enemy lost not to chase the fleeing soldiers. When battle was necessary he would first address the enemy with good words hoping their humanity would shine through.

- He taught that both genders were created for the same purpose – the recognition of their Creator and therefore the realisation of their full potential as human beings – but have been given different tools with which to fulfill their common goal. Indeed, their physiological, emotional, and psychological differences are a result of their divergent spiritual mandate. In secular societies even today if a woman marries, she changes her name. She has no essential existence - A name is significant - she does not possess sufficient value or credit to have a name. When his daughter used to enter the room he would stand for her in respect.....
- They tried to bribe him, intimidate him but even when faced with united enemies who accused him with infidelity, threatened him with death and destruction – he stood firm – not slowing his activities but continuing with the same zeal.
- A teacher is recognised through his students. His most perfect student – Imam Ali (A.S.) describes the Prophet (S.A.W.) – “In the past I had a brother in God, the insignificance of the world in his eyes made him great in his eyes. He was not ruled by his stomach, he did not wish for what he did not have and he did not seek more of what he did have. He used to keep silent much of the time and when he spoke he silenced all speakers and quenched the thirst of questioners. He was delicate and considered weak, but when an emergency arose, he was a veritable lion of the forest, a viper in the valley. He would not advance an argument unless it was decisive and he would not censure anyone for what he could be excused until he had heard the excuse. He

did not complain of a pain until he recovered. He used to say what he would do and not say what he would not do. If he was ever defeated in speech, he was never defeated in silence. He was more eager to listen than to speak. When two things came to him, he would see which was more emotionally desirable and then he would do the contrary.”

- There is no reformer greater than the Prophet (S.A.W.). His message withstands the test of time. Normally philosophers and intellectuals find ‘pleasure’ in criticising those of the past. In the case of Rasulullah the intellectual ‘pleasure’ lay in affirming the truth.
- All this possible because the revolution of the Prophet (S.A.W.) was an intellectual one – The Arabs thought they had reached the peak of literature even having competitions where the seven most renowned pieces were pinned onto the Ka’ba. (Sab’a muallaqaat). The Prophet (S.A.W.) nailed Suratul Kawthar under them and the best of them looked at it and said “This is not from a human being.”
- This personality preached a religion, founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numberless social and political reforms, established a dynamic and powerful society to practise and represent his teachings, he brought a revolution to the world of human thought and human action for all time.
- To summarise the personality using the Qur’anic description of ahlul Janna and elucidating them with the personality of the Prophet (S.A.W.) we build a picture of an individual with self-esteem who has all the intelligences – IQ, EQ (emotional intelligence) and SQ (Spiritual intelligence).

Self-Esteem

- The first aspect of this personality is self-esteem.

لِّلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا الْحُسْنَىٰ وَزِيَادَةٌ وَلَا يَرْهَقُ وُجُوهَهُمْ قَتَرٌ وَلَا ذِلَّةٌ أُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

For those who do good is good (reward) and more (than this); and blackness or humiliation shall not cover their faces; these are the dwellers of Janna; in it they shall abide. **10:26**

- Self esteem is composed of two components – Basic worth and competence. Basic worth is a positive sense of one’s inherent worth and competence is knowing that one is capable of meeting ones needs and the needs of others. Those with self-esteem are resistant to dependencies, they trust in Allah (29:59), they have an ability to be self directed (inspired by Allah), they have an ability to cope with adversities (sabr - 29:59), they have strong relationships and are generally happy. Self esteem radiates from within like stain glass windows. Low self-esteem expresses itself in rebelliousness, under achievement, eating disorders, strained relationships and general unhappiness.

Action Plan to be Ahlul Janna

- Having established that we are responsible for our own biographies and that in Rasulallah we have an ideal to follow; we need to know establish an action plan to reach out desired goal which is to be ahlul Janna.
- The whole process of this spiritual evolution begins in having an awareness of the desire to reach the destination – or rather the knowledge that there is no choice – it is either Janna or Jahannam – either the nafs that is in tawheed or the splintered nafs which is directionless – Know that there is no middle road – no compromise and this requires a paradigm shift – (first introduced by Thoman Kuhn in his book ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’ where he shows that every significant breakthrough is first a break with old paradigms).
- Set aside a time each day and call it your ‘meditation time’. Think about the ultimate choices you have – if you ponder deeply you will realise that it is the freedom of no choice – there is only one reality – one goal and that is to be ahlul Janna. Change the way you say things – Rather than there’s nothing I can do / let’s look at the alternatives. I have to/ I choose to. I can’t/I choose. I must/ I prefer. Often reactive language can become a self fulfilling prophecy.
- The second step is to be pro-active – it means taking the initiative and responsibility for our own lives. (response – ability – the ability to choose your response) Things will not just appear - confront the first primordial sin of the human being – laziness - as has been said – it is not a problem of mind over matter but mind over mattress. The idea is to acquire the logistics of the plan from something revelatory. Reactive people are those who are affected by

physical & social environment i.e. if the weather is good, they feel good, if people treat them well – they are fine – they build their lives around the behaviour of others – empowering others to control them. Pro-active people are driven by values – “No one can hurt you without your permission” – Eleanor Roosevelt.

- We will look at shifting paradigms in all 4 aspects of our lives – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.
- We will start with the most obvious which is the physical. But first let’s understand the connection between inner belief and outward expression.

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُل لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ

رَّحِيمٌ

The dwellers of the desert say: We believe. Say: You do not believe but say, We submit; and faith has not yet entered into your hearts; and if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish aught of your deeds; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. 49:14

- There is a difference between knowing something and believing in it. e.g. Shaytan – knew Allah as the Creator for when he was being thrown out of Janna he was asked why and he said –

خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ

Thou hast created me of fire, while him Thou didst create of dust 7:12

- He asked to be respited until **يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ** therefore he knew of the day of resurrection and he also knew that there would be those he would not be able to deviate – those close to

Allah – concept of Nabuwwa, Imama and Wilaya – yet his knowledge did not lead to belief. Allah says

أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

He refused and he was proud, and he was one of the unbelievers 2:34

- Only that will manifest which is set in the heart. Imam Khumayni (A.R.) advises to first accept the articles of truth logically.

أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَن لَّا يَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ

Was not a promise taken from them in the Book that they would not speak anything about Allah but the truth 7:169

- Then transfer it to the heart as you would to a child. Repeat it again and again and again. The belief will settle in the heart with constant reminders because truth has a tendency to settle whilst falsehood disappears.

Physical manifestation of belief

- It is with these instructions that we will look at physical manifestations of belief. We will look at:
 - i) Appearance – health and attire
 - ii) Language
 - iii) Behaviour
- The physical dimension of health is caring effectively for the body – eating the right foods, getting sufficient rest and exercise – many recommendations by the Ma’sumeen – Tibb Rasul, Tibb Aimma, Tibb Ridha, Risalatuzh Zhahabiyya by Imam Ridha (A.S.)
- The attire –

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ

جَلَابِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

O Prophet! say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers that they let down upon them their over-garments; this will be more proper, that they may be known, and thus they will not be given trouble; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. 33:59

- Here there is a call to the women who are believers – truth has settled in their hearts – to observe hijab for two reasons –
 - i) Declaration of identity – Non communicative message is – “I declare that I am being loyal to myself and my Creator, I am not a victim and you will not pull my strings for I do that myself, I am unique – I will not be compared with the icons the fashion industry contrives to sell their goods, there is certain code of conduct you will observe when you interact with me”

- ii) Protection from sexual harassment – Non communicative message is – “No sexuality in the public domain – I give out no mixed signals”
- The Roman philosopher Epictetus said: “ It is not he that gives abuse that affronts, but the view that we take of it as insulting; so that when one provokes you it is your own opinion which is provoking.” Basically, we teach others how to treat us on the basis of what we will tolerate. The message is moreso through actions and the non communicative messages that our appearance and behaviour gives.
- The Prophet (S.A.W.) had a unique method of solving problems. He preserved the form and container of customs which had a deep root in society – one that people had got used to and changed it’s contents, spirit, direction and practical application in a revolutionary decisive manner. E.g. Pilgrimage...

Attire

- In the same way we need to change our psychology on clothing. Wear modest decent acceptable clothing finding ways to design coverings which fulfil the requisites of hijab – loose clothing covering whole body except for face and hands.....

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَعْضُمْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاؤِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوْ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولِي الْإِمْرَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوْ الْطِفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَاتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful. And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear

their head-coverings over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands or their fathers, or the fathers of their husbands, or their sons, or the sons of their husbands, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons, or their sisters' sons, or their women, or those whom their right hands possess, or the male servants not having need (of women), or the children who have not attained knowledge of what is hidden of women; and let them not strike their feet so that what they hide of their ornaments may be known; and turn to Allah all of you, O believers! so that you may be successful. 24:31

- The attire recommended should be elegant, and befitting the position of the human being. When Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) was asked why he was dressed in 'smart' clothes when the Prophet (S.A.W.) was simply dressed, he recited:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

Say: Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions.... 7:32

Imam elaborated his answer by saying that the reason of the Prophet's simple dressing was because the Muslims then were in poor economic conditions and he dressed as them. Now the society had prospered economically. Imam then showed him his coarse inner clothes to be constant reminder of Allah. The man who asked known as a Sufi (meaning coarse clothes) was ashamed to show that underneath his torn cloak there were luxurious clothes.

- Silk and gold is forbidden for men. Imam Ali (A.S.) recommends the wearing of cotton and wool. The best colour to wear is white whilst black is makruh (except for an abaa or covering cloak for women). It is recommended to wear clothes befitting ones gender. Wearing black shoes reduces the light of the eyes.
- It is recommended to wear rings with agate-aaqeeq (safety – 8th Imam), turquoise-firuz (help, victory and eyesight – Prophet (S.A.W.)), emerald (to ease affairs), ruby (for beauty and dignity), Hadid Seen (strength) – one of the signs of a

mu'min is that he/she only wears rings on their right hand (11th Imam)

- Cleanliness is a sign of Ahlul Janna – tahara, applying scent (people used to recognise the place where Imam Sadiq (A.S.) did sajda by the scent that came from the place). Note of caution – The Prophet (S.A.W.) warns women not to perfume themselves for na-mahrms. Washing one's face with rose water increases it's lustre and alleviates worry. Jasmine oil cures 70 diseases.

Speech

- The next physical manifestation is the words we speak. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "A person is hidden behind his tongue" "Keep away from a conversation which is without an aim or object, for it lowers your position."

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ
وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ تُؤْتِي أُكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ
لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ
الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ يُثَبِّتُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الظَّالِمِينَ وَيَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ

"Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word being like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven, yielding it's fruit in every season, with the permission of it's Rabb, And Allah gives examples for people that they may reflect. And the example of an evil word is that of an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface, it has no stability. Allah confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allah causes the unjust to go astray, and Allah does what He pleases. 14:24-27

- Imam Zaynul Aabedeem (A.S.) in his treatise of rights says - "The right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, refrain from any meddling in which there is nothing to be gained, express kindness to people, and speak well concerning them."
- It has been estimated that most people speak enough in one week to fill a large 500 page book. In the average lifetime this would amount to 3000 volumes or 1,500,000 pages. It is a frightening thought that by these words we shall be either 'blessed' or 'condemned'. There is an ancient Greek fable

about a monster known as Proteus who had the power of assuming many shapes and appearances. He could become a tree or a pebble, a lion or a dove, a serpent or a lamb. He seemed to have very little difficulty in passing from one form into another. The fabled creature reminds one of the human tongue. It can bless or curse, express praise or whisper slander, it can spread a word of encouragement or spread vindictive hatred.

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and have disputations with them in the best manner; surely your Lord best knows those who go astray from His path, and He knows best those who follow the right way.
 16:125

- The commentator of Nahjul Balagha - Ibn Abil Hadeed writes about the Prophet (S.A.W.): Everyone who heard him (Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.) speak became inclined towards him and developed love for him in their hearts. Thus the Quraysh called the Muslims in Makka 'Subat' (Infatuated ones) and they said: "His speech is magic, it intoxicates more than wine." They forbade their sons to sit with him in case they might be attracted by his speech. Whenever the Prophet (S.A.W.) sat near the Ka'ba and recited the Qur'an or remembered Allah, the Quraysh would stick their fingers firmly in their ears so as not to hear and fall under 'the spell' of his speech. They gathered their clothes over their heads and covered their faces so his radiant appearance would not draw them to him. Nevertheless, most people accepted Islam just by hearing him once or by seeing him.....

Gheeba

- The destructive force of words are summed up in the following poem.

I am more deadly than the whistling bullet from a gun.

I win without killing, I tear down homes.

I break hearts, I wreck lives, I travel on the wings of the wind.

No innocence is strong enough to intimidate me,

No purity is pure enough to stop me.

I have no regard for truth, I have no respect for justice, neither do I have mercy for the defenceless.

My victims are numerous as the sands of the sea and often just as innocent. – I AM GOSSIP

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا
وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

O you who believe! avoid most of suspicion, for surely suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? But you abhor it; and be careful of (your duty to) Allah, surely Allah is Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. 49:12

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Surely (as for) those who love that scandal should circulate respecting those who believe, they shall have a grievous chastisement in this world and the hereafter; and Allah knows, while you do not know. 24:19

- The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said- “ Gheeba is to mention something about your brother that he may hate to have

mentioned. Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) said, "Backbiting is to mention something about your brother, concealed by Allah (hidden from the knowledge of other people)".

- Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said: "Those who talk about that, which they have seen from a believer, with their own eyes, or may have heard from him with their own ears, they are those that Allah has described in the Quran as 'those who love that scandal should circulate.'"
- Salman Al-Farsi was once sent to get some food by some of the companions. He went to the kitchen of the Prophet (S.A.W.) which was managed by Usama bin Zaid who regretfully said there was no food that day. When Salman returned and informed the companions they said that Usama was a miser and Salman was the same as well. Later when the same companions appeared before Rasulullah he said "'What is the matter, I see some particles of flesh in your teeth?' They said they had not consumed any meat. The Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "It is the flesh of Salman and Usama".
- The Prophet (S.A.W.) said "Abstain from backbiting for it is worse than adultery, for after committing adultery, if one seeks Allah's pardon, He grants it. However, the forgiveness for gheeba is not granted until the one who's gheeba he did forgives first."
- Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said: Gheeba eats away one's good deeds (hasanaat) in the same manner that fire eats wood".

In Hadeeth Qudsi Allah says of the one who does gheeba - If he repents, will be off the last to enter Janna, and if he does not repent, then he will be off the first to enter Jahannam. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "Whoever does the gheeba of a Muslim, be it male or female, his prayers will not be

accepted for forty days and nights, unless he seeks forgiveness from the one he/she did gheeba of”.

- Ibn Abbas narrated from the Prophet (S.A.W.) that Punishment of the Grave is three-thirds. One-third for gheeba, another third for slander, and the last third for najasat (of the body and nafs)

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said:

- “Gheeba is a springtime pasture for the shameful, the one who listens to it is one of the backbiters. It is the endeavour of the incapable...Whoever is aware of his faults will have no time for the faults of others. How fortunate is the one whose concern for his own faults keeps him from noticing the faults of others. Oh Slave of Allah, do not be quick to find fault with the wrong actions of anyone - for perhaps he may have been forgiven; and do not feel at ease with your self even if it is only slightly disobedient - for perhaps you may be punished for it. So may whoever of you who knows about others' faults be restrained by what he knows about his own faults, and may he be concerned only with his own gratitude for being spared from what troubles others. Slander is a deadly arrow and the bridge to evil.”

Multi Intelligences – IQ, EQ & SQ

- Three types of intelligence – IQ – Rational, logical, rule bound thinking – EQ- Habit bound, emotional thinking and SQ – the thinking with which we address meaning, direction and value to our actions.
- IQ – It is the rational intelligence which allows us to solve logical or strategic problems – became a big thing in the early part of the 20th century and psychologists devised tests to determine peoples level of intelligence, the theory being that the higher the IQ, the higher their intelligence. Just rational, logical intelligence not enough - in fact on it's own without EQ and SQ can lead to downfall through kibr (pride and arrogance) as seen for Shaytan and Abu Jahl – father of ignorance - uncle of the Prophet (S.A.W.) who was previously known as Abul Hikma (father of wisdom). Computers have high IQ's – they know what the rules are and can follow them without making mistakes.
- EQ – name given by Daniel Goleman – better known as personal intelligence. This is the ability to control ones impulses and thus manage emotions (taqwa through jihad) and to be able to have hope (raja') and empathy (rahma) – the ability to read emotions in others – in other words self restraint and compassion – animals often have EQ – a sense of the situation they are in and knowing how to respond to it. As Aristotle put it – 'Anyone can become angry, that is easy. But to be angry with the right person to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way – that is not easy.' But neither animals nor computers ask why we have these rules or situations? How we can better them or make them different?

- SQ – The acquisition of Mulk – authentic power – Living to die – not dying to live. – It allows one to discriminate between right and wrong – to question the purpose of existence – to transform one’s situation – As Imam Husayn (A.S.) said “ Life is nothing but hijra and jihad.” It is SQ which integrates all our intelligences. It is the intelligence of the nafs which gives a meaning to life. That which feels the ‘emptiness’ in a human being –It is SQ that makes us respond to the Qur’an –that allows us to witness janna and jahannam on earth – that which takes us closer to Allah. How do we recognise SQ – It is the ability in a person to bring higher vision and value to others and showing them how to use it – in other words a person who motivates others – . One with SQ is incapable of making anyone or anything a victim, one who does not use any force against another....All our Prophets and Ma’sumeen have a high SQ – they taught us with that which awakens in us the recognition of truth - Lack of SQ shows up in the form of grief and sorrow – A perpetual state of anguish and no possession of peace of mind and body – should an affliction visit them they lose all forbearance and strength and they have no fortitude in the face of events.
- So where do we begin? The first step is to recognise emotions – develop taqwa through jihad – ability to discriminate amongst emotions and draw upon them to guide behaviour – the goal is not emotional suppression – but a balance. An impulse is the medium of emotion. The seed of all impulses is a feeling bursting to express itself into action. When one is at the mercy of impulse and therefore lacking self control suffers moral deficiency. The very root word of the word ‘emotion’ is ‘motere’ meaning (Latin) to move. Emotion leads to action. Each emotion prepares the

body for a different kind of response. E.g. Anger – blood to hand for grasping weapon, Fear – blood to large skeletal muscles, freeze action, Happiness – increase in available energy, Worrisome thought – quietening of body, Love – relaxation, Surprise – raising of eyebrows – large visual sweep, Disgust – upper lip curls, nose wrinkles, spit put food, Sadness – drop in energy, creates opportunity. How emotions are displayed also moulded by culture We must also remember that when you choose the thoughts and the behaviour you choose the consequences – Thoughts also choose the physiological events that are associated with them e.g. think of your favourite food – you will salivate.....there is a powerful connection here – think about how powerfully your thoughts programme you every day. We have two minds – the one that thinks – heart and the one that feels – heart. Ideally they should be coordinated but when shahawaat (desires) surge, the balance tips. Emotional mind swamps the rational mind. E.g. of the magicians dedicated to Firawn who opposed Prophet Musa (A.S.).

فَلَمَّا جَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوا لِفِرْعَوْنَ أَئِنَّا لَمَّا لَأَجْرًا إِن كُنَّا لِنُحْنُ الْعَالِيِينَ

And when the magicians came, they said to Firon: Shall we get a reward if we are the vanquishers?

قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

He said: Yes, and surely you will then be of those who are made near.

قَالَ لَهُمْ مُوسَى أَلْقُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ مُلْقُونَ

Musa said to them: Cast what you are going to cast.

فَأَلْقُوا حِبَاهُمْ وَعَصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغَالِبُونَ

So they cast down their cords and their rods and said: By Firon's power, we shall most surely be victorious.

فَأَلْقَى مُوسَى عَصَاهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ

Then Musa cast down his staff and lo! it swallowed up the lies they told.

فَأَلْقَى السَّحَرَةُ سَاجِدِينَ

And the magicians were thrown down prostrate;

قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

They said: We believe in the Lord of the worlds:

رَبِّ مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ

The Lord of Musa and Haroun.

قَالَ آمَنْتُمْ لَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْنِ لَكُمْ إِنَّهُ لَكَبِيرُكُمْ الَّذِي عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ
فَلَسَوْتُ تَعْلَمُونَ لَأَقْطَعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ وَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ

Said he: You believe in him before I give you permission; most surely he is the chief of you who taught you the magic, so you shall know: certainly I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides, and certainly I will crucify you all.

قَالُوا الْاَصْدِيقِ اِنَّا اِلَى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُونَ

They said: No harm; surely to our Lord we go back;

26:41-50

- Where once the magicians highest value was nearness to Firawn and they even drew strength by swearing on his

might – in a split moment they changed into believing in the Rabb of Musa and Harun. The change was the alignment of the head and the heart -

- 2nd step – You do what works – “I do not understand my actions – For I do not do what I want but I do the very things that I hate” – St Paul. We only do that which has a benefit – monitory, social, physical, achievement....EQ means working towards spiritual benefit – peace...

أَلَا يَذُكُرُ اللَّهُ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

...now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest. 13:28

- Think of the negative (persistent and frustrating) behaviours in your life – identify, describe and note the benefits. Be alert to possibility that your behaviour is controlled by fear of rejection – fear of ‘others’ can be so strong it can virtually make you do anything – Remember what you do not acknowledge you cannot change.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ

“Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change themselves...”13:10

- Be aware of the escalating effect of your thinking. Stop the train of thoughts before it has a chance to get going. Ask yourself – will this matter a year from now?
- Prophet (S.A.W.) asked – Ma AdDeen? Answered – Husnal Khulq Man asked from right, left, back, front – Eventually Prophet (S.A.W.) with a deep look said – “Why don’t you understand?” “Religion is defined not to get angry!” Aristotles challenge – “Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to become angry with the right person to the right degree at the right time for the right purpose and in the right way – that is not easy.”

- 3rd stage - to have rahma - Empathy builds on self awareness – the more we are open to our own emotions, the more successful we are at reading the feelings of others – empathy is the ability to know how another feels without them having to verbalise them – lack of empathy shows in those who abuse others physically and mentally – e.g. Prophet (S.A.W.) – yateem – David Goleman – train journey – rowdy kids
- Robert Rosenthal – Harvard Psychiatrist developed PONS (profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity) Roots of empathy develop from the day we are born – infants cry when they hear another infant crying e.g. one year old brought his mum to quieten another despite the other mum being there... Ali Asgher when hearing distress of father.. Empathy developed by parents – if they do not respond to their infants – takes emotional toll – children become passive too – called mirroring (Rahma programmed within us in the physiology of brain - Species with no neocortex like reptiles eat their young)
- Empathy in the Qur'an

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً

...and We put in the hearts of those who followed him kindness and mercy 57:27

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ

فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in

the affair; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust. 3:159

- Prophet (S.A.W.) signs of those who are wretched –
 - Dry eyes
 - Hard heartedness
 - Excessive greed
 - Persistence in sins
- Nahjul Balagha – Imam (A.S.) describing Muttaqeen to Hammam –
 - People expect good out of them
 - Forgives those who harms them
 - Helps those who abandons them
 - When misfortunes afflicts others – does not blame them – assists them and does not rejoice at the loss of others .
- First manifestation of rahma – behaviour towards parents – The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said”Allah pleasure is the pleasure of parents and His anger is there anger.”

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغُنَّ عَنْكَ الْكِبَرِ
أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا
وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي

صَغِيرًا

And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. 17:23-24

Friends selection

- Building the profile of one who is ahlul Janna – so far we see one who is healthy, clean and presentable. He/she has good disciplined speech with no gheeba or slander. He/she is in control of his/her emotions and has empathy (Rahma). He/she is acutely aware of his/her responsibilities towards parents. Interaction with your parents and those with whom you have chosen to share your life out of all the billions of people on this world serve to activate upon you an awareness of who you are and what you are here to do.
- When choosing/having a relationship with friends, soulmates, spouses – ensure that the choice is based on a long term vision. These choices are extremely important because they can be a catalyst for one to be ahlul janna or ahlun naar. Friendship and nikah are partnerships between equals for the purpose of spiritual growth. This is different from a partnership based on physical survival. When individuals for example enter into a marriage rather than nikah the ability to survive physically is enhanced. Nikah entails a spiritual partnership where one recognises the existence of the nafs and the two are on a journey towards janna taking with them a family too.....
- The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "Whenever you see one of the gardens of Janna open before you, benefit from it". The people asked: "Ya Rasulullah! Where is this garden of Janna?" He replied: "I mean friendship with a mu'min who has eiman in his/her Rabb" When asked to define a good friend, the Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "He is the one whose very sight makes you remember Allah, whose conversation increases your knowledge and whose deeds remind you of the world in the Hereafter" A friend is a very important

person in one's life. He/she has a great effect on our thoughts and actions. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "The behaviour of everyone will be according to the beliefs and principles of his/her friend".

- Qualities one should look for in a friend- Knowledge, reliability and good akhlaq. Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: "The best of companions (friends) are those who have knowledge and patience." "A friend who is reliable is an adornment at the times of happiness and a security in times of difficulty". There is a Spanish saying which says : "If you go to the wolves, it is howling which you will learn from them."
- Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said: "Avoid friendship with three types of people :
 - A traitor because on one day he will deceive others in order to benefit you and on another day he will deceive you to benefit others..
 - A tyrant because if he oppresses others for your sake, one day he will oppress you...
 - A rumour monger (one who gossips) because if he gossips about others in front of you then one day he will gossip about you before others."
- Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) said: "A friend is one who fulfils the conditions below:
 - What he/she feels towards you and what he/she says about you must be the same.
 - He/she should consider your good things as his/her good things and your bad things as his/her bad things. Similarly he/she should consider your honour as his/her honour and your disgrace to be his/her disgrace.

- If his/her financial position changes for the better or he/she acquires a high position his/her attitude towards you should not change.
- He/she should not fail to assist you to the maximum extent of his/her capability.
- He/she should not abandon you and leave you alone when you are in trouble."
- Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A.S.) says: "My most beloved friend is he who points out my faults to me
- When choosing a spouse the Ma'sumeen (A.S.) have given us guidelines which provide a wider vision. In Hadith Qudsi, Allah says "When I wish to give someone the good of this world and the aakhira, I grant them a humble heart, a praising tongue, a body which can bear affliction and a spouse whom when he/she looks at makes his/her happy."

Spouse selection

- Firstly why is there such a strong attraction between the two genders. Allah in the Qur'an says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً

O people! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women...4:1

- As an independent individual, a person is without companionship, without challenge, without potential for growth. Individually we feel incomplete – A key to a successful nikah is to understand its sanctity. Nikah is sometimes defined as the meeting of two mountain summits – the best of two individuals.
- The criteria can be divided into 5 categories: i) Eiman ii) Descent iii) Akhlaq iv) Compatibility and v) Financial competence
- **i) Eiman** . Faith is the motivating force which pushes individuals and society towards the goals which it has set before it. Because marriage is not merely a tool to legalise sexual enjoyment, but the formation of a family, the objectives of mutual love and contentment and the raising of a righteous progeny can only be achieved if both focus their goals on being ahlul Janna – reaching their full potential.
- **ii) Descent** - The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “ Be careful with whom you have children, for the ‘irq’(genes) can be unclean” Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: “Good akhlaq are a testimony to honourable ‘irq’ (genes)” Muhammad Hanafiyya ibn Ali (A.S.) was appointed as standard bearer by his father in the battle

of Jamal. He was commanded to launch an attack on the enemy but the sight of the flashing of swords and the arrows coming forward made him hesitate and he retreated back to the camp of Imam Ali (A.S.). After several attempts, he showed no sign of bravely attacking the enemy. Imam Ali (A.S.) is reported to have told him: “You have an ‘irq’ from your mother” Imam was trying to explain the reason for his cowardice. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has also said: “The root of prosperity or adversity of a people should first be sought in the wombs of the mothers.”

- **iii) Inner beauty** (good akhlaq) – The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “One who chooses a wife based on her beauty and wealth, Allah will deprive him of her beauty and wealth.. If his wife is chosen on the criterion of religion and morals, Allah will not only give him the benefit of her religion and morals, but also of her beauty and wealth.” The akhlaq of a person can be judged through his/her interaction with others. i.e. parents, family, neighbours, friends, & community. Does he/she fulfil the rights of others? If he/she were to be tried in court accused of being ahlul Janna, would he/she be found guilty?
- **iv) Compatibility** – Similar outlook and values. Will I be able to live with this person? Can I take him/her as a friend? Would he/she accompany me to Janna? Inter-marriage between different tribes, and races is recommended. However, because we do not live in an ideal Islamic society and prejudices still exist it is important to make enough investigations about a prospective spouse to conclude a strong marriage. The prejudices of society may be overlooked but it is the children who bear the brunt. Islam changed these prejudices amongst the Arabs to an extent that slaves from different countries and races were

absorbed into society with no prejudice. However, in countries like the USA, even after centuries the prejudices of race and apartheid still divide the country. The key issue is eiman. If eiman is strong then a marriage accompanied by a permanent clash of ideas between the husband and the wife, can ruin not only their lives but those of the children and close relations also.

▪ **v) Financial competence**

- Even if all the above criteria are met, true compatibility can only exist if both the parties are free in their choice without any coercion. The Ma'sumeen have continuously stressed that the main condition of the validity of a marriage is free consent. No imposition is allowed in this respect. A young girl came to the Prophet (S.A.W.) and said: "Ya Rasulullah! ...from the hand of this father..." "What has your father done to you?" The Prophet (S.A.W.) asked. "He has a nephew" she replied, "And he has given me in marriage to him before consulting me in the matter." "Now that he has done it," said the Prophet (S.A.W.) "Do not oppose it. Agree to it and be your cousin's wife." "Ya Rasulullah! I do not like my cousin! How can I be the wife of a man I do not like?" The Prophet (S.A.W.) replied : "If you do not like him, then that is the end of the matter. You have full authority. Go and choose a man whom you would like to marry." The girl then said: "It just so happens that I do like my cousin, and do not like any other person. But because my father did this without my consent, I have purposely come to put this question to you and get your reply and decision on the matter. I wish to inform all women that fathers have no right to take a decision on giving their daughters in marriage to whoever they like." Although, the father does not have absolute authority over his daughter and cannot give her in marriage to anybody he

likes without the daughters approval and consent, most fuqaha consider the permission of the father to be a condition of marriage in respect to virgins (baakira). A widow or divorcee (thayyibaa) requires no permission. However, if the father refuses to give his permission for no reasonable cause, his right is forfeited and the daughter is free to marry the husband of her choice.

Behaviour guidelines for Nikah

- Once we have committed ourselves to a relationship then there are certain growing dynamics that occur. Without commitment you cannot learn to care for another person more than yourself.
- Let's look at the principle of choice first. The choice of the nafs – relationships based on love, forgiveness, humbleness, clarity and wisdom and not the choice of the ego – anger, jealousy, doubt and fear. This requires effort but it is much less anguish than living with anger, jealousy, doubt and fear.
- In the marital relationship the first thing is to **acknowledge the sanctity of nikah**. Two people may love and care for each other but without a divine force, temporal human beings cannot be bonded eternally. The single most important ingredient in creating this life time bond is their commitment to Allah and His laws.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ
مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. 30:21

- **Love** – Selfish love and selfless love are diametrically opposed - Selfish love is conditional love; you love on the condition that your needs will be met, and if the person you have chosen to love doesn't serve your needs, you reject that person and love is bound to be mercurial. When the person you love wants help you may give it. But once the price becomes too high, if you feel you are giving more than you are receiving, you may simply stop loving. After all, there

is only so much discomfort that you may be willing to tolerate for another person. Selfless love, though, means of rising above your own needs. It means going outside of yourself, truly connecting with another person's soul and, therefore with Allah. When love is transcendent, you are reaching for a higher place; together you are reaching for Allah. There are no conditions for such selfless love; when transcendence is the focus of our love, we do not constantly redefine our wants and needs.

- **Value is the needs of your spouse as much as you value your own**, because the partnership that you both want requires two healthy inwardly secure individuals. Example of the relationship of the Prophet (S.A.W.) and Sayyida Khadija (taking food to Jabalun Nur and his remembrance of her after her wafat) and the relationship of Imam Ali (A.S.) and Sayyida Fatima (A.S.).....

هُنَّ لِيَاسٌ لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِيَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ

“.....you are clothes for them and they are clothes for you....” 2:187

- **Trust** - It does not necessarily mean perfect behaviour – it comes from accountability. To acknowledge an error. It means that your attitude and behaviour over time demonstrates to your spouse that they can depend on you. Otherwise there will be doubt. Is she/he really committed to this nikah?
- **Communication** –
 - **Listen carefully.** One of the most important aspects of verbal communication is listening. If we respond to a suggestion or comment before the speaker has had the opportunity to fully express the thought, we are being unjust

- **A soft answer is an asset.** In a confrontational situation, a soft answer is the one that will cool the situation down and enable you to have effective communication.
- **Tell the truth.** Somehow we think it is more love to hide our true feelings from those we don't want to hurt. However, a relationship built on hidden feelings, hopes or fears is built on shaky ground. The saying, "Say what you mean and mean what you say," is supported by the Qur'an.
- **Believe what you hear.** If your spouse tells you something in a discussion, believe what they say. Nothing is more frustrating, when trying to discuss a subject, than to have the other person hearing what they want to hear or think you are talking about, rather than what you really said. Many times people who have been married for many years don't really know each other because they won't believe what their spouse says. In many of these cases, after a few years, one of the spouses just gives up and quits trying to communicate.
- **Stick to the subject.** If you have a tendency to throw in a thought or an unrelated subject while discussing an issue, break the habit. If you and your spouse are disagreeing over why the electric bill is so high and one of you says, "You don't love me anyway," they are not sticking to the subject. If you need to talk about whether you really love each other, do it at a different time, for now, just stick to one subject.
- **Believe you are on the same side.** It is much easier to resolve differences, make plans, or share disappointments, if you both are committed to the

fact that you are on the same side – you are both committed to Allah.

- Some other things to consider- *Criticism does not work* in a relationship. Invalidation of your spouse will only aggravate the problem. *Love the flaws* - A spouse is there for every grumpy morning, every bad-hair day....It may sound unglamorous but you will see a deeper love in the day-to-day existence. Anyone can carry on a grand passion from a distance. It takes real love to adore a human being, spots and all. *Ignore the small stuff* – Sharing living quarters with anyone is difficult. Everyone has an opinion about where to keep the butter and which brand of jam to buy. Buy both kinds. *Not responding in kind to anger* – Choose your battles wisely, agree to disagree and drop the topic. Differences do not mean he does not love you.

Obligations towards a mu'min

- In relationship with mu'mineen there are 30 responsibilities which are incumbent upon one mu'min towards another. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "Every mu'min has 30 obligations towards another mu'min which cannot be absolved until he/she fulfils them or is forgiven for them"
- i) Forgiving their mistakes
- ii) Mercy towards them when they are in a strange land or situation
- iii) Guard their secrets
- iv) Give them a hand when about to fall
- v) Accept their apologies
- vi) Discourage gheeba about them
- vii) Persist in giving them good advice
- viii) Treasure their friendship
- ix) Fulfil their trust
- x) Visit them when ill
- xi) Being with them at their time of death
- xii) Accepting their invitations
- xiii) Returning their favours in kind
- xiv) Thanking them for their favours
- xv) Being grateful for their assistance
- xvi) Protecting their honour and property
- xvii) Helping them meet their needs
- xviii) Making an effort to solve their problems
- xix) Guiding them to what they have lost
- xx) Answering their greeting
- xxi) Taking them at their word
- xxii) Accepting their gifts
- xxiii) Confirming them if they swear to something
- xxiv) Inclining towards them

- xxv) Helping them when they are being unjust (by turning them away from it)
- xxvi) Helping them when they are victims of injustice
- xxvii) Refraining from feeling bored with them
- xxviii) Not forsaking them in times of trouble
- xxix) Whatever good you like to like for them
- xxx) Whatever evil you dislike to dislike for them

QUR'ANIC AYAAT FOR LOVE

1. Recite Suratu Yaseen 7x on 7 separate almonds through palm of the right hand and give to spouse.
2. Recite Suratul Qadr (97)
3. Recite بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ 786x on water and give spouse to drink.
4. Recite Suratun Nisa (4) 7x daily.
5. Recite Suratul Jumua' (62) on Friday.
6. Recite Suratul Quraysh (106) on roses and give both parties to smell.
7. Recite Suratul Muzzammil 41x on a sweet thing and give spouse to eat.
8. Recite 3:31 3x on water and give spouse to drink.
9. Recite 12:29&30 on a sweet thing and give to both parties to eat.
10. Recite 38:32 on a sweet thing and give both parties to eat for 7 days.
11. Recite 5:54 on a sweet thing and give to both parties to eat.
12. Recite 8:62&63 on a sweet thing and give to both parties to eat.
13. Recite 36:83 on a sweet thing and give to both parties to eat.
14. Recite 33:40 on some fragrant flowers and a sweet thing and give spouse to smell/eat.
15. Recite Ayatul Kursi 2:255 equal in number to the total number of both their names.
16. Recite 9:129 30x on Friday night thinking of spouse.

A'MAAL FOR GETTING MARRIED

- 1.** Recite Suratul Ahzab (Sura No 33) every day.
- 2.** Recite Suratul Mumtahana (Sura No 60) 5x every day.
- 3.** For 40 days after Salatut Tahajjud (Shab) recite 100x 36:36
- 4.** Recite Ziyarat Ashura for 40 days
- 5.** Recite Dua Mashlul for 40 days

Hope

- The next quality to ahlul Janna is Hope (Raja')

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing 29:5

- Hope is the heart's attachment to something it loves that will transpire in the future just as fear relates to that which is not loved which will happen in the future. Hope is believing that you have the will and the way to accomplish goals – whatever they may be. Difference between just 'wishing' and hope for wishing makes one lazy whilst hope makes one active. From the perspective of EQ it means that one does not give up in to overwhelming anxiety, a defeatist attitude or depression in the face of difficult times. It is that which gives the strength to be able to think positively. Pandora's box – Greek princess – gods jealous of her beauty give her a box and tell her not to open – curiosity makes her take a peek – released worldly afflictions – disease, sadness, madness –one merciful god let her close the box just in time to capture one antidote – HOPE
- "Whoever turns to Me and stops having hope in anyone but Me, I will be sufficient for him, I will give to his requests and answer when he calls me." Revelation to Prophet Dawud (A.S.) "O Musa! I have no creation better than my believing 'abd – As long as you do My ibada in the hope of meeting ME and no shirk – I will forgive whatever you have done even if you come to me with sins as many as the earth's expanse"

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْفُو الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Say: O my servants! who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives the faults altogether; surely He is the Forgiving the Merciful. 39:53

- The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “A mu’min has 2 wings – the wing of hope and the wing of fear”.
- The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “I am surprised at a Muslim person for any of Allah’s decree about him/her is a blessing. If he is torn into pieces with a pair of scissors or he is the master of the East and West, it would be a blessing for him.” Do your best and then hand it over to him.

وَأَقِمْ وَصِيَّتِي إِيَّاكَ إِنَّكَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

So you shall remember what I say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allah, Surely Allah sees the servants. 40:44

- Use all your worldly connections through hope – not panic or fear and then know it will be all right. Continually remind yourself that He will never let go – you are supported and looked down upon – when you call Him (dua) assume it is pouring forward....The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: “When you call Him (do dua) think that your request is at the door”. It is impossible to do dua without hope and trust – It is impossible to have a thought that is a secret for all energy is heard....

أَجِيبْ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَاكَ

...I answer the dua of the one who does dua when he calls on Me..... 2:186

وَأَتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصُوهَا

“And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah’s favors, you will not be able to number them. 14:34

- Finally ensure that all actions have haya (immortality) , nur (light) and sukun (peace)
- Ask yourself – Given the body and nafs – if at death body annihilated and the nafs lives – what is success and what is loss? Life is to be able to better what was given at start – body decomposes unless converted to spiritual energy. We are created from the earth and will be returned to it.

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى

“From it We created you and into it We shall send you back and from it We will raise you a second time.”20:55

- One Prophet Adam (A.S.) & Sayyida Hawwa from whom earth inhabited. Earth – one planet in the galaxy filled with ne’ma like no other – it’s atmosphere, it’s temperature, it’s riches, it’s minerals, Same earth provides human being with highest product - **blood** whose heat provides thought and emotion – senses, nerves,..... assist in taking raw ideas into thoughts, ideas, laws, same heat causes lust, greed, power, etc.... It is the power of base (earth) which takes a human being to progress of 20th century. Need to convert this ‘heat’ from the earth into coolness of ‘nur’ – convert lust into love, greed into generosity, and radiate instead of consume. Life of Ibada

- Remember whatever we do is stored in the archives of nature...

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ

..And everything is recorded in a clear writing 36:12

- The only ‘amal’ that turns earth to nur is ‘ahsanu ‘amal’ – Imam Sadiq (A.S.) when commenting on the aya below said:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

“.....Who created life and death so He may test you as that who does ‘Ahsanu ‘amal’ 67:2

- “It does not mean one of you whose deeds are more numerous but one who is more rightful in his conduct, and this righteousness is nothing but the fear of Allah and sincerity of niyya and fear.” Then he added “To persevere in an action until it becomes sincere is more difficult than performing the action itself, and sincerity of action lies in this that you should not desire anyone to praise you for it except Allah, and niyya supersedes action. Lo! Indeed niyya is action itself” Imam then quoted

قُلْ كُلُّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِيهِ

“ Everyone act according to his/her shakilatihi (character) ” 17:84

Imam explained that character meant intention.

- Reflect deeply upon your personal world, you will find that your world is the result of your own actions and thoughts. There is very little separation from action and thoughts. Where does thought end and action begin – we cannot define a boundary – Actions and thoughts are continuous – My thoughts and actions are not isolated from those around me and the environment – try for a minute to isolate your own private world – why did I create my world this way and

not that? If we ponder deeply, break it up and look at it from different facets we will come to the conclusion that my world is a result of my actions and thought interacting and superimposed upon the actions and thoughts of those around me.

- Now let us look at the individual – the actions of the ‘I’ – every action has an equal reaction – If I am mean to someone, she will be cold towards me – As the Qur’an says in Suratuz Zilzal –that if you do as much as a mustard seed worth of good, it will come back to you. Actions and reactions are interlinked –you cannot say “I fooled them” You have only fooled yourself. Until one reaches that conclusion, one is baffled by how we can convert the earth to nur.
- One will find one’s deeds ‘illustrated’ and ‘manifested’. We know that an object’s actuality depends on its form and not on its matter. Niyya constitutes the form of a deed and the action its matter. The apparent semblance of the salaah of Imam Husayn (A.S.) in its element may not have differed from that of Umar ibn Sa’d, but whereas for Imam it was a means of nearness to Allah and had the highest spiritual form; for Umar ibn Sa’d it was just a physical action. The difference was niyya.
- Good deeds will be manifested in attractive, pleasant figures which will be a source of joy and pleasure whilst evil deeds will be manifested as terrifying, harmful figures which will be a source of pain and suffering.

يُنَبِّأُ الْإِنْسَانَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

The human being shall on that day be informed of what he sent before and (what he/she) put off.75:13

- That in essence is the manifestation of Janna. To visualise the consequence of each action is to bring JANNA on EARTH.

JANNA ON EARTH

Every human being is a microcosm of the entire creation. When one brings unity between the nafs and the ego, one brings Janna on earth.