

FROM THE MINBAR

TAKING CARE OF ONE'S BODY: ALLAH LOVES BEAUTY ~ PART 2

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at SNMC on January 20th, 2012 corresponding to Safar 26th, 1433 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, Khulafai Rashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him. We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam ~ As Salamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.

INTRODUCTION

Islam does not require of Muslims to be 24/7 at the Masjid or to spend all their time reading the Qur'an and religious books. Rather, it recognizes that God has created human beings with a disposition of needs and desires – needs to relax and enjoy themselves, besides taking care of their souls. The real question in Muslims' lives then is: How can they achieve this balance between their bodies, minds and souls? I am presenting the first out of three Khutbahs that will discuss Muslims' responsibilities towards their bodies and physical appearance, souls and minds.

STRIKING THE BALANCE

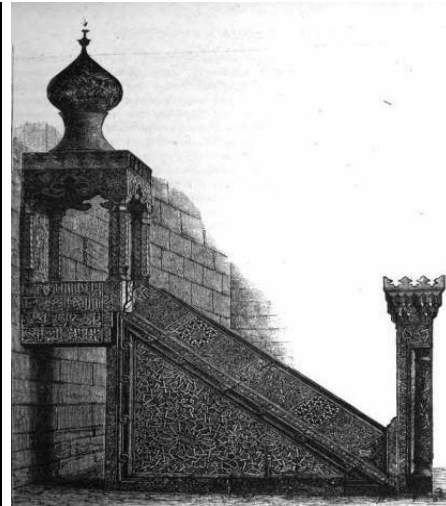
Indeed, wise Muslims are the ones who strike a balance in their lives between the needs of their bodies, souls and minds. They give each the attention it deserves, and do not exaggerate in one aspect to the detriment of the others.

In seeking to strike the right balance between these three aspects of life, Muslims follow normative sources of their Din – the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Proofs for my introductory statement can be found in many verses of the Qur'an and many traditions of the Prophet (pbuh).

TEXTUAL REFERENCE

Let us think for a while of the verse (du'a - supplication) in which Muslims are asking from God for good in both worlds – Duniya and the Akhirah: "O our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the hereafter." {Al Baqarah 201}

Let us ponder over the situation of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr (r.a) who reported that the Prophet (pbuh) knew about his exaggeration in worship, because he told him ('Abdullah): "Have I not heard that you fast all day and stay up all night in prayer?" He said, "That is true, O Messenger of God."



The Prophet (pbuh) told him: "Do not do that. Fast and break your fast, sleep and get up. For your body has a right over you, your eyes have a right over you, your wife has a right over you..." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Let us also think about the example of the companion named Hanzalah al Usaidi to who the Prophet told: "O Hanzalah, there is a time for this (worship) and a time for that (entertainment)." {Muslim}

MODERATION IN FOOD & DRINK

The Muslims take good care of their bodies by actively promoting its good health and strength. So they are moderate in their intake of food and drink, avoiding any type exaggeration. This is in accordance with the guidance of God Almighty who stated in the Qur'an: "... Eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for God loves not the wasters." (Qur'an 7:31)

Similarly, the Prophet (pbuh) also advised moderation in food and drink: "There is no worse vessel for the child of Adam to fill than his/her own stomach, but if he/she must fill it, then let him/her allow one third for food, one third for drink, and one third for air." (Tirmizi)

The wise Muslims know that strong and healthier believers are more loved by God Almighty than weak ones, as the Prophet (pbuh) said, so they try to strengthen their bodies through a healthy lifestyle.

EXERCISING REGULARLY

Although the Muslims usually enjoy good physical health, because of their abstention from haram or harmful food and drink, and their avoidance of bad habits such as staying up late or indulging in

activities that may be detrimental to their well-being, they must still make a resolute effort to improve their bodily strength.

The healthy eating habits that they practices are supplemented by an organized exercise program, appropriate to their physical condition and age. This gives strength, energy and vitality to the body, and provides immunity to illness.

If they are to reap the benefits of exercise, they plan to exercise regularly and do not give up easily when they face any challenge. All of this is done in an organized and systematic fashion, but in moderation, as this is the hallmark of true Muslims in every place and age.

CLEANLINESS OF BODY & CLOTHES

The Muslims whom Islam wants to stand out among people are individuals who take care of their cleanliness. By nature of being Muslims, they should be very clean: they have high standards of personal hygiene, bathing frequently in accordance with the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh) who encouraged people to wash themselves completely. Imagine! That was a policy established by the Prophet (pbuh) at the early 7th century and at the place where water was not so easily accessible!

Abu Hurayrah (r.a) said: "The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'It is the duty of every Muslim to take a bath (at least) once every seven days, and to wash his head and body (the whole body).'" (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (pbuh) placed such a great emphasis on cleanliness and bathing that some of the four Imams considered performing ghusl before Friday prayer to be obligatory (wajib).

The true Muslims keep their clothes and socks clean, checking them regularly, to be sure that they have no unpleasant smell and do not disturb people around.

This Issue 'From The Minbar' presents:

⇒ TAKING CARE OF ONE'S BODY: ALLAH LOVES BEAUTY

⇒ In next issue: Knowledge/Mind

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Imam Ahmad and Imam al-Nisa'i narrate that Jabir (r.a) said: "The Messenger of God (pbuh) came to visit us, and saw a man who was wearing dirty clothes. He said, 'Could this person not find anything with which to wash his clothes?'"

The Prophet (pbuh) did not like a Muslim to appear before people wearing dirty clothes, if he had the means to clean them. He encouraged Muslims always to dress in clean clothes and to present a neat and attractive appearance. He used to say: "There is nothing wrong with keeping two garments for Friday, apart from one's work clothes." (Abu Dawud & Ibn Majah)

PLEASANT OR UNPLEASANT SMELL

The smart Muslims take care of the mouth, for no one should ever have to smell an unpleasant odour coming from it. They do this by cleaning their teeth every day with a siwak, toothbrush, toothpaste and mouthwashes. They also visit the dentist regularly, to check the mouth, at least once a year, and visit other specialists as necessary, so that the mouth will stay clean and the breath fresh.

'A'ishah (r.a) narrated that the Prophet (pbuh) "never woke from sleeping at any time of day or night without cleaning his teeth with a siwak before performing wudu'." (Ahmad & Abu Dawud)

The Prophet's concern for oral hygiene was so great that he said: "If it were not for the fact that I did not want to overburden my Ummah, I would have ordered them to use the siwak before every prayer." (Bukhari and Muslim)

'A'ishah was asked what the Prophet (pbuh) used to do first when he came home. She said: "Use siwak." (Muslim)

Regrettably, some Muslims neglect these teachings that are at the heart of Islam, and do not pay heed to the cleanliness of their mouths, bodies and clothes. So you may see them going to the mosque or to other religious meetings and study circles, annoying their brothers with their unpleasant smell.

What is really strange is the fact that they themselves listen to and repeat the saying of the Prophet (pbuh) that whoever eats for example garlic should not go to the mosque because his/her breath may disturb the angels and the people (Muslim).

TAKING CARE OF ONE'S HAIR

Muslims are also to follow the guidance of the Prophet (pbuh), their role model, in his command that we take care of our hair and keep it neat in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Abu Hurayrah (r.a.) said: "The Prophet (pbuh) said: 'Whoever has hair, let him look after it properly.'" (Abu Dawud)

According to the teachings of Islam, looking after one's hair involves keeping it clean, combing it, perfuming it and styling it nicely.

The Prophet (pbuh) always took note of people's appearance, and whenever he would see a scruffily-dressed man with untidy hair he would caution him for the self-neglect. Jabir (r.a.) said: "Prophet (pbuh) came to visit us, and he saw an unkempt man whose hair was going in all directions, so he said, 'Could he not find anything with which to calm his head?'" (Ahmad and al-Nisa'i)

A PLEASANT APPEARANCE

The true Muslims take good care of their clothes, so you will see them presenting a pleasant appearance, without being extravagant. They are pleasant to look at and to meet. They do not annoy people with their careless and untidy appearance. They always check themselves before they go out to meet people, and they make themselves look good, in moderation. The Prophet (pbuh) used to make himself look good in front of his family, companions and different delegations of visitors.

In his commentary on the Ayah: "Say: Who has forbidden the beautiful [gifts] of God, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, [which He has provided] for sustenance? . . ." (Qur'an 7:32) Al-Qurtubi said: "Makhul reported from 'A'ishah: 'A group of the Companions of the Prophet (pbuh) was waiting at the door for him, so he prepared to go out to meet them. There was a vessel of water in the house, and he peered into it, smoothing his beard and his hair. ('A'ishah said:) I asked him, 'O Messenger of God, even you do this?' He said: 'Yes, when a man goes out to meet his brothers, let him prepare himself properly, for God Almighty is beautiful and loves beauty.'"

The Muslim does all of this in accordance with the Islamic ideal of moderation, avoiding the extremes of either exaggeration or negligence: "Those who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not niggardly, but hold a just [balance] between those [extremes]." (Qur'an 25:67)

Islam wants its followers to stand out in gatherings in an attractive fashion, not to appear unpleasant or unbearable. Neglecting one's appearance to the extent of being offensive to one's companions in the name of asceticism and humility is not part of Islam.

The Prophet (pbuh), who was the epitome of asceticism and humility, used to dress in decent clothes and present a pleasant appearance to his family, his companions and the delegations of visitors. He regarded dressing well and looking good as a demonstration of the blessings of God Almighty: "God Almighty loves to see the signs of His gifts on His slave."

Ibn Sa'd reports in al-Tabaqat that Jundab ibn Makith (r.a) said: "Whenever a delegation came to meet the Messenger of God (pbuh), he would wear his best clothes and order his leading Companions to do likewise. I saw the Prophet (pbuh) on the day that the delegation of Kindah came to meet him; he was wearing a Yemeni garment, and Abu Bakr and 'Umar were dressed similarly."

SIGN OF BEAUTY OR ARROGANCE?

So long as this taking care of one's outward appearance does not go too extremes, then it is part of the beauty that God Almighty has encouraged His servants to adopt: "O children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasteful. Say, who has forbidden the beautiful [gifts] of God, which He has produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, [which He has provided] for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, [and] purely for them on the

Day of Judgement. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who understand." (Qur'an 7:31-32)

Mas'ud (r.a) reported that the Prophet (pbuh) said: "No one who has even an atom's-weight of arrogance/pride in his heart will enter Paradise." A man asked him, "What if he likes his clothes and shoes to look good?" (Meaning, is this counted as sign of arrogance/pride?) The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Almighty God is beautiful and loves beauty. Arrogance/pride means denying the truth and looking down on other people." (Muslim)

This is the true understanding of the matter adopted by the Sahabah and those who followed them sincerely and with proper understanding of the Prophet's (pbuh) legacy.

Therefore Imam Abu Hanifah (r.a), for example, always took care to dress well and to ensure that he smelled clean and fresh, and urged others to do likewise. One day he met a man who used to attend his circle, who was dressed in scruffy clothes. He took him to one side and offered him one thousand dirhams with which to smarten himself up. The man told him, "I have money, I do not need this." Abu Hanifah admonished him: "Have you not heard the Hadith, 'God loves to see the signs of His gifts on His servant'? So you have to change yourself, and not appear offensive to your friend."

The Muslims always aim at moderation in all things, and are on the alert to prevent any one aspect of their lives from taking over at the expense of another.

CONCLUSION

Islam is a practical way of life that always remains with human beings on the ground of realities and day-to-day concerns. It does not deal only with spiritual aspect of Muslims and does not consider them only as spiritual beings but accepts them as mortals who eat, drink, walk, talk, make mistakes, repent to their Creator, etc. Islam stresses that Muslims need to take care of their bodies and their physical appearance (without any exaggeration) not just as a social responsibility but rather as a religious duty. *Allahumma Amin.*

AN ACTION ITEM

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