



HOLIDAYS

Your teenage son attends school. You pay his fees, buy his uniform, provide him with his text books and stationery, arrange for his transport and give him whatever else is necessary for his education. However your son is not truly dedicated to studying. His main purpose of attending school is to enjoy the few exciting excursions arranged by the school each year. Hence in his school life he “lives” from one excursion to the next. This is what motivates him. It is his objective. He eagerly awaits the excursion and plans for the next excursion before the first is over. If the excursion is cancelled for any reason, he is dejected and depressed.

Like any sensible father, you are very disappointed. Your son should have been dedicated to his studies. The excursions are secondary and “by the way.” If no excursion was undertaken, it is not a serious issue. Studying diligently and obtaining a good pass should have been the main concern. You feel your son has “let you down.”

We are also in the “school” of this world to “study” – to learn to recognize our Creator, become His true servants and gain His pleasure. This is our main focus of life. This is our motivation, objective and wherein we experience real pleasure. Everything else is secondary. Thus the “excursions” – the occasional little breaks to freshen the mind – are entirely secondary. They should not be given primary importance or become the driving factor in our lives.

TAKE A BREAK

Unfortunately with the Western culture eroding into our way of life, the “excursions” — the elaborate holidays — have become an aspect of primary focus. Generally people no more take a holiday to “take a break.” Instead the holiday has become the objective. Many people need to take a break *after* the holiday. Nevertheless, much time is spent planning one’s holidays. Budgets are allocated for it. While on holiday “*where we will spend the next holiday*” is discussed. Thus we generally live from holiday to holiday. Every effort is made to ensure that the next holiday is more fun-filled and exciting than the previous one. If the holiday does not materialize, the person is dejected. Alas, this is not the life that a true *Mumin* leads.

Making holidays a high priority in life and generally

chasing fun and entertainment are in fact the ideals of a “religion” termed “hedonism.” In Philosophy, hedonism is defined as “the doctrine that pleasure is the sole or chief good in life and that the pursuit of it is the ideal aim of conduct (Encarta Encyclopedia).” In simple terms a hedonist is one who worships his desires and makes chasing fun his object in life. This is exactly what Allah Ta’ala has denounced in the Qur’an in the words: **“Have you seen the one who takes his desires as his deity and (as a result) Allah caused him to deviate despite knowledge (45:23).”** Indeed no *Mumin* will claim to be a hedonist in belief. Yet in practice by and large we follow in the footsteps of the hedonistic West. The cornerstones of Western society are “make money” and “have fun.” Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) has taught the very opposite – the crux of which is that do not chase the world but spend your life in striving for the comforts, luxuries, fun and pleasure of Jannah.

TRUE PLEASURE

Apparently it would seem that the one who follows the teachings of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and spends his life striving for the Hereafter would have no pleasure in this world. There is nothing further from the truth. In fact only those who dedicate themselves to Allah Ta’ala taste true pleasure. Hazrath Ibrahim bin Adham (R.A.) used to say: “By Allah we experience such pleasure in worship that, if the kings had known about it, they would have tried to snatch it with their swords.” It is for this very reason that they have no need to chase the artificial and superficial fun of material things, nor do they get depressed due to not having some petty material pleasures. On the contrary, the fun worshippers not only get depressed but also become suicidal. It is part of their belief that **“avoidance of pain should be the main concern ... and suicide is by far the most efficacious way of avoiding pain (Encarta Encyclopedia).”** *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raajioon!* Allah forbid!

Just as no Muslim will claim to be a hedonist in belief, likewise he will never believe in suicide being a way of avoiding pain. A *Mu'min* certainly believes in life

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after death and knows that there is unimaginable pain and suffering for one who commits suicide. Yet, due to imitating the hedonistic lifestyle and to some degree making worldly pleasure the purpose of life, some Muslims also become depressed and even suicidal when their desired worldly pleasure is not acquired.

Indeed, Islam has given leeway for a person to occasionally “take a break” from ones normal schedule of work. The object is to take some rest and refresh the mind so that one could return to one’s primary objective (Deen) with renewed enthusiasm and vigour. Hence in taking some rest one will never compromise one’s Deen. Compromising one’s objective for some trivial fleeting pleasure will be like a person who for the pleasure of some warmth makes a bonfire with all the money that he has earned. This would be very tragic indeed.

DO NOT DEGRADE...

In order to ensure that one’s “break” does not break the back of one’s Deen or break the morality and Imaan of one’s family, the following are some guidelines which should be adhered to:

- Refrain from all venues of *fitna*. Even being in the vicinity of the popular public beaches, parks, “shoppertainment” centres and other such venues where hoards of naked people wearing scraps of clothing prance around, is extremely detrimental to one’s Imaan.
- The same applies to beachfront hotels, holiday resorts and the like. Exposing oneself and one’s family to all the nudity, music and other *fitnas* at these venues seriously damages every ones *haya* (shame and modesty) though one may not actively be a part of the *fitnas* taking place.
- Do not degrade the Islamic garb (the beard, *kurta* / cloak, *niquaab*) by attending any such venues where drinking, nudity and other haraam activities take place. These are places which should not be attended by any Muslim, let alone a Muslim who is conscious enough to adopt the Islamic garb.

Remember that you are only taking a break from your normal daily schedule, not from Deen. Therefore, Salaah, recitation of the Qur’an, zikr and other Deeni activities should not stop. Instead it should increase since one is free from many other daily chores.

Any place where immorality abounds attracts the wrath of Allah Ta’ala. This is clearly mentioned in the Ahadith. Incidents in the recent past such as the tsunami, earthquake in Pakistan and other similar catastrophes were a clear manifestation of the ahadith. A common factor was the prevalence of much immorality in the affected areas. When the punishment of Allah Ta’ala descends, the innocent are also affected with the guilty, though in the Hereafter they will be separated from the criminals. Thus places where the naked hordes roam around – on the beachfront, resorts and other similar places – must be strictly avoided.

Always bear in mind that true pleasure only lies in obedience to Allah Ta’ala. In disobedience lies torment and agony – even though one may be in the lap of luxury on the most “exotic holiday.” May Allah Ta’ala grant us the taste and true pleasure of Deen in this world and grant us the eternal holiday of Jannah. Aameen.

KUFFAR CELEBRATIONS

Would a Muslim participate in any Jewish religious occasion? Would he join the Christians or people of any other faith in a religious ceremony? The obvious answer is “no” since this would compromise one’s faith and belief. One cannot compromise faith, otherwise one will eventually have no faith at all. Indeed on a humanitarian level one must treat every human being with dignity, kindness and compassion, but without transgressing the boundaries of Imaan..

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

One of the very common ways in which the boundary of belief is compromised is by means of participating in the religious celebrations of other creeds. For instance, Christmas is a Christian religious celebration. This is clearly ascertained from the following: *“The Roman Catholic Church chose December 25 as the day for the Feast of the Nativity in order to give Christian meaning to existing pagan rituals. For example, the Church replaced festivities honouring the birth of Mithra, the god of light, with festivities to commemorate the birth of Jesus, whom the Bible calls the light of the world. The Catholic Church hoped to draw pagans into its religion by allowing them to continue their revelry while simultaneously honouring the birthday of Jesus.”* (Encarta)

Therefore if one participates in any way in Christmas celebrations, actively or passively, he will in reality be aligning himself with that creed. A *Mu’min* cannot align himself with any creed other than Islam.

PASSIVE PARTICIPATION

Among the ways of “passive participation” in Christmas celebrations is by means of adopting the Christmas symbols – decorating one’s home or business with Christmas decorations, Christmas trees, wishing people “merry Christmas,” etc. Christmas is a celebration of the faith and creed of Christianity. Included in this is the worship of the so called “son of God”??? Would a Muslim wish a Christian “happy worship of the son ...”? It is simply not possible. The same ruling will apply to wishing one “merry Christmas.”

May Allah Ta’ala keep us steadfast on the Straight Path. Aameen.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

PARENT'S OPPRESSION?

Q *I am the eldest of two brothers and three sisters. Some years back my father took ill and I was brought out of university to run the family business. Over the years my brothers and sisters have all completed their schooling. My sisters are married while my brother is completing his final year at medical school. Everybody was supported from the business while I was the only one working in the business. Over the past decade while I worked in the business it has grown from strength to strength. My father has now decided to share his assets equally among all his children in his lifetime. I strongly apposed this move as I feel that I am definitely entitled to much more than my brothers and sisters. My father has started the process of distributing his assets. How can I stop this oppression?*

A May Allah Ta'ala reward you abundantly for having served your parents and family. Kindness to one's parents is a means of great barakah. The doors of Jannah are also opened for the one who serves his parents.

While you have certainly performed a great service to your parents, you are greatly mistaken if you feel that you are entitled to something in return. It is clear from your question that there was no partnership arrangement with your father. You merely made his *khidmat* (served him) for which you will insha-Allah be greatly rewarded. However, your service to your parents, irrespective of how much it may be, cannot fulfil one fraction of the rights of your parents upon you. Your parents served you from birth when you could do nothing for yourself. Have you repaid that service?

SUSTENANCE

Furthermore, you have mentioned that the business grew from strength to strength. Do not regard this to be any personal achievement. This *barakah* has come due to your ailing father. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: **"Verily you are granted sustenance and assistance due to the weak among you."** (*Ibn majah*) This means that due to some weak or sick person in the family, the entire family is granted sustenance. You should therefore realise that Allah Ta'ala has opened the doors of sustenance to you due to you taking care of your parents.

If your father wishes to distribute his assets in his lifetime, he is entitled to do so. In his lifetime he will give all his children equal shares. The rule of sons sharing double the shares of daughters pertains to inheritance which is only applicable after death.

As for stopping the "oppression", you should have already understood that they have not oppressed you at all. However, had they truly been guilty of oppression, in that case you should reflect on the following hadith: Hadhrat Ibn Abbaas (R.A.) is reported to have said: "A person who both his parents are alive and he commences the morning in treating them kindly, Allah Ta'ala opens two doors of Jannah for him. If one is alive, one door of Jannah is opened for him. Further, if he displeases any one of them, Allah Ta'ala will not be pleased with him until he makes them happy." Someone asked: "Even if they are oppressive (must I still make them happy first to acquire the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala)?" Ibn Abbaas (R.A.) replied: "Even if they are oppressive!"

Therefore do not oppose your father. Rather please him and serve him. Allah Ta'ala will bless you abundantly in both worlds.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Hazrath Luqman (A.S.), who was given the title of *Hakeem* (the Wise), used to work in an orchard. Once his master came to the orchard and asked for a cucumber. When the cucumber was brought, peeled and sliced, the master gave the first piece to Hazrath Luqman (A. S.) to eat. He placed it in his mouth and began eating it with great relish. When the master observed the degree of relish with which Hazrath Luqman (A.S.) ate the cucumber, he assumed that it must be very tasty. Hence he also put a piece into his mouth. To his horror he found the cucumber to be extremely bitter. He immediately spat it out and asked in astonishment: "O luqman, how can you eat such a bitter cucumber with such relish?" Hazrath Luqman (A.S.) replied: **"The cucumber is indeed bitter. However I thought that if the hand that has already given me countless sweet things gives me one bitter thing, how ungrateful it would be of me to complain about it!!!"**

Hazrath Luqman (A.S.) also passed on many gems of advice to his son. Among them he said:

* Son, the world is a very deep sea in which many people have drowned. If you make *tagwa* (piety) your boat in this sea, fill it with Imaan and make *tawakkul* (trust in Allah Ta'ala) its sails, you will be saved. Otherwise you will also drown.

* A father disciplining his son (for the sake of his proper nurturing) is like placing fertiliser in the field (which helps to grow healthy crops).

* Son, refrain from debts since debts are the means of disgrace in the day and worry at night

* Son, the radiance from the face of a liar is snatched away, a person with poor character will grieve much and it is easier to move rocks than to explain to a fool.

* To sacrifice one's respect in the obedience of Allah Ta'ala brings one closer to Allah Ta'ala. On the contrary, to attempt to acquire respect by disobeying Allah Ta'ala distances one from Him (thus leading to disgrace in this world and the Hereafter).

Books of Deviated People

Hazrath Hakeemul Ummat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (R.A) once stated: “If a deviated person (one who has strayed from the path of the Qur’an and Sunnah) talks even about Deen, the darkness (of his deviation) will nevertheless still be found in his speech. Likewise a degree of the darkness of deviation will be attached to even the words that he has written (even if the statement is in itself correct). On the contrary, if a religious person talks about (permissible) worldly affairs, there will be *Nur* (spiritual light) in that talk. The reason for this is that the words of a person are in reality generated by the heart (and expressed by the tongue or by writing). Therefore the effect of the condition of the heart will certainly be found in the words. Thus, since the effect of the deviated person’s heart is certainly found in his speech and writings, one should never read the books of people who are deviated. Reading a person’s writings is similar to being in his company. The detrimental effect which occurs in the company of deviated people will also occur in reading a deviated person’s writings.

(*Kamaalat-e-Ashrafiyyah*, pg.68)

The above pertains to reading the writings of one who is deviated, even if the subject matter is in itself correct. Imagine what then will be the disastrous consequences of reading the literature of kuffaar and atheists??? One should therefore refrain from **ALL** literature unless it has been written by people who are conscious of Deen and who uphold the Sunnah. The safest route is to first refer the Deeni literature to an experienced Aalim for approval before perusing it. As for kuffaar magazines, novels and the like, these should be completely shunned.

May Allah Ta’ala save us from all deviation. Aameen.

From the advices of ...



FAQIHUL UMMAH

The sterling advice of Faqihul Ummah Hazrat Mufti Mahmood Saheb (*Rahmatullahi Alaihi*) has helped thousands of people to overcome many problems and difficulties — especially in the line of *Islahun Nafs* (inner-self reformation). Hereunder is an answer to a question posed to him.

CONCENTRATION IN SALAAH

Question: How does one develop concentration in Salaah.

Answer: One should consider the directive of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) that “worship Allah Ta’ala as if you can see him.” One should strive to achieve this condition. Concentration and devotion will be achieved to the extent that this thought will dominate the mind.

[Upon this answer the questioner remarked: “It is not within our control to make this thought dominant over the mind!” Hazrath responded in the following words:]

In order to achieve this condition, you must pluck the courage (and strive to achieve it). Is plucking the courage also not within your control? When a person wants to do something, he never says “it is not possible for me to do it.” Instead he says “I can do it.” Consider that if your father or some elder informs you that he will arrive by train at midnight and wants you to receive him at the station. Despite it being very late at night and being severely cold, you will immediately prepare to go to the station. You will wear warm clothing to overcome the cold. If you do not have transport, you will make arrangements for the same. If there is a fear of oversleeping, you will set the alarm in order to wake up and reach the station on time. In short, whatever difficulties there may be, you will make every effort to overcome them.

On the contrary, if you do not want to go, your immediate response will be: “How can I go at such late hour? I do not even have a car!” You would then make a hundred excuses to avoid going.

Therefore if one truly wishes to acquire something, one will have to pluck the courage and make an effort. One should be prepared to push aside any obstacle that comes in the way. Otherwise if one is not really interested in achieving something, the smallest obstacle will make one give up. (*Malfoozaat*)

UNDER THE CURSE?

Rasulullah (Salallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: “May the curse of Allah be upon the one who casts lustful glances as well as upon the one who emerges in such a way that lustful glances are cast at one” (*Mishkaat*). In the light of this Hadith one should stop and think: “Am I under the curse of Allah Ta’ala? If yes, I must sincerely repent before calamity strikes.” May Allah Ta’ala save us. Aameen