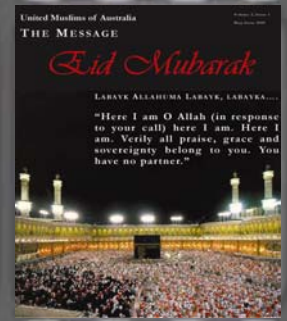
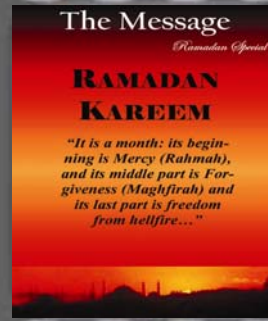


THE MESSAGE

"AND VERILY, YOU
(O MUHAMMAD)
ARE ON AN EXALTED
CHARACTER" (68:4)

EDITORIAL



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Acronyms you need to know:

Pbuh/S: Peace be upon him

Swt: Subhaanahu Wa Taa'la, meaning: The Most Exalted/Glorified.

R: May Allah be pleased with him

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu.

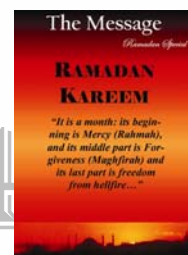
Eid Mubarak to all, and welcome to another edition of "The Message" magazine. The New Year has dawned upon us yet again, and the dials on all clocks and watches have gone up another notch for the year of 2005. Another new year awaits to run its course, and since the first month of the year coincides with Eid, "The Message" committee decided to start off the new year by featuring a special article on Hajj. The committee also found it befitting to focus on the manners and characteristics of a Muslim, as this is a topic that requires a lot of attention in the present day and age. Despite the fact that this theme has a very wide scope with many sub-topics, "The Message" committee has tried to pick some of the most important topics to cover. Keep in mind that this edition is part one, and insha'Allah we will continue on this theme in the next edition, so look out for the next copy to be released soon!

Many of our submitters use the Prophet's character (pbuh) as their inspiration to write their articles, so we should use these characteristics of the Prophet as a chance to reflect on ourselves, and improve our manners in every way possible. Most of us know that he was sent to mankind to perfect manners, so what other way is there to learn these qualities, other than from our beloved Prophet?

I leave you to indulge into the perfect qualities of Muhammad (pbuh), as well as other articles that focus on the Muslim ideal, and I pray to our Almighty Lord to help us maintain proper manners in Islam.

Finally, I would like to invite you to participate in our exciting poetry competition on page 18. Show us your talent, and display to the community your talent and vibe in poetry!

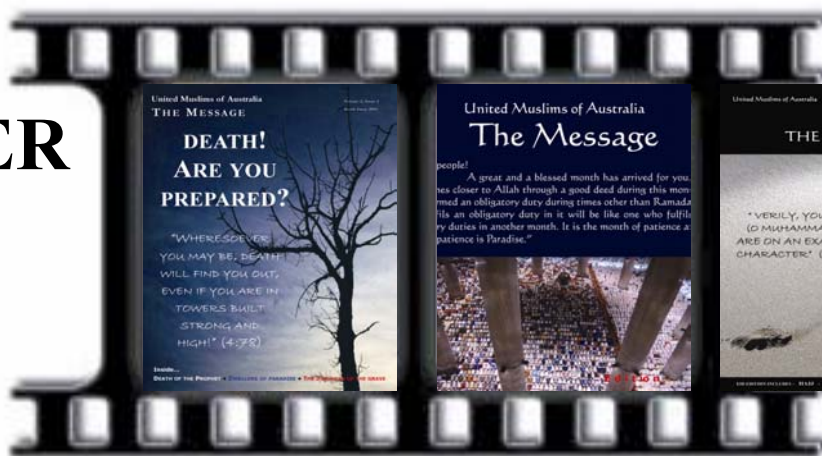
I sign off in the name of Allah Almighty, the all-Knower, all-Hearer.



SHEIKH'S CORNER

SPECIAL FEATURE

The Muslim Ideal



The best words are the words of Allah and the best guidance is the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

One of the greatest blessings of Allah on this nation is Muhammad (pbuh), the greatest Prophet and human being of all mankind. He says (pbuh) describing his great mission: "I was sent by Allah to perfect and complete good manners." This must be the focus of our life and our actions must be based on this. Perfecting one's manners and displaying high morals, characteristics and etiquette are some of the most important deeds in Islam. Displaying this with people is a type of worship that gets you closer to Allah (swt). The Prophet (pbuh) said that "One of you will reach the status of the one that prays during the night and fasts during the day with his good manners."

Demonstrating excellent manners is a form of worship with which Allah will reward a great bounty, and that great bounty is paradise! He (pbuh) also describes those who would be close to him in the hereafter; "The close ones to me in the hereafter are those with good manners."

In practising sound manners you are imitating the greatest Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Sunnah that Allah has praised the Prophet with in which he says in Surat Al-Qalam (Verse 4) "Verily you are in a high and exalted standard of great and good character and manners." Allah the Lord of the universe has provided this description for Muhammad (pbuh) that no other Prophet or human being has been described with. We should be proud to be part of this great nation, to follow the examples of a great man and be rewarded by Allah (swt) a great reward.

The beauty of Islam is that worship is not only limited between Allah and His servants. Worship spreads and continues from Allah to His servants, and His servants to one another. An example is when the Prophet (pbuh) mentioned a woman who was very disobedient. She used to commit adultery yet she still entered the

paradise because she fed a starving dog and had mercy on an animal. Then what are the rewards from Allah if we are generous and kind to His human servants?

'Manners' is an extensive and well-known topic that is much spoken about. It is the subject of several books and lectures; however, the shortcomings are with the implementation of this in our lives and with each other.

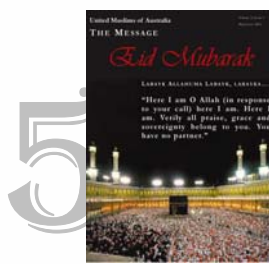
I urge all the Muslim youth to take serious action towards perfecting their manners and apply it in all their daily activities; from their relationships with workmates to that between friends and family. Know that it is a path that brings you closer to your Lord Allah Almighty. You must endeavour to encourage others to possess the character and the etiquette of the Prophet (pbuh).

With this character, Islam ruled the east and the west. With this character, people entered Islam across the nations of the world. With this character you will get closer to Allah and you will enter the paradise of Allah, insha'Allah.

He (Allah Almighty) says, "And compete to the forgiveness of Allah and to a paradise that is as wide as the heavens and the earth." I call all the Muslim youth to take this as their competition with one another, a competition on who would be closer to the Prophet (pbuh) with his good character and his manners, and thus to be closer to Allah Almighty.

I ask Allah almighty to give us what He gave to His Prophet from the good manners and good character, and I ask Allah to have mercy on us and on all the Muslims, and to forgive us and grant us paradise. He is the All-Knower, All-Hearer.

Sheikh Shady Al-Suleiman





All Praise is due to Allah and may the peace and blessings of Allah (swt) be upon His slave and final Messenger Muhammad (pbuh). To go further...

Another year has lapsed and that stubborn digit at the end of the calendar has finally moved up a number. It hasn't done so for more than 300 days. So many days have sneaked passed us until before we knew it, it was Hajj Season again.

It is the time the pilgrims rush to purchase the essentials they need for the trip, when the Islamic bookstores wear thin on their Hajj Guides and booklets, courses are running in this Masjid and that centre, briefing the pilgrims on the Fiqh of Hajj. There is an awe of excitement and a feeling of sadness in the air. You walk into the Islamic Centers and a typical sight is the advertisement on the notice board about a Hajj tour organized by one of the many organizations clearly marking the price of the trip, the Khutab on Friday are related to Hajj, pilgrims of this year call up their friends and relatives, email them and host them as they farewell them and seek their forgiveness of any offences or hurt they may have caused in the past; the tongues of the people speak of the stories and advice as past visitors sit to tell the first-timers of the heart warming and emotional stories, making the hearts of the pilgrims of this season flow with enthusiasm and eagerness while the hearts of those who cannot make it this year is filled with sadness at a lost pleasure.

Hajj is the final pillar of the 5 pillars of Islam, completed only on a strictly defined date at a strictly defined zone on the face of the earth. There is no Hajj on any other day and it could not be done except in a land in the Arab Peninsula, that we now know as Saudi Arabia. Moreover, Hajj is only obligated on those who can financially afford it and only when they can afford it does it become an obligation on them. This is what makes the journey all the more worthwhile and exclusive. Apart from Hajj in Mecca, what else would a pilgrim do?

A must-do for all the pilgrims while they are in the Holy Land is to cross, for a few hours, the dusty dry desert to reach the city of Medina. There, in the most noblest and sacred of surfaces on the face of Earth, lies the body of the greatest man that ever lived, Muhammad the son of Abdullah (pbuh). If giving him your greetings at the gates of his grave is enough reason to make you cross all the distances in the world, then being a few kilometers away from him in Mecca would surely be a reason to see him!

However, one must remember when they take up the journey and responsibility of fulfilling the act of Hajj, they must prepare themselves internally and externally. They must understand why they are traveling and what the aim of the trip is. They must understand that the trip is not a Holiday, that this act of worship is not performed in a vacuum all alone and that the rest of the world is not like Australia. That is why when the pilgrims go to Hajj; they must remember to take their manners with them.

The Hajj and its facilities are established to serve millions of people every year from all around the world. When the pilgrims of Australia travel to Saudi Arabia to make for Hajj, they will see what they will not see even through 50 international trips to 50 different countries. Can you imagine?

Almost every single country around the world will be represented in a sea of pilgrims. Not only in the country but from cities and cities, coming and attending the Hajj for this year. Of them who come from the 'civilised' world, using the term very loosely and others come from the depth of the desert and know only of the tribal and desert etiquettes. You will need patience in the buckets full.

You must have your manners switched on at all times as in some circumstances; even arguing can diminish your rewards. You must stay on your best behaviour to maximize your rewards during this once in a life time trip and make the most of it.

You will come across people who are rude, harsh and hard, selfish, ignorant, arrogant, filthy, smelly, inappropriate, loud, foul mouthed and know nothing of order, respect, queues, maturity or organization. You will be intimidated, disrespected, tested and hurt – what will you do about it? Will you forfeit your entire trip to satisfy your nafss (ego) or will you accept it and cope with forbearance per chance your Hajj may be accepted?

This advice is not only for the Australians facing the other cultures. Including Australians, there are other western nations who come with their etiquettes, systems of organization, queues, hygiene, appropriateness and manners. The warning is also not to consider the Hajj trip as a social event where you get to hang out with your friends, stroll the shopping centers of Mecca, stay up with the boys/girls during the night and laughing and joking during the day – one must also stick to the manners and character of the Hajj also.

There is no arguing in Hajj, no room for foul language, no swearing, no back biting or slander between pilgrims. The pilgrim should use this time to reflect on their past lives, to put a sincere case to Allah to forgive their sins and make them steadfast on the right path, to concentrate on the correctness of their actions and perfect them. Perhaps they may return to their homes without a sin on their backs.

Many lessons can also be learned from Hajj. When one is in Arafah, let him look at the amazing number of people present there like a sea of people and ask himself – why are these people here? What has brought these people here? What are they doing? Does it not strike you that all these people are Muslims who came to fulfill the commandment of Allah and each one of them is asking for forgiveness of their sins. Imagine that Allah rejected all the people – what other source of help would they have? What hope would they have? Imagine Allah forgave them all and they are all inhabitants of Jannah.

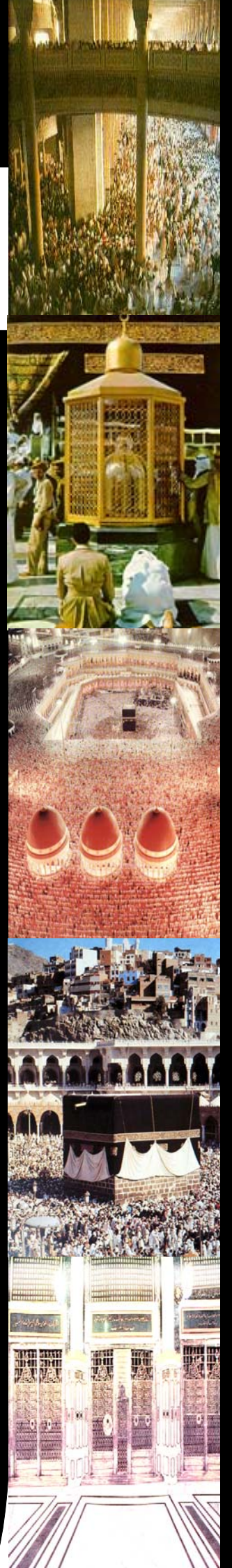
To what event can you invite so many people and get so many to turn up? Prophet Ibrahim (pbuh) once made such a call a long time ago and by Allah this call is still being answered and will continue to do so for a long time to come (insha'Allah) by millions of Muslims all over the world. The other religions envy us for it, but then again any blessing Allah bestows upon His slave is enviable.

The ihram (hajj clothing) teaches us that we are all human and thus we are all equal before Allah on this Earth, therefore it is a demonstration of solidarity, of unity in worship, and submission to Allah. There is no difference between a white man, a black man, a red man or a yellow man. They all wear the same outfits and they are all equal before Allah. What set them apart is not their clothes or the quality of the white cloths they wear, but their actions and the level of piety that they possess.

The number of cultures and societies teaches you the greatness of Allah, where you thought Allah was only there to plan and look after you, only to realize how many millions of people Allah takes care of and provides for, of whose existence you are unaware of.

The patience you practice will be rewarded and may it remain instilled in you forever. On the day of Arafah, if you are at home and did not make Hajj, fast that day for the great reward from Allah.

May Allah (swt) grant everyone the chance to travel to perform Hajj and fulfill their religious obligations in the best possible manner, that of the Messenger (pbuh).



UMA Playgroup

69 Croydon Street Lakemba



Alhamdulillah, Allah (swt) is helping and guiding this Muslim ummah and insha'Allah it will become easier to open an Islamic Child Care centre in the near future. However, for the time being the UMA Sisterhood has worked hard to establish the UMA playgroup. This playgroup has been established to provide our children with sound Islamic play, manners and morals and we are already seeing the benefits unfold before our eyes. Both children and their mothers come together to guide and add purpose to play, sowing the seed of Iman in our young children – the future generation.

The playgroup is set up and looks like a normal playgroup where the children enjoy playing with various educational tools to increase their cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional, physical and motor skills. It is the added ingredient that sets this playgroup apart from other playgroups- Islamic concepts, morals and manners. We try our best to integrate Islamic concepts throughout the curriculum.

Our children are taught to say "bismillah" and "alhamdulillah" before every activity. They wash their hands before they eat, and are reminded to respect, share and love one another. When they play 'dress-ups,' the young girls imitate their mothers and wear the 'hijab'. They read and listen to books with Islamic concepts – if you ask our children "Who brings us food?" They will reply in a loud unison voice;

"Allah brings us food!"
And they chant boastfully;
"I'm a little Muslim,
brave and strong.
Here is my heart and
here is my song.
I will strive for Allah
All life long
And never ever
will I do wrong."

Incy Wincy spider
climbed up the water spout.
Allah sent the rain
and washed the spider out.
Allah sent the sun
and dried up all the rain.
So Incy Wincy spider
climbed up the spout again.



Our children are our future Ummah. To strive in their cause is to strive in the path of Allah (swt).

It is easy to drop off your child at the nearest child care centre but it is hard when you have to deal with the bad attitude and behaviours associated with western ideology and systems. The Prophet (pbuh) said, 'Every one of you is a shepherd and every shepherd is responsible for his herd...and the woman is a shepherd and she is responsible for her herd...'

For every difficult step you take in striving towards your children, our future Ummah; Allah (swt) will reward you and make it easier for the Muslims to establish a good, sound Islamic environment for our children to be safe and healthy physically, socially and mentally.

May Allah (swt) accept our actions and make our children of the righteous. Ameen.

Register your child by contacting 0404 806 167 or emailing fatima@uma.org.au

UMA Playgroup Management

ANMA

AUSTRALIAN NEW MUSLIM ASSOCIATION

Since The Australian New Muslims Association began three years ago, aiming to fill a vacuum in the Muslim ummah for the catering of New Muslims, ANMA has successfully undertaken many hurdles, walhamdulillah. ANMA continues to grow and propagate Islam as guidance and peace to humankind. ANMA also seeks to help the new Muslim to achieve what he/she has set out to achieve, to worship Allah (swt) in a manner that is totally devoted to Him.

ANMA is not a separate entity from our community but rather a united part of this effort. The new Muslim is a great example to the wider Australian community and is in the best position to give Da'wah and we, as Muslims have to treasure them. We hope in Allah's will and with your support, to provide for the emotional, intellectual and spiritual development of the new Muslim brothers and sisters, so they can become future leaders and for the successful propagation of Islam. Our aim is to provide a service totally devoted to pleasing Allah (swt) and to help our brothers and sisters overcome any obstacles or difficulties by any means necessary.

Today ANMA has come a long way, walhamdulillah, with the inclusion of extra services such as IT, marketing and public relations and the opening of new housing units for sisters and brothers who seek accommodation. With over 200 New Muslims registered on our database, the 19 volunteers in ANMA continue to keep regular contact with the New Muslim brothers and sisters through telephone calls, emails and regular social gatherings such as the monthly forum (on the second Sunday of the month), cinema nights and the ANMA Iftar. We also held the fantastic and joyous Eid Festival in conjunction with the UMA at the UMA Centre.

Additionally, who can forget the successful fundraiser held in October, 'The Golden Age.' Alhamdulillah, after many months of planning and organizing, the night was a great success as ANMA had its fellow brothers and sisters supporting us. Inshaa Allah, we expect to hold the next event in the near future, so look out for updates.

ANMA has also launched the EZIDebit program, whereby any person interested can contact ANMA to have Sadaqah or Zakaat debited from their bank account. In addition, ANMA will also be unveiling the new and improved website. It is still under construction, but is due to be completed by the New Year insha'Allah.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact us on:

ANMA Hotline: 0410779299 Email: info@anma.com.au

Hibba Mourad El-Chami, Development Division



What once was a small committee consisting of a brother or two trying to help the youth a few years ago has flourished greatly in the present time. Sydney Muslim Youth, by the grace of Allah (swt), is reaching out to thousands of youth, both face to face, as well as hundreds more found on our website which is dedicated to all Muslim high school students.

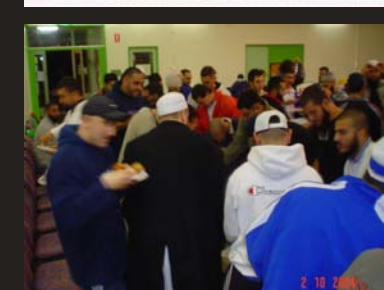
Speaking of which, our beloved Prophet (pbuh) has told us that: on the Day of Judgment, a person will not leave the questioning position until questioned about their youth, and how they spent their time during that stage of their lives. From this we can understand that this period of youth during one's life is very valuable and this time is priceless; as an old man will have wisdom, yet he lacks the energy to do things with the wisdom he possesses. On the other hand, if we observe a child, you will find that he/she is exploding with energy, yet a child lacks the intellect and the wisdom to know what is right and wrong.

Who gathers these two qualities together? We can finally deduce that is it the youth, which consists of you and me!

Our Vision: To gather a generation of young Muslims who are proud of their religion, strong in their faith, who love Allah (swt) and follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), along with success and superiority in any field they choose to endeavor in, whether in education, work, and the like. A generation which possess the love of Allah (swt) and the sincerity to work for His sake, and the means to have a positive impact on the society in all forms.



EID FESTIVAL





CAMP BBQ



The Etiquette of a Muslim

It is a common misconception, among most people, that Islam spread by the sword. This is in fact far from the truth. This is what an increasing number of non-Muslims are also realising. Among the prominent examples is M.K. Gandhi, who writes "...I became more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won the place for Islam in those days in the scheme of life. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for his pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and his followers, his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These, and not the sword, carried everything before them and surmounted every trouble.

Our great religion had small beginnings and this spark ignited a flame, which within a short period of time engulfed a large number of nations.



More than anything else Islam took root in hearts and spread among the general population because of the intrigue and fascination which people had for the Muslims – Yes for the Muslims! Here were a people who came from a land steeped in *Jahiliya*, and yet their presence was so strong and their manner so impressive that people became attracted to their way of life; the way of life that we call Islam. I will draw on the age on saying "Actions speak louder than words" and I put forward to you that an excellent and effective form of da'wah is if we demonstrate to the world by our behaviour and manners how great a religion we have, rather than just telling them. Yahya ibn Saïd said "I have heard that by his good character a man can reach the degree of the one who stands in prayer at night and the one who is thirsty from fasting in the heat of the day" [Al-Muwatta Hadith 47.6]. O that when we speak people will pay attention to what we say, people will accept what we say and people will inshaAllah embrace the true religion of Islam.

We undoubtedly have a superior religion and we tell everyone that we do- perhaps we can drive this point home by exemplifying this ourselves. Narrated Masruq (r): "We were sitting with Abdullah ibn Amr (r) who was narrating to us (the Hadith). He said, "Allah's Apostle (s) was neither a Fahish nor a Mutafahhish and he used to

say, ‘The best amongst you are the best in character (having good manners).’ [Sahih Al Bukhari 8.61].

Good manners form an integral part of one’s belief and this is clear from the Hadith narrated by Abu Huraira, (r): The Prophet (s) said: The most perfect believer in respect of faith is he who is best of them in manners. [Sunan of Abu Dawood Hadith 4665].

The Prophet (s) was known as ‘‘Al-Ameen’’ or The Trustworthy, even before prophethood and this reputation attracted many people to Islam. Moreover, as a Muslim this quality must be in-built, for trust is the building block for any relationship, be it within the family or with a friend. The word of a Muslim must be his or her bond. **If you make a promise then keep it, no matter what happens. This is a sign of a true believer.**

Narrated Hudaifa (r): ‘‘Allah’s Messenger (s) narrated to us two narrations, one of which I have seen happening and I am waiting for the other.

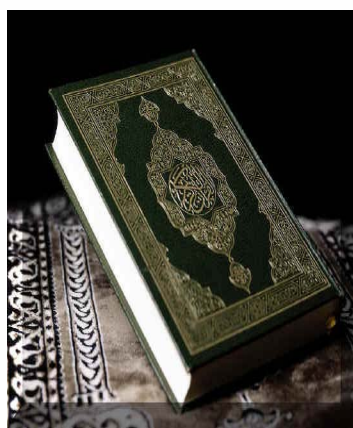
He narrated that honesty was preserved in the roots of the heart of men in the beginning and then they learnt it (honesty) from the Quran, and then they learnt it from the

We tend to take these matters lightly, but these are very serious concerns, the lack of which leads to the widespread corruption, which is so rampant in the Muslim world of today.

There are many other Hadith which bring to light the etiquette which a Muslim must show and practice. As Ali ibn Abi Talib (r) said that the Messenger of Allah (s) said ‘‘Part of the excellence of a man’s Islam is that he leaves what does not concern him’’ [Al Muwatta Hadith 47.3].

Zayd ibn Talha (r), who attributed it to the Prophet (s) said, ‘‘The Messenger of Allah said, ‘every deen has an innate character. The character of Islam is modesty.’’’ [Al Muwatta Hadith 47.9].

Narrated by Abdullah (r): ‘‘The Prophet (s) said: ‘Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (i.e.; wickedness, evil-doing), and Al-Fajur leads to the fire, and a man may keep telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar.’’ [Sahih Al Bukhari 8.116]. Narrated by Abu Huraira (r), Allah’s Messenger (s) said:



Prophet’s Sunnah.

He also told us about its disappearance saying, ‘‘A man will go to sleep whereupon honesty will be taken away from his heart, and only its traces will remain, resembling the traces of the fire. He then will sleep whereupon the remainder of the honesty will also be taken away from his heart and its traces will resemble a blister which is raised over the surface of the skin, when an ember touches one’s foot; and in fact, this blister does not contain anything. So there will come a day when people will deal in business with each other but there will hardly be any trustworthy persons among them. Then it will be said that in such-and such a tribe there is such-and-such person who is honest, and a man will be admired for his intelligence, good manners and strength, though indeed he will not have belief equal to a mustard seed in his heart.’’ The narrator added: There came upon me a time when I did not mind dealing with anyone of you, for if he was a Muslim ruler would prevent him from cheating; but today I cannot deal except with so-and-so and so-and-so.’’ [Sahih Al Bukhari 8.504]. And today we can see this lack of honesty and trustworthiness.

‘‘The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger.’’ [Sahih Al Bukhari Hadith 8.135].

Unfortunately, many Muslims take these simple matters for granted. Little do they realise that these simple matters of characters, morals, good manners, trust, honesty and integrity play such a vital role in our religion and in fact form the basic foundation upon which our belief can be progressively strengthened. The point that I am making is that Allah (swt) says in Surah Ali-Imran: ‘‘You are the best of peoples evolved for mankind enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah.’’ We must justify this and show the world, for the sake of Allah, that we are indeed the best nation to be raised among mankind. To live up to this we must practice the Quran and the Sunnah- this means that we not only observe duties such as prayers, fasting, Zakat etc. but also the finer points of our religion such as good manners, honesty, trustworthiness, integrity and high moral standards. Not only must we practice this but we must also enjoin these on others.

By Maher Magrabi

QURANIC VERSE

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

" VERILY, YOU (O MUHAMMAD) ARE ON AN EXALTED CHARACTER" (68:4)

Let us follow the footsteps of the Prophet (pbuh), surely He is the greatest role model.

'And verily, you are on an exalted (standard of) character.' "It has been mentioned to us that Sa'd bin Hisham asked `A'ishah about the character of the Messenger of Allah, so she replied: `Have you not read the Qur'an'? Sa'd replied `Of course.' Then she said: `Verily, the character of the Messenger of Allah was the Qur'an.'"

This means that he would act according to the commands and the prohibition in the Qur'an. His nature and character were patterned according to the Qur'an, and he abandoned his natural disposition (i.e., the carnal nature). So whatever the Qur'an commanded, he did it, and whatever it forbade, he avoided it. Along with this, Allah gave him the exalted character, which included the qualities of modesty, kindness, bravery, pardoning, gentleness and every other good characteristic.

The focus and attention is on the prophet (pbuh). If it were not for his good character, no one would have embraced Islam. Allah had ordered the prophet not to have the character of a harsh and hardhearted man. In Surat Al-Imran (v-159), Allah (swt) says, "It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you deal gently with them. If you were severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when you

want to take a decision, put your trust in Allah. For Allah loves those, who put their trust (in Him)."

The Prophet (pbuh) led by example, and taught his companions to follow in his footsteps. Anas (r) said, "I served the Messenger of Allah for ten years, and he never said a word of displeasure to me (not even Uff). (Sahih Bukhari). The characteristics of the Prophet were complete; the external behaviour reflected the internal. Imam Ahmad recorded that `A'ishah said, "The Messenger of Allah never struck a servant of his, with his hand, nor did he ever hit a woman. He never hit anything with his hand, except for when he was fighting Jihad in the cause of Allah."

Fear in Allah and good character come hand in hand, if one is absent, so is the other. Allah's Messenger was asked about the deed, which will be foremost to lead a man to Paradise. He replied "Fear of Allah and good character." (At-Tirmithi-Hassan) The best act of good character is trust in Allah, to be patient when afflicted by harm, not to swear, not to fight, and commit sin. One must understand that Allah is all-Knowing and the best of planners. The Messenger (pbuh) said "Anyone for whom Allah intends good, He makes him suffer some affliction." (Al Bukhari).

May Allah (swt) make us patient in moments of despair, Ameen

A GLIMPSE INTO RIYAA'

Riyaa' is of many types and forms. Its nature and tendency is that it invalidates the actions as stated in the Book and the Sunnah. Know O brother, O sister that the word *riyaa'* is taken from the word *ru'yah* (to be seen). The one to be "seen" is defined as a person who seeks esteem amongst others for praise and other acknowledgements.

There are three symptoms that are indicative of riyaa', and it is essential that a believer avoid all of them.

1-The love of Praise

As mentioned in a hadith of the first three people being thrown into the hellfire; the scholar (who taught for fame), the martyr (who fought for fame), and the person who gave his money in charity (so people would say he is generous). All three of these people desired the pleasure of people over the pleasure of Allah. The person who desires the praise of people must feel some pride in himself, for he feels himself worthy of being praised. There is a danger, therefore, of him becoming arrogant and boastful.

2- Fear of Criticism

No one likes to be criticized. The dislike of criticism regarding religious practices may be divided into two categories:

A- The first category is that of a person who neglects a commandment of Allah in order to avoid the criticism of his peers. However, the true believers are described in the Qur'an as follows: "...They do not fear the criticism of those who criticize. And this is the blessing of Allah; He gives it to whomsoever He wishes. Verily, Allah is Self-Sufficient, all knowing. "(Al-Maa'idah : 54)

B- The second category is that of a person who obeys certain commandments of Islam, not for the sake of Allah, but because he fears people will look down on him and criticize him if he does not do it. For example, a man may make his formal prayers in the mosque because he does not want people to criticize him for praying at home, or to think that he is not praying at all.

3- Greed for people's possessions

If a person covets what other people possess, whether it is rank, money or power, then he will wish them to envy him similarly. For example, if he is jealous of a position of a certain person in society, he will try by

possible means to attain the same position. Such desires lead people to spend their lives putting on a show for other people so that they will admire their rank, money, or power.

These three categories are implied in the following statement of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Abu Musa related that a person came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked: "A person fights to defend his honor (i.e. to avoid criticism), another to prove his bravery (i.e. to be praised for it), and a third to show off (i.e. so that his position can be seen); of these three, which one fights in the way of Allah?" He (pbuh) answered:

"Whoever fights to make the word of Allah prevalent [i.e. to bring honor to Islam, and to establish it in the land], he is the one who fights in the way of Allah" (Sahih al-Bukhari vol. 4 #65)

It is clear that riyaa' possess a grave danger to a believer and his welfare. We should continually seek refuge in Allah (swt) to keep us away from riyaa' and its misgivings. Do not differentiate in your worship between the presence of people and their absence, or between their knowledge of your actions and their ignorance. Rather be conscious of the infinite knowledge of Allah alone.

by Abu Umar Shafei



Allah has sent his Prophet (s) for the perfection of good character, Allah's Messenger (s) said "for I have been sent for the completion of good manners"

MOTHER

O

I Forget...

T

Yes, alhamdulillah I have two wonderful parents. Unlike many, I have been blessed with parents that have played an important/essential role in the building of my character - who I am as a complete person. But how many times a day, a week, a year do I remember this? How many times am I thankful? How many moments do I dedicate in reflection of this blessing?

H

In all honesty, I do not know, I cannot remember. And as I write this I am beginning to depress myself, as the guilt slowly creeps from my head to my heart.

E

I am living my life in this constant state of forgetfulness.

I forget to say Alhamdulillah.

I forget to thank my parents.

R

I forget...

So what role does Islam play? What does my being a Muslimah have to do with any of this?

One of the foundations of Islam is the behaviour of a believer. This includes responsibilities and duties to my parents, the rights that they have over me. This has been one of the most difficult areas in my life to fulfill, because it is in the "half-way" moments that I remember my duties.

Mum shouts out my name once, twice, thrice and then she just does what ever it is she needs herself, 'cause it's easier. By the time I get around to responding to her, she has finished what-

ever it was she needed doing. I am running down the stairs, 'Yes mum, what is it?'

Suddenly I remember, paradise is beneath my mother's feet. It is there that my honour, my reward, my everything lies and yet I continue to deny myself these things through my insolence.

So how do I mend this?

Is it fixable, considering my forgetfulness?

Where do I start?

Islam, Muhammad (pbuh), the Quran, prayer and many more things, all of these things, practice to serve as a reminder, or rather should remind us of our duties to our parents. Through prayer, reading Quran, learning the Sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh); through submission to Allah (swt), one can learn and maintain a state of respect, obedience, appreciation and love for one's parents.

The more you can give to your parents, the more you will receive in return from Allah (swt). Every good we do returns to us. Remember, soon enough we will be parents ourselves, insha'Allah. We all talk or think about the ways we will bring up our children and how we are going to improve on our parents' skills and methods. But how many of us have shown our parents what a good job they have done, by behaving the way in which they taught us?

I can't remember.

by Asma Khoder

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا

HADITH

A

D

I

T

H

Narrated by Abu Aiyub Al-Ansari:

Allah's Apostle said,

"It is not lawful for a man to desert his Muslim brother for more than three nights.

(It is unlawful for them that)

when they meet, one of them turns his face away

from the other, and the other turns his face from the

former, and the better of the two will be the one who greets the other first."

Sahih Bukhari (Volume 8. Book 73)

The true bond of kinship has been lost by humanity ever since the time of Abel and Cain. Families have been separated from each other due to reasons like jealousy, pride, status, or even monetary problems. The blessed Prophet of Allah (pbuh) said in an authentic Hadith that whoever severs the bond of kinship will not enter paradise. Such heavy words! However, many of us take this lightly and neglect the duty of reforming this bond between our families. Our hearts are hardened and cloaked by all of these terrible qualities we develop over petty issues. At times, we see a friend or family member at a distance, whether we are in the streets, at the shops, or in the masjid; we turn a blind eye as soon as our eyes lay sight on to that person. Yet in remembrance of the companions of the Prophet, what one learns is the complete opposite of today's actions. The companions used to compete against each other to be the first to give salam, as they knew very well that they were going to be rewarded a great bounty in the hereafter. We are no different from the companions. They are humans just as we are. The only difference was their faith in Allah, and their race to seek the favour of their Lord.

Make this a new challenge for yourself. Race to reform this bond within your family and know that you will maintain a close relation to Allah (swt), for Allah loves those ones who perform this good deed, as cited in the following hadith:

A'isha reported that the Prophet, (pbuh) said, "Kinship (*rahim*) is derived from Allah. If anyone maintains ties of kinship Allah maintains ties with him. If anyone cuts them off, Allah cuts him off." (Sahih Bukhari)

Surely this is enough motivation for you to get closer to Allah and earn something worthwhile in this life and the hereafter, as the hadith above is quite unequivocal! Remember that this action is for your sake only, as Allah (swt) does not need you, nor does He need me. It is we that need Allah, and we should rush to serve Him in every possible way.

You may say to yourself, "But my relatives are not proper practicing Muslims, and that is why I do not want to be associated with them," however, Allah does not order you to completely cut off ties with them. In fact, you should find this as an opportunity to demonstrate to them the beauty of Islam. Do not be mistaken and use this excuse to sever the bond of kinship. Be the one who turns his cheek back to the former and gives his peaceful greetings in the name of Islam. Even if your relative was in the wrong, forgive him. If Allah is the All-forgiving, we are nobody not to forgive. Be the first to nurture this connection once more, and surely you will find yourself as the victor, the successor, the winner both in this life and the Hereafter.

What was said that was good was from Allah (swt), and what was said that was bad was from my sinful self, and from the shaytaan.

May Allah (swt) help us to amend and maintain the bonds of kinship and make us from the successful ones in this life and the Hereafter.

By Hesham Mourad



HONESTY AND

Muhammad (pbuh) proved by his living example that he was the most truthful and honest person of his age. He was a poor orphan who had started trading with his uncle, but in a very short time, owing to his honest and fair dealings with all people, he became well-known and respected. Every Makkan, rich or poor, knew him as As-Sadiq (the Truthful) and Al-Amin (the Trustworthy). When Muhammad was yet a young man, the Ka`bah was rebuilt. A dispute arose among the various tribes of Makkah as to who should have the honor of laying the Black Stone in its place in the Ka`bah. They decided that the first one to enter the Ka`bah the next morning would settle the dispute. Muhammad was the first to enter that morning and when the people saw him, they were all very happy that Al-Amin and As-Sadiq had come and would be the one to decide. He put the Black Stone on a cloth so that every tribe could hold the cloth and help to lift the stone, which he then set in place.

Once the chiefs of the Quraysh were sitting and talking about him. An-Nadar ibn al-Harith, the most experienced of them all, said, "O Quraysh! You have not been able to find any plan to meet the calamity that has fallen upon you. Muhammad grew up from childhood in your presence. He was the most liked, honest and faithful among you. Now when he has grown to maturity and has presented these things to you, you say, he is a magician, a soothsayer, a poet, and a mad man. By Allah! I have heard his Message; he is none of these things. A new calamity has fallen upon you."

The Prophet once gathered together all the people of the Quraysh near Mount Safa and asked them, "O Quraysh! If I say that an army is advancing on you from behind the mountains, will you believe me?" All said in one voice, "Yes, because we have never heard you telling a lie." All the people of Makkah, without any exception, swore to his truthfulness and honesty, for he had

lived an unblemished and extremely pious life among them for forty years. Yet most of them still refused to accept him as the Messenger of Allah.

He had lived his whole life in purity and virtue among them, and even his staunchest enemies acknowledged this. They knew that he was the most honest and truthful person among them. The Holy Qur'an, therefore, appealed to them to look at his life and try to understand. How could he tell lies against Allah, when he did not tell lies against human beings!

When the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius received a letter from the Prophet inviting him and his people to Islam, he called the Arab traders who were then visiting his country. He asked Abu Sufyan, their leader, "Did you ever find Muhammad telling a lie before his claim to Prophethood?" He replied that he had not. Then Heraclius said, "I asked you if he had ever told a lie and you replied that he had not. I am sure, if he had spoken unjustly against Allah, he would not have abstained from speaking falsely against human-beings." Heraclius then questioned him about the Prophet's general behavior and conduct with people. Abu Sufyan replied, "Muhammad is nobly born, is honest and truthful, and has never broken a pledge. He enjoins his followers to worship none but One God and to pray to Him alone. He preaches kindness, piety and tolerance towards all and his followers are on the increase."

The pagans of Makkah, though they rejected Muhammad's call to Islam, still trusted none but him with their belongings when they traveled. When the Prophet finally escaped Makkah for Madinah, he asked his cousin `Ali to stay behind to return the pledges he was keeping. Trustworthy to all, he wouldn't keep even a penny's worth of his enemies' property.

Excerpted from www.islamonline.net

THE PROPHET SAID " THE HEAVIEST THING TO BE PLACED IN THE BALANCE OF A BELIEVING SLAVE ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT WILL BE GOOD CHARACTER "

AND HUMBLeness AND TRUST

Muhammad (pbuh) was a perfect model of modesty and humbleness. He never spoke loudly or in an unseemly manner. In the market, he always passed by the people quietly with a smile. Whenever he heard anything undesirable in an assembly, he did not say anything out of respect for the people, but the color of his face showed his feelings and the Companions became cautious. `A'ishah said that she never saw Allah's Messenger laughing so immoderately that she could see his molar teeth, for he only used to smile.

Ibn `Umar reported that a man from the Ansar (the Muslims of Madinah) was giving his brother a warning against modesty when the Prophet came along and said, "Leave him alone, modesty is a part of faith."

`Abdullah ibn Maslamah reported Allah's Messenger as saying, "Modesty is a part of the teachings of the previous prophets and anyone who lacks it is most likely to do whatever he likes."

Zayd ibn Talya reported Allah's Messenger as saying, "Every religion has a character and the character of Islam is modesty."

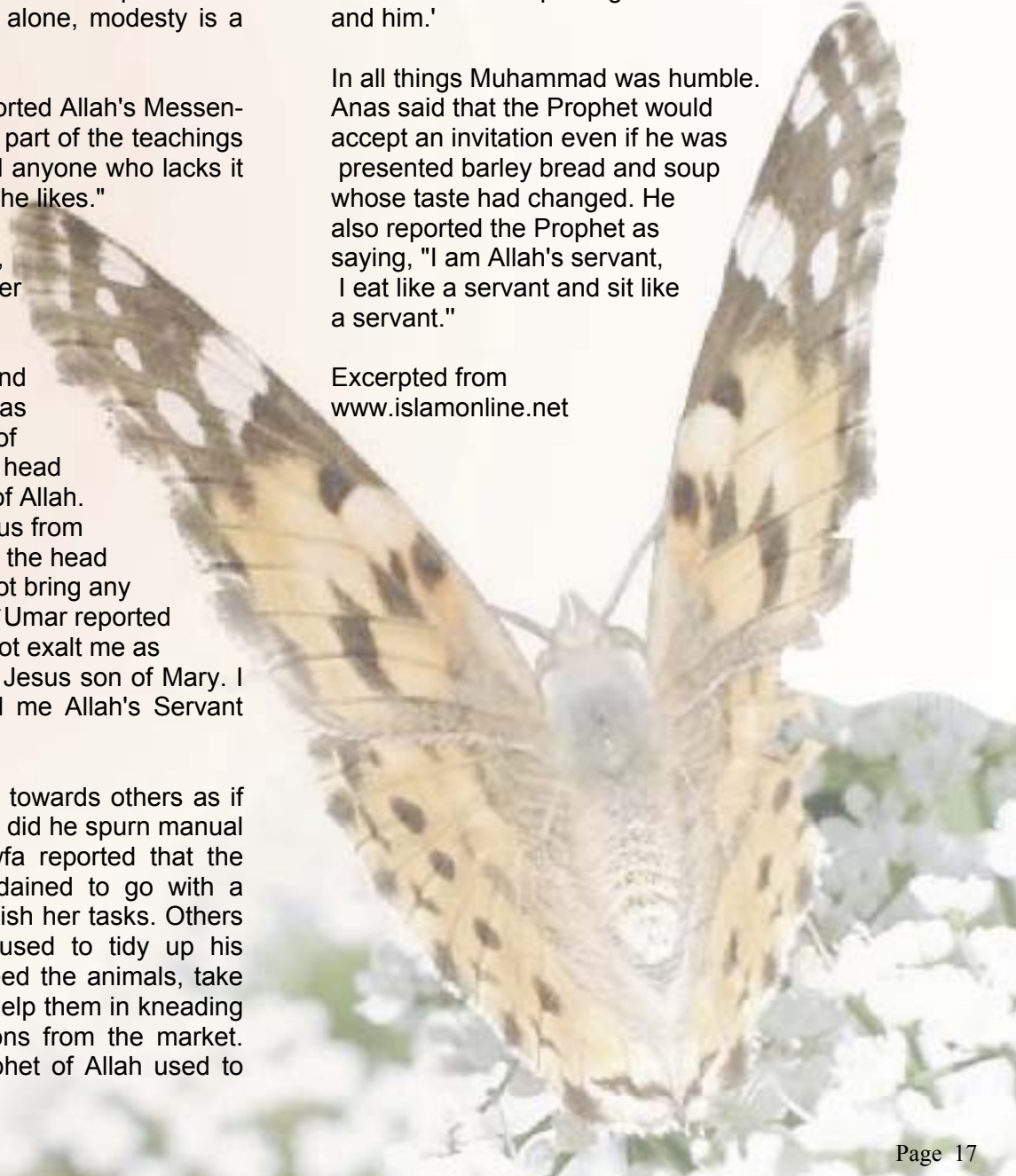
The Prophet lived a simple and modest life, both in Makkah as a trader and the Messenger of Allah, and in Madinah as the head of the state and Messenger of Allah. The change in his social status from that of a trader in Makkah to the head of the state in Madinah did not bring any change in his modest living. `Umar reported the Prophet as saying, "Do not exalt me as the Christians have exalted Jesus son of Mary. I am just His servant, so call me Allah's Servant and Messenger."

The Prophet did not behave towards others as if he was better than them, nor did he spurn manual work. `Abdullah ibn Abi Awfa reported that the Prophet of Allah never disdained to go with a slave or a widow to accomplish her tasks. Others reported that the Prophet used to tidy up his house, tether the camels, feed the animals, take food with his servants, and help them in kneading dough and bringing provisions from the market. Anas reported that the Prophet of Allah used to

and accept a slave's invitation for a meal. Jabir stated that the Prophet used to slow down his pace for the sake of the weak and also prayed for them. When `Adiyy ibn Hatim came to see the Prophet, he called him inside his house. A maid-servant brought a cushion to rest on, but the Prophet placed it between him and `Adiyy and sat down on the floor. `Adiyy later said that he had then immediately realized that the Prophet was not a king. A similar incident was reported by `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al-`As, who said: Once when the Messenger of Allah came to my house, I gave him a cushion filled with bark, but he sat down on the floor placing the cushion between me and him.'

In all things Muhammad was humble. Anas said that the Prophet would accept an invitation even if he was presented barley bread and soup whose taste had changed. He also reported the Prophet as saying, "I am Allah's servant, I eat like a servant and sit like a servant."

Excerpted from
www.islamonline.net



POETRY

... a moment

You must take care of your soul,
Feed it, nourish it, make it whole,

With knowledge of faith, it will defeat,
Then it should feel right and complete,

Don't let it break and fall apart,
Don't let yourself trip and lose heart,

All tests, with patience, you can bear,
Remember Allah, most loving, most fair,

Be a humble servant, and shed your pride,
Be remembered as one who submitted and cried,

By Eman Dandan

COMPETITION

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 HUMBLENESS
 INTENTION
 KNOWLEDGE
 MANNERS
 MODESTY
 PATIENCE
 SALAAT
 SACRIFICE
 SINCERE
 SUBMISSION
 TRUTHFULNESS

WISE QUOTES

Al Hassan said: “Good character is represented by a pleasant and delightful face, loving benevolence, and stopping harm.”

‘Abdullah bin Al-Mubarak said “The characteristics of good conduct are three: to shun all that is forbidden, seeking what is lawful, and spending amply on one’s dependents.”

“Good character is to keep close to the people, yet away from their fortunes.” (Excerpted from Minhaj Al-Muslim)

“Good behaviour is to prevent harm and to extend the necessary help to a believer.” (Excerpted from Minhaj Al-Muslim)

“Good character means that there is nothing important to you besides Allah.” (Excerpted from Minhaj Al-Muslim)

The Messenger (s) said: “There are three characteristics of a hypocrite: when he talks, he tells a lie; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he makes a covenant, he acts treacherously.” (Agreed upon)

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