

Recognition of oneself

Who are you? You are your personality - character - how would you describe yourself - opposites - kind/meanetc....

First step is to recognise oneself especially ones shortcomings - difficult - story of horse who refused to cross the river because he did not want to step on his reflection.

Concept of past, present, future - Who would you like to be? In other words what would you like to change about yourself - cannot be what is not right for you - story of tiger pig - pig who wanted to be a tiger.

Use goals and personality given by Ma'sumeen to determine what you want to be because one needs to have the best of goals - Qur'an says - "Wa laqad kaana lakum fiy rasulullahi uswatun hasana" (Indeed in the messenger of Allah you have the best of examples"

As Muslims our goal therefore is to be a mu'min who achieves the pleasure of Allah - which means having taqwa (doing all the wajibats and keeping away from all muharrimat), having rahma (awareness for the feelings, needs and concerns of others), and doing hijra (emigrating towards Allah by being motivated)

So what stops us - feelings such as fear of rejection by others.....?

What is a feeling? Talk about all the different feelings (emotions) one has - anger, sadness, love, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness... and talk of what happens when these feelings come - All feelings are impulses to act - in other words that which makes us do something - Clever thinking is to be able to act on those feelings in the right and best way - in the way that shows that a human being is in control of himself/herself and is a Muslim.

Discuss situations of feelings of anger for instance - looking at the wrong way to act and the right - e.g. Someone stepped on my foot and I get really angry - I wanted to hit them, push them away - clever thinking would be to think for a minute - maybe he/she did not see me, maybe he/she tripped or stumbled on my foot..... Encourage the children to share examples in their lives.

Discuss fear especially fear of rejection - 90% of the time it is False Evidence Appearing Real -

How do we overcome it - with yaqeen - certainty in ourselves - called having self esteem which has 2 components - basic worth (I am OK being a Muslim because **I know** I'm OK - not because someone say so) and competence (I am able to meet my needs and the needs of others). Prophet (S.A.W.) - "If you have a pearl in your hands and others call it a walnut, it will always remain a pearl."

SELF ESTEEM

To be able to think cleverly we have to learn how to achieve self esteem step by step:

- The first one is to know who I am and what I want to be (done on 1st day)
- Then to really think about myself and ask myself some questions e.g.
Do I look like a Muslim, do I act like a Muslim . e.g. Do I get angry quickly, do I lie, do I get upset over small things, do I give up quickly, do I pray my salaa without being reminded, do I recite Qur'an every day,
- We need to then look at the areas in our lives which need correcting - remember we can only change for the better if we know where the change is needed.
- Once we identify areas of change we need to WANT to change and have a firm intention - explain difference between wanting (irada) and intention (niyya) - Intention means to have a plan of action and following that plan -

The first place of change is how we present ourselves to others - in other words how we communicate with others - Prophet (S.A.W.) - Each Insaan is hidden beneath his/her tongue. It is not only what we say that is important but also how we say it.

Manners of speaking

Imam Zaynum Aabedeen (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."

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. How others react towards us depends, in a large measure, upon the words we utter to them. So, before you speak, before you write, remember the power of words. 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.....

Let's look at the following ahadith of the ma'sumeen.

- "Do not begin a conversation without first greeting the person you are talking to."
- "Keep away from a conversation which is without an aim or object, for it lowers your position."
- "..Wait to speak at the right opportunity; Many speak the truth but not at the right moment and therefore have to face disrespect."
- "Do not argue with foolish and ignorant people as they will hurt you with their nonsense."
- "Your speech is under your firm control as long as you do not speak, but if you speak you come under it's control; so guard your tongue as you guard your gold and silver, for many a word is a blessing but leads to displeasure".

Let's look at a sura which shows us how to communicate with those who cover up the truth of tawheed - Suratul Kafirun and compare it to how we should communicate with mu'mineen - "Innamal mu'minuna ikhwa..." (Indeed the mu'mineen to each other are brethren...)

Suratul Kafirun - Sura revealed when leaders of Quraysh proposed to Prophet (S.A.W.) that he should worship their gods for a year and they would worship his God for a year - (point to note here - they were willing to give up their gods for a year - no yaqeen in their own beliefs) --- two ayaat are repeated twice - in reply to both their proposals - to denote present and future refusal and finally to invalidate not only what/who they worshipped but also how they worshipped - when we communicate we need to be clear, concise and to the point (Prophet (S.A.W.) Khayrul kalaam qalla wa dalla - the best of talks is short and to effective (to the point))

With mu'mineen there is a need for Rahma (mercy) - let's first look at some of the rights of mu'mineen as taught by the Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

"Allah has made seven rights Wajib upon a mu'min towards another mu'min:

1. To respect him
2. To love him
3. To share his property with him
4. To consider doing his gheebat haram
5. To visit him when he is sick
6. To escort his funeral procession
7. To say nothing but good about him after his death."

One day the Prophet (S.A.W.) was sitting alone in the masjid. A man came near him and the Prophet (S.A.W.) moved aside to make place for him. The man said: "Ya

Rasulallah! The masjid is empty and there is so much space available, why have you moved aside?" The Prophet (S.A.W.) replied: "A Muslim has a right on another Muslim - when he wants to sit near him the latter should move aside as a mark of respect".

When communicating with mu'mineen think cleverly how you will be able to fulfil the following rights:

In '**Risälätul Huquq**' (A charter of rights) attributed to Imam Ali Zaynul Abedeen (A.S.) ; Imam lists 51 rights. Some of them are:

The right of a mother is that you know that she carried you where no-one carries anyone. She did not care if she went hungry and thirsty as long as you ate and drank... she gave up sleep... The right of the father is that you should know that he is the root. Without him, one would not be. When you sees in yourself something that pleases you; know that your father is the root of that blessing....

The right of the one who imparts knowledge is to respect him/her, listen to him/her and attend with devotion. You should not raise your voice towards him/her.. You should not speak whilst she/he is speaking nor speak ill of him/her... If anyone speaks ill of him/her you should defend him/her... You should not show any enmity or show hostility in friendship. If this is done then Allah's angels

will give witness that the knowledge learnt from him/her was for Allah and not for the sake of the people...

The right of one who is older is that he/she be respected because of age and honoured because he/she entered ISLAM before you... The right of the one who is younger is that he/she be shown compassion through teaching him/her, forgiveness, covering of faults and help... The right of he/she through whom Allah makes you happy is that you first praise Allah and then thank the person....

Why do we want to go through all this change? Clever thinking will look for a benefit or advantage at the end of the day? So what are the benefits? Janna, Ridhwanullah.... In the aakhirah but what of the benefits in this world? After all we ask for 'hasana' in the world and in the hereafter in our qunoot of salaa..

Explain the benefits - knowledgeable, pro-active (do not need to be pushed but takes the initiative to do things by oneself), courage, unrestricted by the attitudes, behaviour and action of others.....Those who do their best knowing it is according to the laws of Allah and then trust in Allah for they know that the outcome is always khayr (good). ('Wa ufawwidhu amriy ilallah, innallaha baseerum bil 'ibaad - I hand over my affairs to Allah, Indeed He is ever vigilant over His 'ibaad) In other words an individual whom as Imam Ali (A.S.) says - people want to be with when they are alive and cry for when they die.

Why do we do wrong things - There is a famous saying "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very things that I hate". The first thing to do is to think about 5 things you do that you know are wrong but you still do them - think why you do them - what does it do . e.g. Why are we mean, rude? Why do we lie? Why do we gossip?..... Most of the time it is because of fear of rejection (talked about earlier),

The second thing is to think cleverly - if I did not do it what would I get? Compare the two consequences and you will see that avoiding them has a greater benefit.

Discipline in life e.g. the responsibilities we talked about are not easy to fulfil - but we must understand that we only do that which works - in other words human beings only do those things which have benefit them - albeit short or long term benefits - The benefit of thinking cleverly and then carrying it through action is that the benefits are eternal.

Think about sacrifice - All those who have served humanity in one way or another, whether as scholars, philosophers, inventors, or teachers, deserve the gratitude of all mankind. But none deserves this to the extent that the shuhada do, and that is why the people of all sectors of the society have a sentimental attachment to them.

The Qur'an says: "Think not of those who were slain in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive, finding their sustenance with their Rabb." **Suratu Aali Imran 3:169**

All other servants of humanity are indebted to the shuhada. The shaheed can be compared to a candle whose job it is to burn out and get extinguished in order to shed light for the benefit of others. The shuhada are the candles of society. They burn themselves out and illuminate society.

Parvin (a famous Iranian poetess writes): "The onlooker said to the candle, tonight I have decorated my room. Last night I didn't sleep with excitement, I sewed the dress and put it on. I stitched the pearls on the design, I decorated it with flowers. You can't even reach even reach to the dust of my art, for I have sacrificed my mind and body for it. The candle laughed and said: I was the one who saved you from darkness, for letting you stitch your pearls on the dress. I have filled my lap with pearl like tears, I cried like the rain clouds of spring, and thus watered the flowers on your dress. I am happy with my burning out, For I am enlightening your house, although there is no hope for me, I illuminated your walls and created hope for you. For the manifestation of your beauty, I have strengthened your heart,. The fruits of my life have burnt out, but I provided the fruits of your

delight. The works you describe- you did not do them - I did them."

Shahadat is the death of a person who, in spite of being fully conscious of the risks involved, willingly faces them for the sake of a sacred cause, or, as the Qur'an says fi sabil Allah (in the way of Allah). Shahadat has two basic elements: Firstly it must be for a sacred cause - in the way of Allah and secondly the sacrifice is made consciously. Usually in the case of shahadat, an element of crime is involved. As far as the victim is concerned, the death is sacred; but the action of the killers is a heinous crime.