

Values drive behavior and Behaviour drives Results.

If you want to address behavior you must first address the values that drive that behavior. Without that, any behavior you see can be playacting and pretension. Playacting cannot be sustained. Playacting is always seen through by everyone except the actor, and it destroys credibility.

The three values, Identity, Integrity, Courage, have the power to drive the behavior which will get us results that we can feel proud of, and which will be an asset for us in the Aakhira. We looked at Identity last week. What is the nature of the identity that I need to develop as a Muslim? What are the challenges that I will face in that process? What are the solutions? This week, we will look at the second value and that is: Integrity

Integrity is a total commitment to the truth. To search for the truth. To accept the truth even if it goes against whatever you believed previously or would have liked to see. To accept it even if that leads to embarrassment for yourself because you had said or done something contrary to it before that. If you are intelligent, you will face that embarrassment only once in your life. Integrity is an expression of self-respect. Only someone who has self-respect; someone who is aware of what he/she stands for as a Muslim and truly considers that worth upholding, can behave with integrity. Integrity is to speak and act according to our core belief. Integrity is total congruence between belief, speech, and action without any compromise. Integrity is the essence of Imaan because that is what entering Islam means: to behave congruently.

تصديق بالقلب ، إقرار باللسان ، و أعمال بالأركان

Nifaq or hypocrisy which is a major sin, is to behave incongruently. To speak or act differently from your belief.

Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Amr al-Aas (R) narrated that Rasoolullah ﷺ said: "Whoever has the following four characteristics will be a pure hypocrite; and whoever has one of these four characteristics will have one characteristic of hypocrisy unless and until he gives it up; whenever he is entrusted he betrays, whenever he speaks he tells a lie, whenever he makes a covenant he proves treacherous, and whenever he quarrels he behaves in a very imprudent, evil and insulting manner." [Bukhari]

Allahﷻ considered Nifaq (hypocrisy) to be so serious that He revealed Qur'an commanding Rasoolullah ﷺ not to do Salatul Janaza for the Munafiqeen and declared that He would not forgive them, even if Rasoolullah ﷺ made dua for their forgiveness 70 times.

Our company distinguishes, identifies, and influences us. Allahﷻ ordered:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Tawba 9:119 *O you who believe! Have Taqwa of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds)*

So, that is the first consideration. Who are your friends? We become like our friends. In their company it becomes easy to do what they do and difficult to do what they don't. There are entry conditions to any group. We must

consider these carefully because they influence, and demand compromise and we end up paying a heavy price. Some people are afraid of losing friends if they refuse to accept unislamic entry conditions. The reality is that you do not lose friends, you only exchange them for others. I remind you that everybody has friends. The worst of people have friends and so do the best. The question is who you want as your friends, because we will be with them when we meet Allahﷻ. Allahﷻ warned us about wrong friends and said:

وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا
يَا وَيْلَتَى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيلًا

Furqan 25:27-28 And (remember) the Day when the Zalim (criminal) will bite at his hands, he will say: Oh! Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger ﷺ.

Ah! Woe to me! Would that I had never taken so-and-so as a friend!

الْأَخِلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

Zukhruf 43:67 Friends on that Day will be enemies of one another except Al-Muttaqun

In the famous Ayah which is the finest declaration of the importance of justice ever made and which Harvard Law School acknowledged as such and displayed on their Wall, Allahﷻ ordered:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ
أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلُؤْأُوا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

Nisa 4: 135 O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, be he rich or poor, Allah is a Better Protector to both (than you). So follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you may avoid justice, and if you distort your witness or refuse to give it, verily, Allah is Ever Well-Acquainted with what you do.

Allahﷻ commanded us to be truthful and to accept the truth and not to allow our dislike or hatred for someone to blind us to the truth if it comes from them. The fact is that if we ignore the truth, we only harm ourselves.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ
شَنَاةُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

Ma'aida 5: 8 O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.

This is what destroyed Abu Jahl. He knew the truth that Muhammad ﷺ was the Messenger of Allah ﷻ but he refused to accept it because he did not like the fact that Rasoolullah ﷺ belonged to his rival clan. So also, others among the Quraysh, who would not accept the truth of Islam, not because they didn't believe it, but because it was being propagated by Muhammad ﷺ. On the other hand, was Omar bin Khattab (R) who also started from the same place of hating Rasoolullah ﷺ. In his case it was to the extent that he decided to kill him and started out for Bayt-ul-Arqam with a drawn sword. We know the story of how he met Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas (R) on the way who told him that his sister Fatima bint Al-Khattab (RA) had become Muslim. He decided to deal with this in-house threat but when he heard the recitation of the Ayaat of the Qur'an, Imaan entered his heart. Omar bin Khattab (R) started out hating Islam and Rasoolullah ﷺ, but when he was faced with the truth, he didn't allow his hatred to blind him to the reality. So, Allah ﷻ guided him to be one of the greatest Muslims of all time and included him in Asharaum Mubashshara (10 who were promised Jannah in their lifetime).

Let us check if we have people in our lives, who tell us the truth, but we do not accept it because we don't like them, not because we don't believe them. That is truly ignorant behavior and harmful only to the one who does it.

Integrity is Al Ikhlaas un Niyyah – Sincerity of intention – which is the prerequisite for the acceptance of our deeds. That is why we must constantly check our Ikhlaas to see who we are really speaking or acting to please.

Allahﷻ or someone else? Allahﷻ does not accept actions that are adulterated where we do things to please others, while pretending that we are doing them to please Allahﷻ. In the famous Hadith of the Thalaas – The Three:

Abu Hurayrah (R) reported: I heard Rasoolullah ﷺ say: The first of people against whom judgment will be pronounced on the Day of Judgement will be a man who died a martyr. He will be brought, and Allahﷻ will make known to him His favors and he will recognize them. Allahﷻ will ask: And what did you do about them? He will say: I fought for you until I died a martyr. Heﷻ will say: You have lied – you fought so that it might be said [about you]: He is so brave. And so, it was said. Then it will be ordered that he be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Jahannam. [Another] will be a man who studied [religious] knowledge and taught it and who used to recite the Qur'an. He will be brought, and Allahﷻ will make known to him His favors and he will recognize them. Allahﷻ will say: And what did you do about them? He will say: I studied [religious] knowledge and I taught it and I recited the Qur'an for Your sake. Heﷻ will say: You have lied – you studied [religious] knowledge that it might be said [about you]: He is learned (A'alim). And you recited the Qur'an that it might be said [of you]: He is a reciter (Qari). And so, it was said. Then it will be ordered that he be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Jahannam.

[Another] will be a man whom Allahﷻ had made rich and to whom He had given all kinds of wealth. He will be brought, and Allahﷻ will make known to him His favors and he will recognize them. Allahﷻ will say: And what did you do about them? He

will say: I left no path [untrodden] in which You like money to be spent without spending in it for Your sake. Heﷻ will say: You have lied – you did that so that it might be said [about you]: He is open-handed (generous). And so, it was said. Then it will be ordered that he be dragged along on his face until he is cast into Jahannam. (Sahih Muslim)

Rasoolullahﷺ taught us to be truthful even in small matters. He prohibited telling a lie even as a joke, which is almost the norm today.

Mu'awiyah ibn Haydah (R) reported: Rasoolullahﷺ said, "Woe to one who tells lies to make people laugh. Woe to him! Woe to him!" (Abi Dawud)

Abu Dharr Gifari (R) reported: My dear friend, Rasoolullahﷺ instructed me with virtuous traits. He instructed me not to look at those above me and to look at those below me. He instructed me to love the poor and be close to them. He instructed me to maintain my family ties even if they turn their backs. He instructed me not to fear the blame of the blamer in the matter of Allahﷻ. He instructed me to speak the truth even if it is bitter. He instructed me to increase in declaring there is no power or might but in Allahﷻ for it is a treasure among the treasures of Jannah. (Ibn Hibbān)

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (R) reported that Rasoolullahﷺ said, "You must be truthful. Verily, truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Jannah. A man continues to be truthful and encourages honesty until he is recorded with Allahﷻ as truthful. And beware of falsehood. Verily, falsehood leads to wickedness and wickedness leads to the Jahannam. A man continues tell lies and encourages falsehood until he is recorded with Allahﷻ as a liar." (Bukhāri & Muslim)

Ibn-Omar (R) narrated that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "There are four things, which if you possess, then you should not regret whatever you miss from this world: speaking the truth, fulfilling trusts, good manners and lawful source of provision." (Ahmad)

Ubadah Ibn ul-Samit (R) narrated that Rasoolullah ﷺ said, "If you guarantee me six things on your part, I shall guarantee you Jannah: Speak the truth when you talk, keep a promise when you make it, when you are trusted with something fulfill your trust, avoid sexual immorality, lower your gaze (in modesty) and restrain your hands from injustice." (Musnad Ahmad)

Allahﷻ described His Anbiya by the attribute of truthfulness to stress its importance as one of the greatest attributes a believer can ever possess.

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

Maryam 19: 41 And mention in the Book [the story of] Ibrahim. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِدْرِيسَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا

Maryam 19: 56 And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet

وَأَذْكُرُ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا

Maryam 19: 54 And mention in the Book, Ismail. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet

وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

Al-Ahzab 33: 22 and Allah and His Messenger spoke the truth

Rasoolullah ﷺ himself was known as As-Sadiq ul Amin (The Truthful and The Trustworthy) by his people long before he announced Islam and though many opposed him bitterly, nobody accused him of lying or deception, even though they became his mortal enemies and tried to defame him in many ways. Truthfulness and trustworthiness were so important to Rasoolullah ﷺ that he declared them to be the signifiers of Imaan (Faith) and being Muslim. A Muslim cannot lie or deceive anyone. It is as simple as that.

Safwan ibn Sulaym (R) reported that Rasoolullah ﷺ was asked, "Can the believer be a coward?" He said, "Yes." He was asked, "Can the believer be a miser?" He said, "Yes." He was asked, "Can the believer be a liar?" He said, "No." (Murwatta Malik)

Integrity is the soul of influence. It is the essence of honor. It is the inspiration for respect. An individual without integrity is despised and distrusted.

It was the clearly manifest integrity of Rasoolullah ﷺ which gave him the title of As-Sadiq ul Amin and that was his greatest asset. Muslims believe what Allah ﷻ revealed because As-Sadiq ul Amin said so.

Integrity defines reputation. Reputation inspires influence. It is that simple.