

‘Ashara Mubaraka 1441 H, Colombo  
Majlis 6  
Reflections

Rasul Allah <sup>SA</sup> states, ‘Every faith has a character trait which is specific to it.’ The character trait of Islam is *hayaa*’ (a sense of shame). Continuing with the counsels Amirul Mumineen <sup>AS</sup> bestowed upon Imam Hasan <sup>AS</sup>, Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin <sup>TUS</sup> today mentioned that the next set of counsels pertain to *hayaa*’.

Imam Hasan <sup>AS</sup> asked his respected father, “What are the three things regarding which one is to maintain a sense of shame?”

Maulana Ali <sup>AS</sup> replied:

- Maintain a sense of shame for Allah so that He doesn’t find you doing something He disapproves of, as if you are unaffected by his wrath.
- Maintain a sense of shame before the two angels perched upon your shoulders who record our deeds.
- Finally, maintain shame before the ‘Virtuous of Mumineen’, the imam (and *dai*) of each age.

Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal <sup>TUS</sup> stated that the shortcomings and flaws of one who is clothed in *hayaa*’ will remain concealed and he will distance himself from all those deeds that will bring him disrepute.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Imam, Imam Ahmed al-Mastur <sup>AS</sup>, narrates a parable that the prince of a king of Hindustan put a question to a sage from Serendip, “After the soul departs from the body does it ever desire to come back to it?” The sage replied with a parable.

Once, a king celebrated the wedding of his son. For 7 days the festivities continued, with each night the kingdom engrossed in merriment, drink and song. After one night of revelry, the prince sought to head back to his bride. However, due to his inebriety, instead of heading to her room he wandered off in another direction, exiting the palace and the city altogether and ending up on the outskirts of the city. There he saw a house with the lights still on which he assumed to be his bedroom. He entered the small house and saw a number of sheathed people asleep on the floor. Thinking that they his bride's servants, he proceeded towards a lady whose clothes were new and from whom a pleasing fragrance emanated. He presumed her to be his wife and went to sleep beside her.

The next morning he awoke sober and called for his servants, but no one answered. He opened his eyes and saw that the entire room was filled with corpses and the woman whom he thought was his wife, was in fact an aged woman who had recently passed away, hence her new shrouds and the lingering smell of camphor. However, her shrouds, and now his clothes, were soiled by the corpse's blood and pus. He immediately ran out and headed to a river to wash his stained clothing. As he sat in the water, a person passed by and asked him what he was doing. He replied that he had fallen into a garbage pit and was washing off the filth from his clothes. In the course of their conversation, the prince asked the person to lend him some clothes and his mount in exchange for money. When he returned to his family who had all feared that he has been abducted by a jinn, they rejoiced. When they questioned him over his whereabouts he brushed them off saying that it is a long story and that he would relate it some other time.

Following this parable, the sage asked the prince, “Would anyone look forward to sleeping beside the corpse of that old woman again?” Similarly, the soul will never long to return to the body. Like the prince in the parable, ashamed of his actions, the soul too will be ashamed of even mentioning where it was or recalling the memory of the corpse.

Mufaddal Maula <sup>TUS</sup> explained that the imperative form of *haya*’ — ‘maintain a sense of shame’ — is *istahye*. This imperative can also be taken to mean seek *hayaat* (life). Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> called towards Islam which grants *hayaat* to all those who answer it. Syedna Abdulqadir Najmuddin <sup>RA</sup> writes that the day following his Mi‘raj (ascension to heaven), Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> proceeded towards the marketplace. There he saw a frail lady with two children tied upon her back, walking slowly and weeping. Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> enquired about her state to which she replied that I am ill and my master has sent me to the market to purchase some items. I fear that if I am late in returning, he will reprimand me. Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup>, in all his mercy, replied, “I will come with you and speak to your master on your behalf”.

He carried the two children and swiftly proceeded towards her master’s house. As he moved forward, the woman called after him, “I am ill; I cannot keep up with you”. Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> instructed her to hold the trails of his clothing which would help her keep pace with him. Nabi Mohammed <sup>SAW</sup> knocked upon her master’s door who was astonished at seeing him.

“O, Mohammed, you normally never take this path through this part of the city.” Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> replied that he had come to appeal on behalf of his servant. The servant’s master requested Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> to sit for a moment while he went inside and returned with a copy of the Torah. He said:

O, Mohammed the Torah is full of your praise. It mentions that the sign of the true prophet is that the day following his Mi'raj he will come to the house of a Jew and vouch on behalf of his lady servant. How can I further delay embracing Islam!

Immediately he recited the shahada. Such is Rasul Allah's <sup>SAW</sup> mercy and sense of shame.

Following this narration, Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal <sup>TUS</sup> observed that while travelling by bus or train, or at the airport, we often come across people who are aged, ill or with young children. Our sense of shame dictates that we immediately offer our seat to them. Yet, there are others who are completely and utterly shameless. In 1431, at the age of 99, Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> travelled to Makkah for his final umrah. While in Bait Allah, Burhanuddin Maula <sup>RA</sup> approached the Hajar Aswad. Despite his age and frailty, the guard standing there prevented him from approaching and instead gestured for him to join the queue. At that moment, all the Muslimeen standing in the line said in unison that we will not proceed to pay our respects at the Hajr Aswad until Syedna Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> does. Maula <sup>TUS</sup> stated that the incredulous individual must have seen the radiant countenance of Burhanuddin Maula <sup>RA</sup> but in his jealousy, he did not show even the most basic humanity.

Our texts inform us that one should not give azan from a raised location where he is able to peer into people's homes. Such was the sense of shame required of a Muslim. However, the wicked ummah had no such shame; far from not peering in, they barged into the Ahle Bayt's <sup>AS</sup> home having threatened to burn it down.

Amirul Mumineen's <sup>SA</sup> wearing of patched garments is analogous to the way he ensured the survival of the garb of Islam even as the enemy sought to rend it. Imam Sadiq <sup>AS</sup> mentions that the clothes of Islam are *haya*. Maulana Ali <sup>AS</sup> stated that, "I have a woollen garment that has been patched up so many times, that there is no room for further patchwork." With his perseverance and by wearing patched up clothes he ensured that the clothes of Islam were saved from being torn to shreds.

Maulana al-Mina'am <sup>TUS</sup> provided two explanations for the order in which Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> gave his *wasiyyat* regarding a sense of shame. The first explanation determines the order in terms of familiarity with the human mind. Allah Ta'ala, although extremely close, is far too great to comprehend and understand. He is unseen and in that context is far. Though closer, a Mumin's two angels are also of the spiritual realm and therefore imperceivable. 'Salih al-Mumineen' is the *saheb al-zaman*, the *dai* or imam, who although is a spiritual being has taken a physical form and is therefore the closest to a Mumin. We have the honour of beholding him with our eyes. The second explanation described the order in the context of man's three sins: sins perpetrated against the Creator, sins against other people and sins against the *saheb al-zaman*. The object of our sense of shame differs for each of these categories of sins starting with Allah, then the two angels and then *saheb al-zaman*.

On the eve of Aashura, Imam Husain <sup>SA</sup> directed his Ahle Bayt <sup>AS</sup> and loyal companions to leave. He told them to disappear into the darkness of the night when no one will know that they have left or where they have gone. "It is halal for you to leave," he told them. But they refused. "It would be shameful if we did so; with what face will we present ourselves to Rasul Allah <sup>SA</sup> on the Day of Qiyaamat if we were to leave you?" they cried. They added, "If

we were to give a thousand lives for your cause, we would still fall short in fulfilling our obligation to you!” Their sense of shame and devotion to Imam Husain <sup>SA</sup> ensured that they sacrificed their lives for him and attained the highest of heavenly ranks.

In Syedna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man’s <sup>RA</sup> recounting of the popular narration where a *ma‘idat* (a *thaal* filled with food) descends upon the Ahle Bayt <sup>AS</sup> from the heavens, Maulatona Fatema’s <sup>SA</sup> preeminence is made obvious in her devotion to Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> and her sense of shame before Allah Ta‘ala. When Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> inquired as to whether there was anything to eat at home, Maulatona Fatema <sup>SA</sup> responded saying there was not. Over the last two days, she along with Imam Hasan and Imam Husain <sup>SA</sup> had gone without food presenting whatever little there was in the house to Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> instead. “Why did you not let me know?” Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> asked Maulatona Fatema <sup>SA</sup>. She respectfully responded, “I thought it shameful in the eyes Allah Ta‘ala to cause you discomfort or difficulty”. After narrating the remainder of the account, Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal <sup>TUS</sup> juxtaposed the extents to which Maulatona Fatema’s <sup>SA</sup> went to ensure that Amirul Mumineen <sup>SA</sup> was not troubled with concern for their meals, with the extreme maltreatment he faced at the hands of the tyrants who tied a black rope around his neck, pulling him as they would a camel.

The second group before whom a sense of shame should be maintained are the vigilant, honourable angels who record all a human being’s deeds. Maulana al-Mina‘am <sup>TUS</sup> declared that these angels are the Du‘at Mutlaqeen <sup>AS</sup> whose *hayaat* and *hayaat*, their sense of shame and ability to give life, are exemplary. Their unique ability to inspire a sense of shame in their followers and breathe new life into their faith is especially remarkable in Yemen. Shortly after the seclusion of the 21<sup>st</sup>

Imam <sup>SA</sup>, enemies were intent on erasing all traces of the Fatimi Dawat. Syedna Hatim Mohyiddin <sup>RA</sup> whose very *laqab* means the one who gives *hayaat* to faith, Mufaddal Maula <sup>TUS</sup> explained, preserved the sanctity and *hayaat* of Yemen. Yet over time, the Mumineen of Yemen became deficient in their deference of the Fatimi Du‘at <sup>AS</sup> and their sense of shame diminished.

Shamelessness had grown to the extent that many of the prominent figures of the community in Yemen would brazenly disregard the Dai’s directives and the Dai’s own representatives signed a document declaring their disavowal and repudiation of his leadership. However, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Moharram in 1373, the 51<sup>st</sup> Dai prayed to Allah Ta‘ala asking him to preserve the ‘*sharam*’ of Yemen: “*Yemen ni sharam tu rakhje!*”. Mufaddal Maula explained that the numeral equivalent of the word ‘*al-hayaa*’ in Arabic is 51, indicating that it was the 51<sup>st</sup> Dai who paved the way towards salvaging the *sharam* and honour of Yemen and reinvigorating the souls, homes and hearts of the Mumineen residing there. Syedna Taher Saifuddin <sup>RA</sup> sent his *mansoos*, Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> to Yemen, and with his arrival, the heavens descended *hayaat* all across the region: showers of rain and *barakaat*. His presence reinstilled *hayaat* in their hearts and *hayaat* in their souls. Despite the consistent efforts of antagonists to undermine Dawat and its Dai, Syedna Burhanuddin <sup>RA</sup> restored a sense of shame in the Mumineen of Yemen with the *zikh* and remembrance of Husain Imam <sup>AS</sup> whose *shahadat* preserved the shame and nobility of prophethood. Maulana al-Mina‘am <sup>TUS</sup> recounted his own recollections of the state of Yemen before: when he recited the sacred *shahaadat* of Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> there were those seated in the majlis that would cover their faces with their clothes and snicker. Today however, he said, that the Mumineen of Yemen, in their expressions of grief and *matam* are at par with their brothers and sisters in Hindustaan. In fact,

Maula <sup>TUS</sup> continued, that sometimes it is hard to determine whether this expression is greater here, or there.

The third place to maintain shame is before Saheb al-Zamaan <sup>AS</sup> — the imam and, in his seclusion, the *dai*. We were asked to witness how Maulatona Fatema <sup>AS</sup>, in her shame and humility beseeched Maulana Ali's <sup>SA</sup> forgiveness on her deathbed; although since the day of entering his home she had never uttered a mistruth. Maulana Ali <sup>SA</sup> interjected, "thou art too lofty, too knowing, too virtuous [to transgress in any way]". She continued, "however this is the physical, human realm, so if anything has come to pass, forgive me!"

A true sense of shame is achieved at the middle of its two extremes. On the one hand you have *qihah* (impudence; effrontery) and on the other is *futoor* (diffidence). In between is the middle ground, shame. This was illustrated by two examples of the two 'brothers' in contrast to Maulana Ali <sup>AS</sup>. When Maulana Ali <sup>AS</sup> was repairing Rasul Allah's <sup>SAW</sup> sandal, Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> at that time proclaimed that one among you will battle for the *ta'weel* of the Quran in the same way that he had battled for its *zaahir*. Each of the two, showed effrontery, instead of asking, "Who is it?" asked, "Is it me? Is it me?!"

Now, in another instance, when Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> ordered the killing of a man who had spoken insolently to him; this time both 'brothers' were diffident. First one went after the man, then the other only for both to return and say that the wretch was 'in namaz' - so they did not carry out the order. The order had been given by the Prophet who has instituted namaz and which should be carried out regardless of the circumstances. Maula <sup>TUS</sup> stated that to do what should be done and refrain from what should not be done is the very definition of *hayaa* '.



Syedna al-Dai al-Ajal <sup>TUS</sup> stated that our sense of shame dictates that we should hide our shortcomings and flaws from those around us, but not from Allah Almighty. Imam Zainulabedin <sup>AS</sup>, whom Yazid's armies tortured so shamelessly after the shahadat of Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup>; states:

“Remain resolute in cloaking poverty, until it is as if you are affluent;  
Be resolute in hiding illness, until it is as if you are free of any malady;  
Be resolute in suppressing your anger, until it is as if you are always happy;  
Be resolute in hiding your nafilat, until you are seen to be doing none;  
And be resolute in hiding alms-giving, until it is as if you are a miser.”

The shamelessness of the enemy in Karbala went beyond any extreme. Water was cut-off, by imperial order, from this seventh day of Moharram. Imagine how the children with Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> would have asked him whilst looking at the Furat river, are we not to have any of the water? How could he possibly reply? When Shimr sat to slay Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> and his blunt sword did not work Imam Husain <sup>AS</sup> told him to wait, for he had seen that Maulatona Zainab <sup>AS</sup> was watching. He went into *sajdah* but Shimr did not wait, for in his shamelessness he cared not that his dear sister was watching as he slaughtered her brother the imam.

When Maulatona Fatema <sup>AS</sup> was nearing her last day, Maulana Ali <sup>SA</sup> returned home. Where she would normally welcome him by washing his *hath mubarak* and *aqdaam tahira*, he found that

today she had chosen three other deeds instead. She had put lotus tree leaves to soak in order to bathe the two Imams, had prepared two days worth of dough and had put their clothes to dry having washed them. Maulana Ali <sup>AS</sup> asked why she had done all this. In her response, Maulatena Fatema <sup>AS</sup> recounted the dream she had the previous night in which Rasul Allah <sup>SAW</sup> had promised her that the next night she would break her fast at the *thaal* of the prophets. Today was her last day upon this earth. Who would then take care of her beloved children?

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the sense of shame that is appropriate to one who believes in Allah, acknowledges the angels on his shoulders writing his actions and also his Maula, the Saheb al-Zaman, Syedna Aali Qadr Mufaddal Saifuddin. May Allah grant him long life and good health until Qiyaamat.

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