



THE GREATER CONCERN

Are you worried? Are you concerned? Indeed you are. Every person is undoubtedly concerned about many things. Nevertheless, as *Mu'mineen* (Believers) it is imperative that we evaluate these concerns in the light of the teachings of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. This will enable us to ascertain which concerns are noble, which are permissible and which concerns should be abandoned.

Generally, many people's concerns center around worldly and material aspects. According to his situation, so are his concerns.

The poor man's concerns: Will I manage to pay the rent? Will I have enough to buy the necessities? My child's school fees are not paid! The roof is leaking! etc. etc.

The average man's concerns: I need to replace my old car! When will I be able to buy my own house? I need to save up to take my family for a holiday, etc. etc.

The concerns of the wealthy: The next acquisition! Projected future profits! Off-shore investments! Keeping up with the Jones's! A bigger mansion! The ultimate luxury vehicle! A star-studded wedding for my child! And the taxman!!! etc. etc.

The concerns of many women: The latest styles! The matching carpets and curtains! The new appliance! Or simply a host of day-to-day mundane issues.

Youth concerns: The latest cell-phone! Fashion! Keeping up with friends! Entertainment! etc. etc.

LEGITIMATE

Some of the above concerns are legitimate - in fact necessary to a certain degree. It is the duty of a husband and father to provide the necessities of life for his family. But, that is the point of separation. Necessities of life should receive the necessary concern only. The purpose and object of life — to serve *Allah Ta'ala* and establish His *Deen* on earth, should receive the primary and dominant concern. No matter what the situation, even the legitimate worldly concerns should never dominate a *Mu'min's* life. *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* has clearly taught us this lesson in the form of an earnest supplication. Amongst the numerous heartfelt *duas* of *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* is the following *dua*: "**O Allah! ... Do not make the world (worldly matters and issues) our greatest concern,**

nor the sum total of our knowledge nor the pinnacle of our aspirations."

Subhanallah!!! What a concise *dua*! It comprehensively highlights the outlook and attitude of a true *Mu'min*. Indeed, he will have some basic concerns of the world, he will acquire the necessary life-skills and as part of his human nature, he will have some worldly aspirations. But, these concerns and aspirations should never be dominant. The dominant and greater concerns and aspirations will be those related to *Deen*.

A *Mu'min's* primary concern should be whether he is earning the pleasure of *Allah Ta'ala* or not! Hence whether he is in the *Musjid*, at home or in his business — he is forever concerned about earning the pleasure of *Allah Ta'ala* in all his actions and transactions. Thus even his business and social interactions will become *Deen*.

ETERNAL LIFE

A *Mu'min* is most concerned about those aspects which will affect his eternal life. Of primary concern is his *Imaan*. Does he have the correct *aqaa'id*? Next in order is his *Salaah*. *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* is reported to have said: "**The first thing the servant will be questioned about on the Day of Judgment, is Salaah.**" Are we performing our *Salaah* regularly and with *Jama'ah* (for males)? If not, is it not something to be extremely concerned about — more than the concern for tomorrow's bread or the concern for the next investment? If death comes today, neither will the investment matter nor will the bread. The *Salaah* will certainly matter. Similarly, we should be concerned about fulfilling all the other obligations of *Deen*.

CLEANSING HEARTS

What about the concern of cleansing our hearts of all the vices that can severely affect one in the Hereafter? An iota of pride will prevent a person from entering *Jannah*. Jealousy destroys one's good deeds just as fire consumes wood. Love of the world (which leads to sin or which is at the level of greed for the world) is the root to every vice. How

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concerned are we to rid ourselves of these vices and many others of this nature?

What about the concern for humanity? Together with a sincere concern for ourselves, we have to be genuinely concerned about the spiritual and worldly well-being of our families, relatives and friends as well as the entire *Ummah*. Or are we so consumed with our investments, acquisitions and bread-and-butter issues that we have no concern for our *Muslim* brethren?

A *Muslim* whose life is dominated by worldly concerns, who is hardly ever concerned about the level of his *Imaan* and the quality of his *ibaadah*, who is not affected by the pitiable spiritual and financial poverty of the *Muslims* around the globe, lives a very hollow life. A *Mu'min's* life is one which is very meaningful. He is an asset to himself and the *Ummah*. He earns the Pleasure of *Allah Ta'ala* and earns the *Aakhirah* in this worldly abode.

ULTIMATE DESTINATION

The month of *Ramadhaan* is the ideal time to correct our direction if we have lost focus of our ultimate destination — the *Aakhirah*, which is fast approaching. Hence it rightfully deserves the greatest concern. Let us take time daily, in this *Mubarak* month, sit in solitude and ponder deeply about our purpose and objective in this world. Then let us take practical steps to achieve that objective.

The crucial question at this juncture would be: What steps can I take? To understand the answer, consider what the situation would be if one was affected by a serious physical illness. Everything else would stop. Doctors, specialists, scans, blood tests, etc. would become the order of the day. If hospitalisation is prescribed, one whole-heartedly submits. Are our spiritual ailments less important? For instance, is the cancer of the love of the world, to the extent that it even cramps out the fulfilling of one's Deeni obligations on time, not serious enough to warrant spiritual hospitalisation???

Thus the first step is to consult some Allah-fearing, experienced personality for guidance. An extended period of time in an environment of Deen in the path of Allah Ta'ala and remaining in the company of the *Ahlullah* (pious personalities—the friends of Allah Ta'ala) builds the spiritual strength and courage to change the direction of one's heart towards the Hereafter. Thereafter continue taking guidance from them in every aspect. Insha-Allah, one will find that while Deen will become the greater concern, this worldly life will also become more enjoyable and full of blessings.

RAMADHAAN & REFORMATION

Multiplied rewards for good actions, an increase in one's sustenance, the showering down of the Mercy and forgiveness of *Allah Ta'ala* ... and many other bounties. These are all bonuses and gifts from *Allah Ta'ala* during the great month of *Ramadhaan*. However, the object of *Ramadhaan* is to acquire *taqwa* (piety) as has been clearly explained in the *Qur'an-al-Kareem*. *Taqwa* can be explained in many ways. In short, it refers to becoming the true servants of *Allah Ta'ala*. Transforming oneself to become the true servant of *Allah Ta'ala* is what is termed as spiritual reformation.

The month of *Ramadhaan* is the ideal time for this reformation — wherein we have the opportunity to change our lives change for the better forever, not just for the month of *Ramadhaan*. In order to achieve this reformation, the vital issue is to appreciate this *Mubarak* month and use every moment correctly.

DOUBTFUL AND FUTILE

While there are numerous points in this regard that could be discussed here, much of it can be summarised in the following two aspects: Leave out everything that is futile and which is doubtful. Spend time in only those things that will certainly earn one the pleasure of Allah Ta'ala and make the path to reformation possible.

If a person seriously gives up what is doubtful, the possibility of him becoming involved in Haraam is extremely remote. Forsaking futile aspects simply means that to leave out any such aspect which, by refraining from it one will not suffer any harm in this world or in the Hereafter. Engaging in futility happens in actions, talk and even thoughts. An effort must be made to forsake all of them. *Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)* is reported to have said: "It is from the excellence of the Islam of a person that he forsakes all things that are futile."

The idle chit-chat, whether in private conversations, in public or on the air, is generally at the very least futile. Very often it stoops to back-biting and other sins. We should therefore not spoil our *Ramadhaan* in this manner.

Also, while every moment of *Ramadhaan* should be spent in gaining the multiplied rewards of this blessed month, unfortunately much time is wasted on elaborate Eid preparations. Eid shopping, preparing Eid outfits and other extensive and elaborate preparations long before Eid, is not in keeping with the spirit of *Ramadhaan*.

In short, we should make every effort to use the time correctly. Give up the doubtful aspects and leave out the futile things. Insha-Allah the object of spiritual

SELLING INFERIOR PRODUCT

Q *I am in the manufacturing business. Due to the stiff competition, I am manufacturing a product of a slightly lower grade, which appears to be identical to that of a higher grade of a rival company. The customers are clearly under the impression that they are purchasing the product of the higher grade for a lower price. They will be disappointed if they discover that it is not so. Since I am not making any claim that the product is of a particular grade or quality, will I be sinful?*

A You have mentioned several aspects which make the answer manifest. Those aspects are the following:

- ◆ Your product is of a lower grade.
- ◆ It is deliberately manufactured to resemble a product of a higher grade.
- ◆ The purpose of this is to overcome the stiff competition.
- ◆ You are tacitly and deliberately passing off an inferior product UNDER THE GUISE OF a superior product.
- ◆ Your customers are clearly in a deception, hence their disappointment.

Thus you should refrain from this practice immediately. Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: "He who deceives us, is not from us." In another narration it is related that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said: "The buyer and seller have an option (to transact or not) until they separate (conclude the deal). If they had disclosed the defects and were truthful, they will be blessed with *barakah* in their transaction. If they conceal the defects and resort to lies, the *barakah* of their transaction will be destroyed."

NOT A CENT MORE

You should forever keep in mind that you will not earn a cent more than what is decreed for you. If you restrict yourself to only *Halaal* means, refrain from lies and deception and generally uphold the laws of Shariah, you will experience much *barakah*. On the contrary, if you resort to deception or to *Haraam* avenues, you will simply become entrapped in the "rat race." Apparently you may earn much, but the negative consequences of deception will destroy everything.

NOT INTELLIGENCE OR EFFORT

Business is merely a means. Sustenance comes solely by the will of Allah Ta'ala. It is not your effort, intelligence or anything else that earns you your living. Many people who have greater intelligence and make more effort, fail in their business ventures. Some people with much lesser intelligence and who exert lesser effort, earn far more than you do. Hence, be content with whatever you earn through *Halaal* means with moderate effort. Insha-Allah you will experience great *barakah* even though the quantity and amount of the earnings may appear lesser.

EXPRESS TARAWEEH?

The special gift of Allah Ta'ala to His servants, the gift that was granted to Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) beyond the seven heavens on the occasion of Me'raj, the gift that brings the servant closest to Allah Ta'ala this gift is indeed the bounty of *Salaah*. Hence in the month of *Ramadhaan*, the month of getting closer to Allah Ta'ala, the Ummah has been granted much more *Salaah* to perform — the *Salaah* of *Taraweeh*. However, this gift will only take us closer to Allah Ta'ala if it is appreciated and performed with due care.

Unfortunately, due to lack of appreciation for this great gift, some people prefer an "express *Taraweeh*." The end result of such an "express *Taraweeh*" is that one destroys the *Salaah*.

- A *Salaah* that is performed in such haste that:
- * The recitation of the *Qur'an Shareef* is unclear
 - * The *ruku* and *sajda* are performed haphazardly
 - * The *wajib* aspect of *ie'tidaal* (performing every posture properly without haste) is not fulfilled in the *qauma* (standing posture after *ruku*) and *jalsa* (sitting between the two *sajdas*).
 - * The *durood* at the end of the *Salaah* is omitted
 - * The *Salaah* is performed in such a manner as if it is a burden which one merely wants to get over with
- ... then such a *Salaah* takes a person further away from Allah Ta'ala. The *Salaah* itself curses the person for having destroyed it.

BARGAIN FIVE MINUTES?

The month of *Ramadhaan* is a month to exert oneself in the *Ibaadat* of Allah Ta'ala. To be on the lookout for the place where *Taraweeh* finishes ten minutes earlier than other places, just so that one can get "leave" earlier, is against the spirit of *Ramadhaan*. Undoubtedly it is necessary that the *Huffaaz* should consider the condition of the people since there are often weak and sick people in the congregation. Thus while performing the *Salaah* properly with all its etiquettes, they should recite the *Qur'an Shareef* clearly with *tajweed* at a good pace. Also, the *tasbeehs* in *ruku* and *sajda* should be recited with ease so that the congregation can also recite it thrice with ease. However, to "bargain" for five and ten minutes, which is then often spent chatting outside the *Musjid*, is completely against the spirit of this *Mubarak* month.

Therefore, appreciate the gift of *salaah* and get closer to Allah Ta'ala. Do not destroy this

FAMILY BONDS

Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) is reported to have said: **“He who gives equal treatment in response does not really strengthen family bonds. Rather (the one who is deserving of the virtue) is the one who through kind behaviour strengthens his ties of kinship with those who sever relations with him.”**

Obviously if you believe that you should treat your relatives just as they have treated you, you have done little for strengthening family bonds. For, this principle applies even to strangers: you are morally bound to do good to a person who has done a good turn to you. But if you do good to a relative who does not show much concern for you, remains aloof from you or even severs relations with you, your kind behaviour towards him would spring from a regard for the sanctity of family binds. It is therefore desirable that you should never think of how a kinsman treats you but think of what you owe him and continue to fulfil your obligations to him, lest you should be called to account on the Day of Judgment for negligence in observing your duty to him. Never for a moment entertain a thought of what he owes you on account of your kinship with him, you should rather feel happy if you are not receiving what is due from him. For, on the Day of Judgment your reward for foregoing your rights will be far greater than the material benefits you would have gained if he had fulfilled them.
(*Fazaa'ile Sadaqaat*)

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 extract from his discourses.

MONTH OF BLESSINGS

“... This is the month of *Ramadhaan*, a month of tremendous blessings. Great favours are showered upon us and the angels descend upon the earth. In this month, the great night of *Qadr* is found. If the habit to recite the *Qur'an* daily is cultivated in the month of *Ramadhaan*, then *Insha-Allah* this habit will remain with us throughout the year. There are so many people who are habituated to drinking alcohol, but only due to the respect of the holy month of *Ramadhaan*, they abstain from alcohol. Due to the blessings of *Ramadhaan Allah Ta'ala* enables them to stop this habit forever. There are so many people who do not perform *Salaah*, but due to the blessings of *Ramadhaan*, they start performing *Salaah*. May *Allah Ta'ala* grant us the *toufeeq* to abandon all those evil habits that we possess, due to the special blessings of this month of *Ramadhaan*.

In this month *Allah Ta'ala* has revealed the *Qur'an* which is a treasure of unlimited bounties. This *dua* should be made: **“O Allah, those sins which I am aware of as well as those sins which I am not aware of and only you know of them, save me from all of them.”** *Allah Ta'ala* will save one from those sins and one's *dua* will be accepted. If one could not refrain from those sins in this world, then the reward of the *du'a* will not be lost - one will definitely receive it.

AN INATTENTIVE HEART

Nevertheless, just as *Salaah* is an *ibaadat* and has certain pre-conditions for its acceptance, there are some conditions for *dua* as well. So what are these? The place must be pure. The clothes must be pure. The body must be pure and one must face the *Qibla*. These are all conditions for the acceptance of *Salaah*. If a person leaves out any of these conditions and reads *Salaah*, then will his *Salaah* be correct? The answer is no! And if a person leaves out a condition contemptuously, regarding it to be trivial, then do not be surprised if a *Mufti Saheb* issues a severe *fatwa* against him - rendering him out of the fold of *Islam*. This is a very dangerous state of affairs. That is why there are conditions for the acceptance of *du'a* as well. It is stated in the *Hadith Shareef*: **“Allah Ta'ala does not accept the dua of a person whose heart is unmindful.”** In other words one is asking something with his tongue but the mind is somewhere else. One's attention is not focused on the *dua* being made.” (Therefore one should make *dua* at all times with an attentive heart.) (*Mawaaziz*)