

# COOPERATION

## THE QUR'ANIC IMPERATIVE

### Reaching Out to Humanity for Charity and Piety

Cooperation in matters of righteousness to God or benefit to humanity is a great virtue in Islam. It is sad that many Muslims today often tend to underestimate it and neglect it. What are the causes of this unfortunate lack of an element so vital to our well-being as a community as well as to our relationship with others? What could we do to reverse them?

By Uwaymir Anjum



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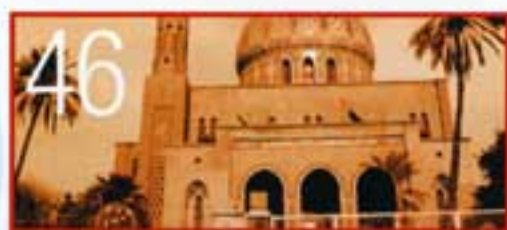
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Al Jum'ah Magazine  
Published by Al-Muntada Al-Islami

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Al Jum'ah (ISSN 10921772) is published monthly for \$30.00 per year by Al-Muntada Al-Islami, Inc. The publication date for this issue is August 14, 2007. Principal Office: 4718 Hamersley Rd., Madison WI 53711. Periodicals postage paid at Madison, Wisconsin and additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Al Jum'ah P.O. Box 5187 Madison WI, 53705-5187 Copyright © 2007 Al-Muntada Al-Islami, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without prior permission is prohibited. Al Jum'ah Magazine is not responsible for the accuracy of information provided by the advertisers. Readers are encouraged to verify such information directly with the advertisers. Al Jum'ah Magazine reserves the right to reject any advertisement.

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# STRAIGHT TALK

For young adults about Faith & Life

BY SALMA SANWARI

## There Is Not A Right Way To Do A Wrong Thing

We can try to reason a way into it or even talk our way out of it, but no matter how you look at it, there is no way that we can make going out on a date with someone that we like become right. 'We knew our limits,' 'everyone else is doing it,' 'we plan to marry each other anyway,' 'we are old enough and mature enough,' but no. It just does not matter. It is not right.

There is really not any right way to do something that is just plain wrong. If something is wrong, it just is. We cannot find a short cut that makes it right, better or justified. We cannot find a way around it or a way to rationalize it. If it is wrong, it is wrong. But sometimes we cannot accept that; or we plain ignore that and convince ourselves of ways to make wrong deeds look right. For example, we can backbite and gossip about a friend with another for hours on end. To what consequence? Well, we can tell ourselves that we are trying to figure out a way to help this person. We are talking about Friend #1 for her own good. She has a problem and we need to figure out a way to tell her. Is that why we have to talk about it every time we meet, for hours at times, and we have yet to approach the person we are speaking about? We are trying to make a wrong thing right. We are justifying a wrong action by excusing it with a right cause.

Islamically, there are many things that

are laid out for us. Those things that are clearly forbidden are easy for us to stay away from. For example:

- ✦ There is not a right way to go on a date.
- ✦ There is not a right way to have a drink.
- ✦ There is not a right way to backbite and gossip.

However, there are lots of shades of gray in Islam and life—aspects that require us to use some common sense and our sense of morals and ethics. When is something wrong and when is it right? What about plagiarizing on a term paper for example. There is really no right way to do this—the reason being that this is the wrong thing to do. We can convince ourselves that we did loads of research, and the authors of the other works “said it best”, but the bottom line is: it is plagiarizing and it is not only illegal but also immoral and not allowed by any school or university. Therefore, it is wrong and there is really not any way to justifiably make it right. Of course, many students do it and get away with it. That is not the point.

The point is that we should be asking ourselves if we should be doing so in the first place. Should I be plagiarizing? Can I justify this? Is this really the right thing to do? Before doing anything, if you ask yourself “How can I make this right?” and “Can I justify this honestly?”

and if you cannot find a logical, easy answer, then it is probably not the right thing to do in the first place.

### Is There A Wrong Way To Do A Right Thing?

The answer is yes! There definitely is a wrong way to do something that is right and permissible in Islam and in society at large. We can mess up even the most noble of deeds and actions by our intentions. Let us say that we are planning to visit a friend, but all the while we are grumpy about having to drive so far to see them. We are running late, sitting in traffic, hungry because we missed breakfast, and by the time we see our friend, we are miserable. Do you think that our friend appreciates this visit or would she rather that we just run along and get on with our day? She can see our frustration and thinks that we are unhappy with her and begrudge having to see her. How can we convince her that it is not her but rather the drive and the other unfortunate circumstances that make us cranky?

We screwed up a good deed by having bad intentions and a lousy attitude. Instead, if we could have cleared our head and our thoughts before heading over to see her, we could have helped her and had a better visit for both of us. That would have merited some benefit; the outcome instead proved useless and almost costly.

Intention along with temperament and attitude go a long way when it comes to corrupting and ruining a good and moral deed. Maintain the right character when doing the right thing and you are bound to do it the right way. ▲

# If I Were a Non-Muslim...

BY SOBIA ASRAR

Alright, before the 'astaghfirullah's' begin, please know that the intention here is not to initiate a vain thought process or to plant misleading ideas in the youth's minds,

But, as unthinkable as the phrase is, it begs to be known what young Muslims might follow it up with. Surely, this next generation has something to say, but the elders are hesitant to discuss it, for fear of what it might be.

Their fears will not entirely be misplaced. After all, being a Muslim these days either calls for being branded as poor, what with Japan's GDP (on a PPP basis) nearly equaling that of 57 Muslim countries combined; illiterate, in accordance with the Muslim world's average literacy rate of 40%; or a terrorist, as is evident in the mass casualties in Muslim countries grabbing headlines every day.

Even if we do not think on such a global scale, as individuals, there are many times when following Islamic guidelines sets us apart from others. Children who do not quite have a grasp of inflation, student loans and security threats, also sense how lifestyles that go against Islam are constantly applauded and glamorized in games, stories and cartoons.

So, while the elders may scoff, 'as if we want to live like the *kuffar*', it remains to be said that they have



*"And they will say, 'Praise to Allah, who has guided us to this; we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us. Certainly the messengers of our Lord had come with the truth.' And it will be said to them, 'This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.'"* [7:43]

already lived halfway through their lives. They know where their life has gone and know not to believe in chas-

ing fairytales, because their experience has taught them otherwise. They are now in a stage when they are keeping their boats afloat, with no time for thinking about their dream cruise.

In contrast, the young have their whole lives ahead of them. So, when deciding what they want from their future, a time comes when they wonder how their peers of other dogmas are taking their lives in directions dictated by them alone, and seemingly, are doing good at it.

But, do not get me wrong; these youth, they love Islam, want nothing more than to be the best Muslim and would never give it up for anything in the world. Yet, they do speculate what another way of life would be like and if Islam holds them back sometimes. After all, those who are not Muslim seem to be at their apex today; who is not impressed by that? These may be hush-hush thoughts, but Allah does not shy of the truth. He knows the insinuations that creep into our minds, so He uplifts us: "Be not deceived by the [uninhibited] movement of the disbelievers throughout the land. [It is but] a small enjoyment..." [3:196-7]

Asking these young Muslims to complete a sentence that starts with "If I was a non-Muslim...", is not intended to, and will not, InshaAllah, get them carried away into a world they would never dare enter in real life.

# FAMILY

MUSLIM FAMILY LIVING HAPPILY AND HEALTHFULLY

# LIFE

## PARENTING

### Yes You Will...No I Won't Who is Right?

BY NOUR HABIB

"Clean your room." Two week later, the room is still dirty.

"Don't talk back." The arguing never stops.

"Take only what you'll be able to finish." A pile of food remains in the plate.



These are all scenarios which no doubt most parents have faced with their children at one point or another. It seems that some children have an inherent streak of stubbornness. No matter what you tell them, they will only do what they want, when they want, and how they want.

So, what is behind this stubbornness?

#### Causes of Stubbornness

Many factors may contribute to the rise of stubbornness in a child. It could be a new friend who encourages your child to rebel. It could be problems at school. It could be a change in routine

that throws them off balance, such as moving too many times.

Whatever the reason, it is a good idea that before you start trying to deal with the stubbornness itself, you attempt to finger the cause.

#### Purpose for stubbornness

Dr. Jane Nelson, a licensed Marriage, Family, and Child Counselor, explains in her book *Positive Discipline* that there are several reasons that children misbehave. Among these is to gain attention, attain power, or get revenge.

