WMWT 2 –The Big Picture

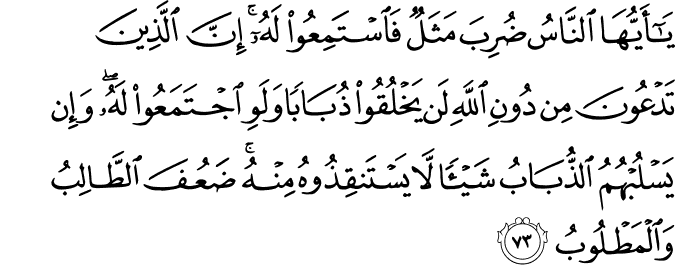
Nouman Ali Khan

(Transcript of WMWT2 with minor editions by editor.)

Verses From Sura Hajj: 73-78

*In The Name of Allah The Most Merciful, The Most Kind*

[22:73](http://quran.com/22/73)



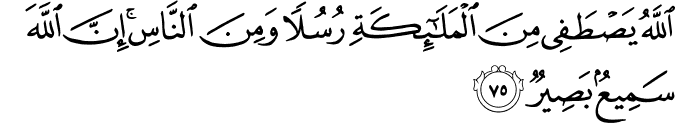
O people, an example is presented, so listen to it. Indeed, those you invoke besides Allah will never create [as much as] a fly, even if they gathered together for that purpose. And if the fly should steal away from them a [tiny] thing, they could not recover it from him. Weak are the pursuer and pursued.

[22:74](http://quran.com/22/74)

22:74

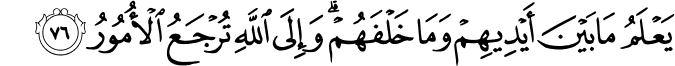
They have not appraised Allah with true appraisal. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.

[22:75](http://quran.com/22/75)



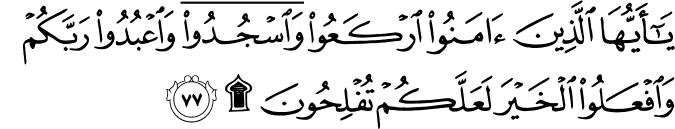
Allah chooses from the angels, messengers and from the people. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Seeing.

[22:76](http://quran.com/22/76)



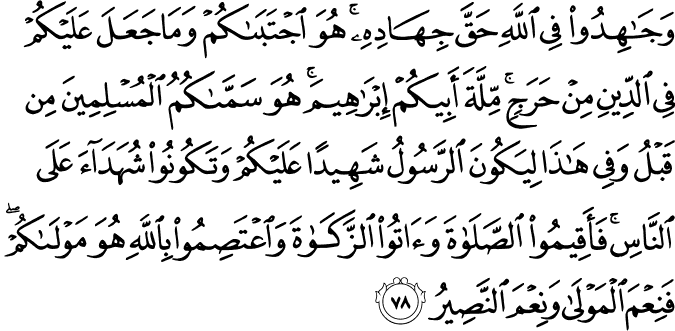
He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them. And to Allah will be returned [all] matters.

[22:77](http://quran.com/22/77)



O you, who have believed, bow and prostrate and worship your Lord and do good so that you may succeed.

[22:78](http://quran.com/22/78)



And strive for Allah with the striving due to Him. He has chosen you and has not placed upon you in the religion any difficulty. [It is] the religion of your father, Abraham. Allah named you "Muslims" before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people. So establish prayer and give zakah and hold fast to Allah. He is your protector; and excellent is the protector, and excellent is the helper.

Explanation

This passage is inspired by the last part of Sura Hajj and in it we’ll talk about the big picture.

The Fly

This passage begins with an address to humanity; ‘Ya ahu hanaas duriba masalun, ***‘Oh mankind an example has been given.’***

The first verse is talking about Allah’s power and the weakness of the human being. Fastamoola hu-An example is about to be given so listen carefully.

It is in the passive or majhool form. There is no mention of the faail or doer; the one who gave the example. It says an example was given.’ The purpose of using the passive is to conceal the subject or the doer. The reason for doing so is that Allah is talking to a hostile crowd. Humanity doesn’t want to hear anything from Allah. So instead of saying Allah gave an example because that would turn people off who are not prepared to listen. They would immediately say, ‘I don’t want to hear this. I’m not interested.’ In comparison the audience in Madni Quran was predominantly Muslim so in those verses Allah says, ‘Darb Allahu masalun.’ Allah mentions his name when addressing the believers. So we pay extra attention not less, but here Allah highlights the speech or the content instead of the speaker like the famous statement of Ali ® ‘We judge the speech, before we judge the speaker.’ It’s very hard to do by the way.

Because as human beings we tend to look at who’s talking, then we listen to what they have to say. We look at all the peripherals and its very hard for us to look past that and hear that something very good is being said by an unlikely source. This is the same reason it is hard for the father of Ibraheem (as) as to accept what Ibraheem (as) is saying even if Ibraheem (as) is speaking the truth. Ibraheem (as)’s father is thinking, ‘He’s just a kid. How can I listen to a kid?’ What does he know?’

So the content is undermined because it is coming from an unlikely or unexpected source. That happens to us too but that’s not the point, the point is that Allah gives us an example, so we should listen to it carefully. ***‘No doubt it those that you are calling upon other than Allah (meaning false Gods). They won’t be able to create a single fly even if they all got together for that purpose.***

So the example Allah gives is the powerlessness of idols and the powerlessness of false kings. Kings who claim themselves to be gods. This seems like a historical thing. Thousands of years ago there was a Firaun who said, ‘Anna Rebuke Alalaa’, ‘I am your Supreme Lord.’ He turned to his people and said, ‘I don’t see for you any God for you besides myself.’ He called himself God. But you know what? We are living in crazy times these followers of Bashar Al-Assad may Allah curse him, are literally screaming, ‘La illaha illa Bashar!’ There’s a video tape of this. So this idolization of humans is not something restricted to the ancient times. There are people who claim to be God now too. It’s happening in our lifetime. So Allah says whether they are idols or humans false gods because of their kingdom or power (or whatever the case maybe), ***‘they cannot create a single fly.’***

And why mention the example of a fly. Lets see the context. These verses were revealed in Makkah. The Mushrikoon used to worship idols. In pagan cultures people sacrifice animals or leave sweets, milk, honey and flowers etc. in front of these idols as a show of devotion. But what happens when you leave food out in the open? What shows up out of nowhere? Flies. A fly shows up and drinks the chocolate milk or eats from the snickers bar in front of the idol and the big old statue smiling back at it can’t do anything. So the idea is that the foundation of their faith is that this idol is sacred and it has to be shown respect. But it gets disrespected in the highest temple by a lowly thing such as a fly! And they can’t do anything about it.

So the foundations of their faith are crumbled in front of their eyes. Even if they all got together, what can they do? How are they going to catch a fly? And on top of that even if a fly comes and takes something from the food of someone, like Firaun or the Firauns of our time, what are they going to do? They can’t get it back. You can call on all the armies of the world but even if we catch that fly by some miracle you are not going to get that food back again. It’s gone.

If the fly was to take something away from them they wouldn’t be able to get it back. Allah teaches us that he can teach the lessons of his oneness and his power even through a fly. If you just pay attention to the world around you, even a fly can give you guidance. That’s one of the miracles of the Quran, it changes human perspectives. Once you understand this passage you don’t look at this passage in the same way.

Dafuu al Talib Wal Matloub. ‘***The one who is seeking;*** (lover, fan, student and the one who is sought; the beloved-singer, sports star) …***are both inherently weak.***’ We are always seeking something or someone so whatever we are running after is also weak. Now after saying this, our weakness i.e. we’re so weak that we couldn’t recover something from a fly, He mentions, ***‘They didn’t appreciate Allah as He deserves to be appreciated.’*** Just before this Allah talked about us being seekers, the suggestion being that we seek everything else except, who? Allah. Why don’t we seek Allah?

Why don’t they appreciate Allah as He deserves to be appreciated? Why are they running around everywhere else? Why is everything a pursuit for them but Allah is not matloub for them? Ma Qadra Allah Haqqa Qadre Hee-In Allaha Qaweeun Azeez. Allah first mentions our weakness and in the next ayat he mentions that, ***‘He’s mighty, He’s strong, and He’s the Ultimate Authority;***’ La Qawiun Azeez. In many English translations the word azeez is translated as mighty but the word azeez combines two things; power and respect. Someone who has izza has two elements authority and respect. The latter is as a result of that authority. There are authorities in the world that don’t have respect and there are respectable figures that don’t have authority. But when you have both together you have izza. Then you are azeez. That is the meaning of Azeez.

Istifaa and Istijaab

Now as part of Allah’s might, He say’s; ***‘Allah is the one who purely of his own choice selects messengers from the armies of the angels and among the legions of humanity.’*** What’s the link between this passage and our discussion?

The word Istafa is at the heart of this discussion. ‘Allah hu yastafee, or ***Allah Selects***.’Al-Istafa comes from safee which refers to purity. Like in Urdu you have the word saaf meaning clean or pure. But when you make a choice that is purely your own and no one else influenced your choice,. No one has a say in your choice. Nobody gave you a suggestion, it was entirely and completely your own choice, that kind of choice is called al-istifaa. For instance when I go to the grocery store and pick up a Kit-Kat-that’s istifa. If my wife asks me, ‘Why you didn’t buy a Bounty?’ I say, ‘Well that’s my istifaa. I like Kit-Kat that’s it. I like it. That’s the only reason.’ That’s istifa.

Now look in the next verse, Allah talks about us, Muslims. He say’s, ‘Huwa yajtabakum.’ The English translation says, ***‘He selects messengers’***, and then it says, ‘***Allah selects you.’*** But the word for selection for messengers was istifa which means it’s purely Allah’s choice but the word for **us** was **ijtiba**, i.e. huwa yajtabakum. What this means is to select someone based on qualifications. Like for example, if you have a loose bolt on your kid’s bike, so you open the tool box and one of the spanners is too big the other is too small and then you see one that is just the right size for the job. That’s ijtaba. I didn’t make istifaa but ijtiba. I chose the right tool for the right job. That’s what the word ijtiba means. And when for example I’m going to hire somebody, I will interview ten people in order to select one person. I’m not going to make istifa, it doesn’t make any sense. I’m going to make ijtiba. I’m going to pick the right person for the right job. So Allah used a different word when he talked about you and me being Muslim. He used a word which suggests that he picked me and he picked you to be able to say, la-illaha illa Allah, wa Muhammad (s) Rasullallah. Why? Because he sees us fit for the job. He’s got something in mind for us for you and for me and he sees that we are perfectly fit for that task. So he picked us. So shouldn’t it be a big priority for us to figure out what Allah wants us to do? What He wants me to?

Sura Hadeed (57:7) makes us ask that question. ***‘Spend out of what you have been given...’*** Here rizq covers every resource at your disposal. It covers things like whatever talents you have been given, whatever abilities you have been given, whatever financial resources you have been given, whatever social position you have been handed etc. So use whatever you’ve got at your disposal and spend it for Allah your Master. That’s the demand of Allah in Sura Hadeed. Here in the verse which we are discussing, he’s letting you know that you have been chosen for a particular task.You are not just a random selection of Muslim. Each and every one of us has a role to play and we have to figure out what it’s going to be. And that requires a deep assessment of oneself. That’s ajtabakum.

This comes at the end of this ayat but now let’s go back and balance the equation again. Allah (swt) says, ***‘He knows whatever is in front of them and whatever’s behind them and to Allah all decisions are returned.’***  The word for decisions is amoor. This comes from amr which means actions that were made with a specific and deliberate purpose. All such decisions will be returned to Allah and after issuing this threat to humanity believers are addressed. I want you to understand this transition. It’s a very heavy transition.

In the first part of this passage Allah is displeased with humanity. They are calling upon false gods. They don’t even understand the simplicity of tawheed. Even though something as simple as a fly can teach them that lesson. They don’t appreciate Allah as he deserves to be appreciated. On top of that even though a fly should have been enough to teach them about Allah, He sent messengers anyway. But they still didn’t understand. Don’t they realise that everything that they do in the past, the present and the future is on record. So they are in some serious trouble. Humanity is in serious trouble.

Now Allah says, If you care about each other you would be worried about the ultimate destiny of your fellow human beings. By default humans care about each other, that’s just part of who we are our natural disposition or fitrah. By the way the word insaan is from uns which means a creature full of compassion. We can’t but help feel compassion for others. And this trait, feeling has been eroded or even taken out of our system gradually and slowly in our time. So we have become desensitized. Otherwise we are programmed to feel compassion for others like us. We are supposed to be bothered when we see somebody in pain. We are supposed to be concerned when someone else is suffering. But in modern educated, advanced, liberal and so called humane civilised society, whether in the east of west many people walk right by when they see someone lying on the pavement in pain. That’s how we’ve been desensitized, or de-humanized. It’s almost like if it’s happening behind a screen for us. The major reason is because we see so many people dying, being injured or hurt on TV so much that we think everything is a movie. Our life also becomes like a movie. So when we something which bothers us we just change the channel. That’s how we have become completely de-sensitized as genuine, caring, compassionate human beings. But if you are sensitive as a human you will realise that you have a lot to do. And one of the most important aspects of caring for others is to remind them of their ultimate destination.

Who is responsible for this task of telling humanity that they are going to stand before Allah one day and answer for their deeds? Who is going to let them know? The messengers are done. The final Messenger (s) is gone. The companions have played their part. It’s on our shoulders now. It’s up to me and you now. So let us begin with ourselves. ***‘Oh you who believe make ruku, make sajdah, make yourselves slaves to your Master.’*** By the way ruku and sujood are part of what act? Salat or prayers. But the physical acts are being highlighted, physically if you see it from a non-Muslim point of view when they see somebody making ruku, they think this guy is tired. ‘Why is he on his knees like that? He’s probably exhausted.’ You know when sprinters run and they’re exhausted, what do they do? They go in to ruku on their knees to catch their breath. But the Muslim says, ‘Ya Allah, before you I have no strength.’ And this guy couldn’t even stand up and then what? He collapsed on the ground. A friend of mine was making salat and a group of bikers showed up. And they sat behind him while he was praying. And when he finishes his prayer and turns his face and sees all these bikers. And they say, ‘You Muzlim?’ Yeah. ‘Oh, I thought something was wrong with you or something.’ Then they drove off because they thought the guy collapsed when he made sajdah, and he got up and he collapsed again and he got up and he got tired and held up his knees so he was having problems.

We give ourselves up in salat. But our obedience physically, is from one act of obedience to a more humble act of obedience and that’s supposed to be reflected in our life. The more we grow as Muslims the more humble and the more closer to Allah we are supposed to become. That’s what is supposed to happen over time in our worship and that’s when we finally through salat reach the state of ibadaah. Irkaoo, wasjudoo, waabudoo, rabakum.

Ibadah is not an act. It’s a state of being, it’s a maqaam. It is to be a slave. We’ll reach the point where we understand where we internalise and accept deep down inside that we are slaves, and that we have a master and are content or happy in that state. Salat will get us there. *It may sound strange that we have many groups and jamaats whose members have been working for many years but when you look at their prayers and other acts of worship they are of a very poor standard and I have come across some members of the big jamaats who hardly prayed Fajr on time and some who didn’t even pray the five prayers! And once we realise that then we’re ready to do good.(editors comments)* By Allah you and I will not be able to do any good to anybody until we realise that we are nothing but slaves. By the way it should be mentioned that there is no job on this planet lower than slavery, no position worse than slavery and no position or rank higher than master. So when we say, ‘I’ve accepted my self as abd.’ Then I've accepted that there’s no one higher than Allah and there’s no one lower than myself, that’s what I have accepted. And when I’ve come to terms with that internally or psychologically and its not just something that I say but something I’ve accepted deep in the soul of my being, then I’m ready to do good. Now I’m ready to help others.

Wafulkhair-‘***And do good***.’ So what is the concern? You really want to do work? You want to be a volunteer? You want to help in a cause, or a dawah programme or an educational programme, an Islamic school, a media group or whatever? What is the first step? First get your ibadah in order. And ibadah doesn’t just mean the acts of worship. That’s the starting point that leads you to the state of it. Once you reach that state of ibadah, the doors of goodness will open for you. This is because when you are a slave, your pride and ego is gone. All you care is about is making the master happy. That’s all that’s on your mind. You’ve got nothing else in front of you. And when people say something that bothers you, you just leave it to Allah. Aoofawedoo amree ilallah in Allah ha basirun bilibaad.

Now you’re ok. You are just concerned about what you’ve got to do. Things don’t get under your skin or bother you anymore. Now you don’t complain and say things like, ‘I cant believe they said this or I’m never doing this again,’ or, ‘I did so much but no one appreciated me or that guy said this about me.’ Remember you are a slave. People can say whatever they want. You only have to answer to your master. That’s it. You should have no complaints with people. That’s wafalulkhair, ***‘And do good.’***

Then Allah says, lallakum tuflihoon. ***‘So you can attain true success.’*** What’s beautiful about this ayat is related to what I started this whole discussion with. I said Islam is concerned with something more than individual reform. This mission is concerned with more than just yourself. If you say irkaoo-wasjadoo-waabudoo rabakum. That’s yourself. Be in a state of ibadah but when He says, ‘***Do good.’*** What does it mean? Do good to who? To others of-course.

If you really want to be successful then you have to be helpful to others so you can be successful. But remember when you do good to others its not only for them but its also for who? Yourself. So our voluntary contributions in whatever way shape or form are actually efforts to help ourselves. Don’t ever think about the time you gave to a masjid or for a programme or a convention or a cheque you wrote for the school or the youth club or whatever and say, ‘I helped such and such.’ I only helped myself. The moment I say, ‘I helped them’, then I helped them. It doesn’t count for me anymore. I cannot go to Allah on Day of Judgement and say, ‘Ya Allah where’s the money I gave?’ Allah will say, ‘You yourself said, ‘You helped them.’ You didn’t say, ‘You helped yourself.’ You can’t have it both ways. Allah only counts one intention. So if you are going to give, whether you give time, money, effort, suggestions expect returns only from Allah. If you expect anything from anyone else then know that Allah doesn’t like shared intentions. Allah is very jealous of intention. He wants his attention to be exclusive. You try to put anybody else, yourself, some other agenda, in that attention, its gone. It doesn’t count for anything.

So you know how sometimes in Islamic organisations because they are donation dependant, (schools are donation dependant, dawah organisations are donation dependant, publishers are donation dependant) somebody writes a cheque for $20,000, then all of a sudden shaytan comes to them and first of all says, ‘Mabrook.’ Then he says, ‘By the way, why don’t you give them a suggestion about the colour of the carpet? I mean after all you wrote a big cheque. You should have some weight in your opinion and so go and give a suggestion.’ You didn’t give a suggestion before you wrote the cheque but all of a sudden now your opinion got $20,000 heavier. So you want to give an opinion and you are expecting your opinion to be taken more seriously now because you gave some money. So your intention for giving the money was not to please Allah any more. It was for getting your opinion to weigh a little more, and that’s all you will get out of that sadaka. Is it worth it?’ Think about that. Don’t ruin your sadaka which you give in any cause by tying your contributions to expectations. (La Tubtiloo Sadakaatikum Bil Manna wala Azza-‘Don’t destroy your charity by reminders and hurt…’2:264)

If you want to have expectations have them with Allah. Personally when I write a cheque for sadaka I write a little reminder on the top of the cheque, ma naqasin mallin min sadakatin, wealth doesn’t decrease because of sadaka. I remind myself, ‘Who am I giving sadaka to?’ I’m actually depositing it in my akhira account, so I remind myself that withdrawl is going to happen after I go into the dirt. You try to withdraw now, you won’t get anything later.

Now Allah then says Wa jahidoo Fillahi Haqqa Jihadehe, That’s about attitude.Islam is not the only religion which has spirituality. The Christians and the Buddhists and other religions have a very powerful spiritual tradition. Buddhists can sit on top of a mountain or stand in front of a snake for hours on end. That’s concentration. And we can’t concentrate for two minutes in salat. So we are not the only religion with a spiritual tradition, but we do claim to have spirituality for a purpose. For example planting a plant in the soil. You make sure it gets plenty of sun and you put plenty of water on it, all that is fixing the soil. But what is the point of all these exercises and efforts if you don’t plant a seed in the soil. And the purpose of putting in a seed is so that it grows into a plant and eventually into a tree. And when it grows into a tree it’ll give fruits that’ll benefit others.

Us working on ourselves is like fixing the soil. Removing the weeds, making sure it gets plenty of sunlight, is like doing zikr for our nafs but if we don’t put in work for deen, what’s the point of that spirituality? Our spirituality is driven by purpose. Your purpose is supposed to drive that closeness to Allah with some solid contribution. Something, anything. For a mother who is so busy taking care of her children, her contribution maybe the kids. For a writer it may be his authorship. For a poet it maybe his creative writing which inspires Muslim youth. It can manifest in different ways but it must come out. And that’s what the next ayat refers to.

How seriously should you take an effort? Because voluntary efforts are not accorded the same level of seriousness and commitment as other areas of life. For example you have a meeting at 7pm. You’d be lucky if somebody shows up by 7.30pm. And that’s one off meetings. If it’s every week, then inna lilahe wa inna elahi rajioon.’ The general attitude is, ‘Its voluntary, who cares?’ It’s not as if you are getting paid for it. But if you understand this ayat then you’ll realise that voluntary work done for Allah has more weight than anything you do because nothing else you do pays as high as this work! Nothing else pays like this! ***The parable of those who spend their wealth in God’s way is that of a grain that produces seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. God multiplies for whom He wills. God is Bounteous and Knowing***, 2:261. The next part of the passage says, Wa jahidoo Fillahi Haqqa Jihadehe, ***‘Then struggle for no goal before you except Allah as he deserves to be struggled for.’***

Beating Boredom

Folks before I close this session, let me tell you something serious. Islamic work can get pretty boring. It can get pretty unfulfilling. Who wants to sit there and makes a hundred copies of a flyer? That’s not going to increase your imaan. You press the green button on the copier and watch the flashing light go to and fro. Who enjoys doing that? Who enjoys sitting in a two hour meeting discussing the architects plans for the parking area of the masjid? It’s called a masjid board meeting for a reason; it makes you bored! It’s not fulfilling work. But before you walk into that meeting or that menial task, you should remind yourself, ‘I’m not doing this for the YC or the MSA or J.I or Al-Huda etc. or anybody else and I am doing this for Allah and the only one I want appreciation from is Allah.’ If you do that, then you will have a great time. You’ll enjoy every minute of it. So you have to walk in with the right intention. By the way intentions are not one off things which are decided at the beginning. They get rusty so fast. Maybe you came in with good intentions but twenty minutes into the meeting your good intention disappears and turns into a monster so you have to constantly refresh it like cleaning the windscreen of you car on a rainy day. You have to fix it again because you can forget why you were there. You have to constantly remind yourself, ‘No, no no, I’m here for Allah. I’m here for a higher purpose. I’m not here just for myself.’

So, He (swt) says, ***‘Struggle for the sake of Allah,’*** i.e. with no goal before you except Allah. Fillahi Haqqa Jihadehe. As though the only one before you is Allah. And put in the best effort in it as He deserves. Huwa Ajtabakum. That’s the word I meant before. He especially crafted you, shaped you, and selected you for a task. And don’t you for a minute start thinking this work is too good for you. That you are not good enough to do this work. Because Allah says ***‘I didn’t put any difficulty for you in your religion.’*** I didn’t put this religion on you so you could be uncomfortable (like monasticism in Christianity for instance) ‘I didn’t do that.’ ***‘You are the legacy of Ibraheem (as).’***

Before Allah motivates you and me to struggle, ‘He says ‘C’mon don’t you realise that you are from the family and nation of Ibraheem (as) as.’ If anybody struggled for Allah it was your forefather Ibraheem (as). If anybody has a right to question Allah’s orders it would have been Ibraheem (as) more than anybody else in the world. He could have asked, ‘Jumping into the fire, what’s the point of this exercise?’ Is this really necessary? Fire? Really?’ or ‘Put a knife to my son’s throat? Are there no cows or goats? My son? Really? His family has to be left in the middle of the desert. It’s really interesting. All these men are doing saee. The original saee is a sunnah of a woman and she’s given birth recently so she’s not physically in her peak shape and she’s running around. And there was no A.C, no tiled floor, no water cooler on the side with zam-zam. Allah says that you are from that family. You should have appreciation for struggle and if Ibraheem (as) and Hagar and Ismaeel didn’t complain, what are you complaining about? Like some of us say, ‘Well the meetings are too long. They make me do these boring tasks. I want something else. I want some exciting tasks like giving speeches and doing street dawah etc.’

Here I’m reminded of the woman who used to sweep the Masjid An-Nabawi. People didn’t even know her name and when the Prophet (s) s learnt that she had passed away, he cried. You know how high her rank is? She wasn’t a celebrity, she wasn’t a speaker, she wasn’t an alima. She didn’t have the glory. Nobody knew her name but she was grand before Allah. Our attitude towards Islamic work should be that the one who needs to appreciate it definitely appreciates, no matter if no one else does. Wa ma taafalool kahirin y’lam hullah’, ‘***Whatever good you do Allah will know it***.’ Don’t worry. People might not notice but Allah will notice. Allah will know. That’s the power of intention. He says, le yakoono rasulun alaikum shaheeda. ***‘So that the Messenger (s)will be a witness over you.***’ He will be a witness against us on the day of Judgement. So if we don’t take the work of our deen seriously the one who is a mercy to mankind will bear witness against us. And by work of deen I mean the thousands of projects out there, not just one thing. Find yourself a noble cause and commit yourself to it. All of us don’t have to struggle for the same thing. Ascertain what you are good at and what you believe in and what you feel is needed for the ummah which is not being fulfilled and do it. I’m my mind there are three kinds of services Muslims can provide in order of priority: 1. Educational. 2. Social /Community Work 3.Protection of Muslim Community.

Education is educating ourselves and others about our deen in any way shape or form. It starts with ourselves , our families and then others. That’s one grand area under which a lot of sub-projects can exist.

Social/Community Work is helping people Muslim or non-Muslims in the locality or neighbourhood like cleaning up the area, providing meals for the hungry, helping out at the old people’s homes or the Edhi Centre or at the Islamic Relief etc. It’s helping people in the neighbourhood. (Christians are far ahead of us n this and we can learn a lot from them).

Protection involves doing something that protects the community, our children, our institutions, marriages, families, our civil liberties etc. This is an important task.

These are three broad areas in which we can contribute in.

These are all worthy causes and just like in the battlefield during the Prophet (s) time you had people who were engaged with the enemy, others who took care of the sick, others who were providing bringing food and water, others who were carrying off the injured and sick to points of safety and there were people who were guarding the Prophet (s) himself. They were standing guard. So all these were important tasks. So we have these areas that we have to concern ourselves with and give ourselves to.

We have to be volunteers, and we have to train our kids to be volunteers. When your kids turn eleven or twelve they should be volunteering. You should bring them in Ramadan to the masjid to serve the fasters or the saimeen. Our kids should learn to volunteer, they should learn to help. We should be taking them to visit the old, to visit the sick. We should take them to the grocery store to shop not for themselves but to buy something sweets or toys to give to the needy of the community. We have to instil these values in ourselves and in our children.

If we don’t do one of the above or similar things then Allah says, ***‘That he will make the Messenger (s) stand as witness against us***.’ Kazalika jaulnakum umatun wasatun letakoonoo shuhadaa alanaase.’ ‘***Like wise we made you a middle-nation so that you be witnesses over humanity…’*** So we are sandwiched between humanity and the Messenger (s). On the one hand the Messenger (s) will complain that they didn’t do what I instructed them or showed them. On the other hand humanity might complain against us that we never got the message of truth from these people. We didn’t know Islam was a beautiful way of life.

Nowadays a lot of Muslims try to skip these three areas of Islamic work and go into something deemed more exciting; public relations (PR) for Islam. To try to improve the image of Islam in the eyes of the people especially the westerners. They use slogans like, ‘We are not extreme, Islam is really moderate and humane, please like us.’

If we actually acted and behaved like Muslims we wouldn’t have to do PR. Our neighbours would testify to for us, we wouldn’t have to. (Example of Jewish murderer given amnesty in house of murdered man’s son). Our job is to stand up for our deen and Allah will take care of our protection, Allah will take care of our PR.

At the end of it all Allah says, ‘W aqeemusalat, wa atuzakat wa taseemoo billahi. ‘***Establish prayer, give zakat and hold onto Allah.’*** What does hold onto Allah mean? It means tie your hopes on Allah. Tie your expectations with Allah. Be in direct regular conversation with Allah. Don’t ever let go of that. He is the one protecting you. Huwa maulakum. What an awesome maula you have. What an awesome protector you have. Someone who is going to give you mawlaat and naseer. Protection and help. Allah says when you start doing the work of my deen I will help you like nobody else can help you. I will energise you like nobody else can energise you. That’s his promise. This is a formulae from Allah. You put in your struggle for Allah, then help from Allah comes. ‘…they were so shaken up, that the Messenger and those who believed with him asked, ***“When will Allah’s help come?” Indeed, Surely Allah’s help is near.*** (Sura Baqarah:214) Muslims stood in the battlefield of Badr first, then an army of angels came down from heaven. The angels were not there three hours before the battle had started saying, ‘We’ve been here for a while, where have you guys been?’ It’s not like that. You have to go into the fight then they will show up. Then help will come. Ibraheem (as) as jumped into the fire then it cooled down. It wasn’t cool ahead of time. It cooled down once he made the jump. You want to take the plunge, just do it, Allah will cool it off. This is the formulae Allah has taught us in the Quran. It is true at the individual and the community or group level as well. For example, you take one step Allah will take ten steps towards you. You give 100 dollars Allah will open the doors to more goodness for you etc. So we have to make the struggle to be worthy of the help from Allah to come. This is the conclusion of the second session.

Barakallahu li walakum fil Quran al hakeem wa nafani wa iyaakum bilayati wa zikr ul hakeem.

The next session is about volunteer discipline inshallah.