

EDITORIAL

In the recent Annual General Meeting of the Forum held in London between 24-25 of August 1996, new members of the Executive Committee were elected. Those elected are:

Dr Kabir Usman Kabo President, Mansur AbdulQadir Secretary, Dr Muhammad Sani Ibrahim Assistant Secretary, Sulaiman Ibrahim Treasurer, Garba Sani Organising Secretary I, Dr Muhammad Jimoh Organising Secretary II, and Usman Gambo Abdullahi Publicity and Publications Secretary.

While we welcome the new Exco members and wish them Allah's guidance in their deliberations and leadership throughout their tenure, it is expedient to stress here that the Exco cannot do much without the full support and co-operation of other members. As such, we urge all members to operate as integral part of a whole. We should remember that our achievement lies in our collective efforts and at the end of the day, what matters is how faithful we have been in collectively fulfilling our ultimate aim of fostering the much desired unity and brotherhood among all Nigerian Muslims.

We ask Allah (SWT) to guide them towards what is pleasing to Him and protect them (and all of us) from what is displeasing to HIM, so that they lead the Ummah to the right path. And may HE (SWT) make our words and actions testify in our favour on the day of judgement, not against us, ameen.

DEATH: THE DESTROYER OF ALL PLEASURES (Part 1 of 2)

Death is inevitable. There is no escape from it. It makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. The greatest personalities of the world, past and present, were subjects to this fate. Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, Musa, 'Isah Alaihimus-Salam, and even Muhammad (SAW) had to die. Allah (SWT) said:

We have not granted to any man before you (O Muhammad) immortality: If then you should die, would they live forever? (21:34).

The highest intelligent man of the globe or the greatest scientist could not invent a plan of avoiding death. Death in itself is not an absolute end. It is just a discontinuation of unity between the body and soul. It is a change from one state to another and a transition from the present life to that of the hereafter. Allah (SWT) said:

Certainly they see it as distant, but we see it as near (70:6-7)

Death snatches away an affectionate son from the clutches of his parents, a beloved husband from the consoling bosom of his wife, a man from his enormous riches and a powerful king from his kingdom. Allah (SWT) said:

Every soul shall have a taste of

death. And only on the day of Judgement shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved from the fire and admitted to the Garden (Jannah) will have attained the objective (of Life): For the life of this world is nothing but goods and chattels of deception (3:185).

Also, in another verse, Allah (SWT) said:

Wherever you are, Death will find you out, even if you are in towers built up strong and high! If some good befalls them, they say: 'This is from Allah'; But if evil, they say: 'This is from you (O Muhammad)'. Say: 'All things are from Allah'. But what hath come to these people, that they fail to understand a single fact? (4:78)

The above verses clearly stated the

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incapability of man to escape from death.

Death only becomes a reality when a beloved or a close one dies. The heart feels heavy, the eyes shed tears and there is, at that moment, an intense fear of death. Death is the first stage of the eternal journey to Jannah for the righteous or Hell for the transgressors, as birth is the first stage of this world's journey. Allah (SWT) states:

Verily We created man from a quintessence (of clay). Then We placed him as (a drop of) sperm in a place of rest (mother's womb where there is ultimate protection from all sorts of things) firmly fixed. Then we made the sperm into a clot of congealed blood; then of that clot We made a (foetus) lump; then We made out of that lump Bones and clothed the bones with flesh; then We developed out of it another creature. So blessed be Allah, the best to create! After that, at length, you will die! Again, on the day of judgement, you will be raised up (23:12-16).

My dear brothers and sisters, this verse is enough a lesson for us to ponder upon and know that surely death is inevitable; there will come a time when all of us will cease to exist as we were before our birth. No amount of transgression will make a person live forever.

Remember the story of Pharaoh who called himself god, and, according to his belief, he gives life to whom he wills and takes life of whom he wills, and so on! What happened to him in the end? Allah (SWT) said:

We took the children of Israel across the sea: Pharaoh and his hosts followed them. In insolence and spite. At length, when overwhelmed with flood, he (Pharaoh) said: 'I believe that there is no god except Him Whom the Children of Israel believe in: (That is in the One True God). I

am of those who submit (to God) in Islam (a death bed repentance because of the terror of the catastrophe). (It was said to him:) 'Ah now! - But a little while before, you were in rebellion! - And you did mischief (and violence)! This day shall We save you in your body, that you may be a sign to those who come after you!' But verily, many among mankind are heedless of Our signs! (10:90-92)

Pharaoh's arrogance, mischief and rebellion to Allah did nothing in preventing his life being taken by the All-Knower and the Majestic, in the most disgraceful manner! Even though he uttered the shahadah, but Allah (SWT) does not accept such repentance; repenting at the point of death. O Allah make us among your faithful and obedient servants, ameen.

CONSTANT THOUGHT OF DEATH

Since death is inevitable, we must constantly think of it and what will occur after it. If we were to spend even a single moment each day thinking about death, it would bring many concerns, the greatest being our Hereafter. Allah (SWT) said:

Say: The Death from which you flee will truly overtake you: then you will be sent back to the Knower of All things Secret and Open: and He will tell you (the truth of) the things that you did! (62: 8).

In another, Allah (SWT) said:

Who Has created death and life, that He may test you, which of you is best in deed.... (67:2)

We should not be deluded by the life of this world and its pleasures. The world is nothing compared to the life of the hereafter. The prophet (SAW) is saying:

This world in comparison with the

hereafter is just like one of you putting his finger in the sea. Let him consider what it returns with (of water). (Muslim)

The prophet also explained how this world is not even worth the wing of a mosquito. Look at how small the mosquito is, not to even talk of its wing! So what is the worth of the world we run after and are dearly attached to? The prophet (SAW) referred to death as the destroyer of all pleasures, saying:

Increase the remembrance of the destroyer of all pleasures - death. (Tirmidhi & Nasa'i)

This is so because when each one of us remembers the awesome reality of death and what is to follow after that, our present desires of pleasures in this world would seem so insignificant and futile, and the life of the hereafter becomes our goal.

The state of one who luxuriates in this world and sets his confidence therein is comparable to that of a man who, in the absence of an emir, enjoys himself in his palace, trusting that the emir will deal leniently with him or that he is unaware of the ugly deeds he is committing, until such a time as the emir suddenly seizes him and shows him a copy-book in which all his foulness and misdeeds have been recorded in full detail. The emir, who is mighty and powerful, is greatly concerned for the welfare of his preserve and exacts retribution from all who would encroach on his authority, paying no heed to those that would intercede on behalf of any that has rebelled against him. Contemplate the plight in which such a man would be upon being caught, and the fear, shame, disgrace and sorrow which would be his lot before the emir's chastisement descended upon him. Thus is the state of the dead evildoer who had been dazzled by this world and set his trust therein following his death and before the

punishment of the grave has descended upon him! May Allah (SWT) save us from such an awful disgrace in the hereafter, ameen.

A great Muslim Thinker was reported to have said:

Verily there are some thoughtful servants of Allah; who divorced the world for the fear of its calamities; they studied the world and when they realised that the world is not an abode for the living; they took it as a small river and made their good deeds in it as their boats(canoes) to cross.

This sort of thought for the world is what we should try and adopt.

Death is a great admonisher to mankind, it reminds us of our meeting with the Al-Mighty. The Prophet (SAW) said:

I have left two admonishers to you: one that talks and the silent one, Qur'an and Death.

Constant remembrance of death protects man from sins and saves him from the transitory vanities of the world. He tries to adorn himself with, all the virtues that will take him to Paradise and to avoid the sins that will take him to Hell. Therefore, we should always have it in mind that our lives would soon be taken. How soon? Only Allah (SWT) knows.

In the second part, we will insha'Allah look at the manner and times of thinking of death and also whether it is lawful or not to hope for death. May Allah in His Infinite Mercy accept our good deeds and forgive our shortcomings, ameen.

Usman Abdullahi



FROM THE QUR'AN - GOOD MANNERS

The Chambers (Surat-Al-Hujurat (49)) is a Madinah Surah which was revealed during the year of deputation (9 A.H.), when a large number of deputations of all kind visited Madinah to offer their allegiance to Islam. It addresses the subject matter of **MANNERS**. These manners are expected to be observed by the rapidly growing Muslim Community among ourselves and towards our leaders. The English translation of the Surah reads:

1. *O you who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger, and fear Allah, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*

2. *O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the Prophet's voice, and do not speak loudly to him as you speak to one another, lest your deeds are rendered fruitless, while you are unaware.*

3. *Surely those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger, those are they who Allah has tested for piety; They shall have forgiveness and a great reward.*

4. *Surely those who call out to you from behind the chambers, most of them do not possess minds.*

5. *And if they wait patiently, until you come to them, that would be better for them, and Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

6. *O you who believe! If an immoral one comes to you with tidings, assess it carefully, lest you should harm a people without knowledge, and then become regretful for what you have done.*

7. *And know that the Messenger of Allah is among you. If he obeyed you in most matters, you would suffer, but Allah has endeared the Faith to you, and beautified it in your hearts, and has made disbelief and lewdness and rebellion abhorrent to you. Such are the rightly guided.*

8. *It is a bounty and a grace from Allah, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.*

9. *And if two parties of believers fight, make peace between them, then if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the transgressing one, until it reverts to the Command of Allah. And if it reverts, make peace between them fairly and be just. Surely Allah loves those who are just.*

10. *The believers are brothers, so make peace between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may find Mercy.*

11. *O you who believe! A people should not mock another people, it may be that they are better than them, nor should women mock other women, it may be that they are better than them, And do not look for fault in one another, nor defame one another with derisive names. Evil it is to have a name of wickedness after one has believed. And whoever does not desist, these are the evildoers.*

12. *O you who believe! Shun most suspicion, some suspicion is sin. And do not spy nor backbite each other, would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would abhor it. And fear Allah, indeed Allah is the Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.*

13. *O mankind! We have created you from a single male and a single female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the most honourable of you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. Indeed Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.*

14. *The Arabs of the desert say: "We believe". Say: "You do not believe" but say: "We submit to the Will of Allah (to become Muslim)" for belief has not yet entered your hearts, and if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything of your deeds. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.*

15. *Most surely the believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, and never have any doubt, and strive with their possessions and their souls in Allah's*

Cause, those they are the truthful ones.

16. Say: "Do you tell Allah of your religion? While Allah knows what is in the heavens and the earth? And Allah has knowledge of all things".

17. They deem it a favour to you that they have become Muslims! Say: "Deem not your becoming Muslims a favour to me, rather, Allah confers a favour on you, in that He has guided you to believe, if you are truthful".

18. Indeed, Allah knows the Unseen of the heavens and the earth, and Allah sees whatever you do.

The Surah addressed many issues among which are that, a community must show its respect to its leader in all form of behaviour. Quarrels are unseemly and should be composed because manners spring from morals and mutual respect to one another.

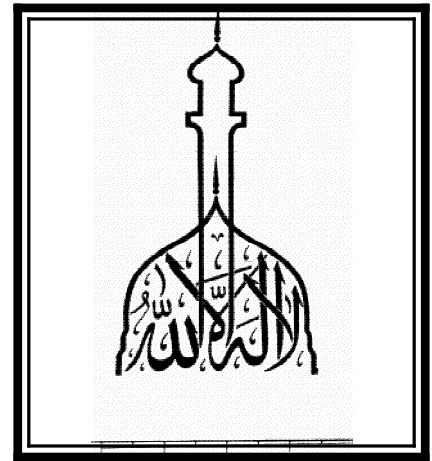
The respectful behaviour to the leader has to be in manner, voice, and demeanour as they are the strongest bases of organised community. The whispers of rumours, selfishness, and impatience should be avoided and whoever embarks on such acts should be stopped by the community, but with perfect Fairness and Justice. Ridicule, taunts and backbiting words should be abhorred either in the presence or the absence of the individual member or group of the community. Suspicion and spying are unworthy acts for sincere believers. All these acts are sinful and should be kept away from.

As all human beings originated from one pair, the honour on an individual does not depend on his Wealth, Power, Knowledge or Race but believe and action in accordance to the Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is therefore pertinent to remember that Faith is not a matter of words, but of accepting Allah's Will and striving in His Cause. The coming into Islam confers no favour on others, but is itself a favour and privilege, and a

guidance for true and sincere believing men and women.

It is hoped that we should think deeply about this Surah and check ourselves, address and respond to the issues raised in this surah, so that we can mend our ways and behave as proper and sincere Muslims to gain Allah's Mercy, ameen.

Kabir Usman Kabo



FROM THE HADITH - KINDNESS TO PARENTS

1. Abu Huraira (RA) reported that a man came to the prophet (SAW) and asked: "O Messenger of Allah (SAW), which person of all the people is best entitled to kind treatment and good companionship from me?" He answered: "Your mother. The man asked: "And then?" He said: "Your mother." The man asked: "And then?" He said: "Your mother." The man asked: "And after her?" He said: "Your father." (Bukhari and Muslim)

2. Abu Huraira (RA) reported that the prophet (SAW) said: "May his nose be rubbed in dust, may his nose be rubbed in dust, may his nose be rubbed in dust (i.e. may he be humiliated, saying it three times), who found his parents, one or both, approaching old age, but did not enter Paradise (by treating them kindly). (Muslim).

3. Ibn Abbas (RA) reported that a man came to him and said: "I proposed to a woman and I yearned that she marry me. Then someone else proposed to her and she desired to marry him. Then I seduced her, then killed her, so is there repentance for me?" He said: "Is your mother alive?" The man replied: "No." He said: "Repent to Allah Azza wa Jall and seek to get close to Him as much as you can." Ata' Ibn Yasir said: "So I went to Ibn Abbas and asked him:

'Why do you ask if his mother was alive?'" Ibn Abbas said: "Indeed I do not know an action which can get one closer to Allah (SWT) than righteousness to the mother." (from Imam Bukhari's Adab-al Mufrad - 4/4)

The two ahadith and the saying of Ibn Abbas quoted above emphasised the necessity of being kind to ones parents, especially the mother. Some of us have both their parents alive while others have one and others have none. In either case, we are expected to be kind and dutiful to our parents in order to win their love, affection and prayers. After their departure (death), we should constantly remember them in our prayers, as it is one of the basic things that reaches them in their graves.

May Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'alah make us among those who, when they hear something being said or read about something, try to practice the best out of it, ameen.



FASTING IN THE MONTH OF RAMADHAN

Fasting is one of the five fundamental pillars of Islam. It is a universal institution as much as all the religions of the world and all great religious personalities adopted fasting as the principal method of controlling and killing passion. The Jews use to observe an annual fasting on the Day of Atonement in commemoration of the Descent of Prophet Musa (AS) from mount Sinai. prophet Musa (AS) qualified himself to receive revelation from God after forty days of fasting. Prophet Isa (Jesus) fasted for forty days in the desert and commanded his followers to fast (according to the bible - Matthew 4:16). Therefore the institution of fasting is universal as is seen in the following verse:

O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious (Al-Muttaqun). (2:183).

Fasting as a form of worship in Islam was revealed in the 2nd year after Hijra. It gave the institution of fasting a finishing touch and introduced therein method, regularity, and meaning which go together to make it perfect and everliving, as opposed to other religions. Fasting was previously resorted to as a sign of grieve of mourning or propitiate an angry god. Islam abolished this pantheistic idea and introduced a highly developed significance.

The ultimate goal to be achieved in fasting is ATTAQWA (piety), so that one may guard against evil. In other words, the main object of fasting is to generate power in man which can control unruly passion just as a beast is brought under control by keeping it occasionally hungry and then by giving it food.

ITS VIRTUES There are many virtues and merits which a believer gets from Allah (SWT) by fasting the month of Ramadhan, which I am sure we all know of. Some of these include control of Passion, Reduction

of Evil Tendencies, Protection from Hell Fire, Forgiveness of Sins, Serving as an Intercessor, Admission into Paradise through a Special Door (Ar-Rayyan), Teaches Sympathy for the Needy, and Removes Sense of Prestige. All these and many others need no further explanation.

I would like to end this short reminder with two sayings of the Messenger of Allah (SAW):

The acts of the son of Adam are recompensed many times, from ten to seven hundred times, except fasting because it is undertaken simply for my sake, (that is, there is no limit for its recompense). I, Alone, shall bestow reward for it..... For a fasting person there are two periods of joy, firstly when he breaks his fast he is happy and the greatest happiness is when he meets his Lord (Bukhari & Muslim)

As we can see from the above hadith, Allah (SWT) specifies the reward of every action a believer, except that of fasting. Allah (SWT) kept that to Himself. This is so because it is in fasting that one shows his truthfulness. One can lock himself up, eat whatever he likes, drink whatever he wishes and do all sorts of things, and yet come out to people as a fasting man. However, Allah (SWT), The All-Knowing knows who is faithful in observing this duty, and so recompenses him.

Salman al-Farasy reported: The Messenger of Allah admonished us on the last day of Sha'aban. He said: 'O Men! There has come to you a magnificent month, a blessed month, a month wherein there is a night which is better than one thousand months. Allah has made its fast compulsory and the standing (in prayer) of its nights optional. Whoso comes therein with a good habit, becomes like one who performs an obligatory thing besides it; and whoso performs an obligatory thing becomes like one who performs seventy obligatory duties besides it.

And it is a month of patience; and for patience its reward is Paradise. And (it is) a month of mutual sympathy, and a month wherein the provision of a believer is increased. Whoso gives 'Iftar' to a fasting man, there is for him forgiveness for his sins and emancipation of his neck from fire, and there is for him the like of his reward without anything being diminished from his reward'. We said: O Messenger of Allah! everybody of us does not find means wherewith to give 'Iftar' to a fasting man. Then the Messenger of Allah said: 'Allah will bestow this reward on one who gives Iftar to a fasting man with a sip of milk, or date, or a sip of water. And whoso gives satisfaction to a man, Allah will give him drink from my Fountain (Al-Kauthar), which will not make him thirsty till he will enter Paradise. It is a month of which its beginning is mercy, the middle is forgiveness of sins and the end is freedom from the fire. And whoso makes light the (burden) of his covenanted slaves therein, Allah will forgive him and He will make him free from Fire'. (Baihaqi)

This sermon of Allah's Messenger (SAW) summarised the virtues and adaabs of the month of Ramadhan.

In conclusion therefore, we must not forget that all these benefits are achieved by first knowing that we are observing the fast as an obligatory duty and hence should strive hard to see that we observe it in concordance with the way Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAW) said it should be observed - by knowing its obligatory, sunnah and recommended steps as well as those things that nullify it.

May Allah (SAW) in His infinite Mercy enable us to see the beginning and end of this sacred month and include us among His servants that would be emancipated from the Hell in it, ameen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TA'ALIM SESSIONS

Brothers and sisters are reminded of the importance of holding weekly Ta'alim Sessions in areas where there are atleast two members. This would help immensely in bringing the brothers together and also (most importantly), their hearts would find rest due to the remembrance of Allah, as Allah (SWT) said: "Those who believe, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest." (Q13:28). It also keeps them alive, according to the saying of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) who said: "The example of one who remembers his Lord (Allah) in comparison to one who does not remember his Lord (Allah), is that of a living creature compared to a dead one". (Bukhari)

May Allah (SWT) give us all the ability to be among those who constantly remember HIM, ameen.

APPEAL

The Publication Committee welcomes from members things like (i) Information about any member regarding birth, marriage, arrival, graduation and departure, (ii) Information on branch activities such as lectures, ta'alim sessions and fund raising drives, (iii) General comments, observations, or objective criticisms regarding the Newsletter. We should all keep in mind that the Newsletter is ours and should strive to make our contributions towards its prompt publication.

APPOLOGY

The Publication Committee is apologising to brothers and sisters for the late production and distribution of this issue. This was due to some technical and logistical problems. We sincerely hope and pray that such hitches would not happen again, insha'Allah.

ARRIVALS

Brother Abubakar Sadiq Musa arrived from Kaduna State Water Board, for a Masters in Business Administration programme at Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield.

Brother Mas'ud Baderin arrived from Lagos State, Nigeria for a Masters programme (an LLB) in Law at the University of Nottingham, Nottingham.

GRADUATION/DEPARTURES

Brother Muhammad Hamisu Muhammad has returned to Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Nigeria, after completing a one year training programme in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Birmingham, Birmingham.

Brother Abdur-Rasheed Ayeni has returned to Lagos State Water Board after successfully completing his M.Sc. in Water & Waste Management at the Water, Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC), an Institute in Loughborough University, Loughborough.

BIRTHS

The family of Brother Usman Abdullahi of Loughborough University has been blessed with a baby girl on the 12th September, 1996. They named her Sakinah. May Allah bless her, make her a good muslimah and enable her parents bring her up in the right manner, according to the Sari'ah, ameen.

The family of Brother Abubakar Shehu Yabo also of Loughborough University has been blessed with a

baby boy on the 6th November, 1996. They named him Bashir. May Allah bless him, make him a good muslim and enable his parents bring her up in the right manner, according to the Shari'ah, ameen.

THE WINTER CAMP

This year's Winter Camp is scheduled to take place at Didsbury Mosque, Manchester from 27th to 29th December, 1996. The Theme of the gathering is "DA'AWAH - A FUNDAMENTAL DUTY OF ALL MUSLIMS".

Speakers at the Camp include Dr Manazir Ahsan, the Director of Islamic Foundation, Markfield, Leicester, Brother Abubakar Asmal and Brother Ashiru Sani, former President of the Forum.

There would be workshops and discussion sessions on several topics, among which is a special session on the Role of Women in the Transformation of Nigerian Society. It is in the light of this that we highly encourage both brothers and sisters to try and attend this gathering. Full details and formal invitation letters and directions would be sent to all members shortly, insha'Allah.

We look forward to seeing you at Manchester.

