In Memory of Ahmed Kolia - 21st November 1984 - 20th June 2010

An abundance of recitation of salutations upon the Messenger of Allah coupled with a keen study of his biography is one of the secrets of developing a personal relationship with him (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

The following is a transcript of a lecture given by Habib Ali Al-Jifri in London on the 9th May 2008 on the subject of chivalry.

It was this video on the internet that sparked a change in Ahmed and which led him, from that day forth, on a path to develop that secret but intimate relationship with the Noble Prophet of Allah (pbuh).

Those who were close to him will attest to the fact that he never let any opportunity pass without mentioning, or trying to share the video clip with all whom he came into contact with. Little did we realise how much he was striving to imbibe these concepts, and how strong his need to develop a genuine love for the Prophet (pbuh) had grown.

This became apparent during the Friday night dhikr sessions, when the salutations upon the Prophet (pbuh) would be recited. He would break down and cry, particularly when the following two formulations of salutations would be recited:

"Oh Allah send blessings and salutations upon the Beloved who on the day of intercession will proclaim, "I am the one (worthy of interceding)"

"Oh Allah send blessings and salutations upon the one whose call on the day of Resurrection will be, 'My Ummah! My Ummah!"

A week after the accident and his passing, we as a family thought about transcribing the video and distributing it as a means of Isale' Thawab for him. After requesting and receiving permission from Habib Ali Jifri to go ahead, we were faced with the daunting task which required much time which unfortunately none of us had. Only a day later did we discover the entire talk, already completely transcribed on Ahmed's laptop. We believe he was preparing this document for distribution himself and would have wanted everyone to read/ listen/watch this presentation. We are hoping, insha Allah, in the near future, to print this presentation in the form of a small booklet together with the Arabic. If this project is a means of anyone gaining any degree of closeness to Allah and His Messenger (pbuh), then this would indeed be the best form of Sadaqah al Jariyah for him. The internet video can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ngm7udFsAc

We ask Allah to also send the rewards of this project to our beloved master Muhammad (pbuh), his family, companions and those who follow in their footsteps, as well as Ahmed and those - who Providence ordained - would leave this world with him; his cousin Muhammad Kolia, Muhammad Jada and Radia Pelwan. We also include Aisha Dendar, to whom Ahmed was intending to get married. She passed away a month and a half later, after a prolonged terminal illness.

May Allah forgive and shower his Mercy on them all and fill their graves with Light. May he reunite them in the eternal abode in the company of the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Elect.

May Allah allow us, the living, to imbibe the character of the Noble Messenger of Allah whose mission he himself summed up most eloquently when he said:

"Indeed I have been sent only to perfect virtuous behaviour and good moral character."

May Allah's choicest peace and blessings be upon him, his folk, his companions and all those who live their legacy until the Day of Resurrection

The Kolia Family

10th September 2010 1st Shawwal 1431

In the name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful. Praise be to Allah, May Perfect and Abundant Salutations and Peace be upon the Leader of the people of Chivalry, our Liege-lord Muhammad, and upon His Family and Companions.

A definition of Chivalry:

It is a power possessing insight which is internalized and which reacts in order to give victory to truth.

Sincerity is its final goal. Good character is its guide. Mercy is its inward. And bringing about change is its outward.

Therefore, everything which does not combine all these attributes is not considered chivalry.

So it is a power. In the body, in the self, in the intellect, and in the spirit.

One can sometimes be forgiven for lacking it in their body. One can sometimes be forgiven if their self and intellect do not equal the level of chivalry in their spirit. But it is unforgivable for it not to be possessed as a power in their spirit. And whoever does not possess this power in their spirit cannot possess chivalry.

It is a power that possesses insight:

When the power is blind, we can never call that chivalry.

It can make mistakes, but because it possesses insight, it can correct its own mistakes.

It is internalized:

The love of demonstrating ones power has nothing to do with chivalry, except in a situation in which one needs to bring about the victory of truth. The Prophet of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saw one of the companions during a battle, walking around proudly, in a way that was showing off (but he didn't reprimand him because) it was a battle to defend the truth, to subdue oppression and to fight someone who had transgressed against them. The Prophet of Allah (pbuh) said that kind of walk is a walk that is hated by Allah, except in this situation. So therefore it (chivalry) is hidden.

So how do we come to know about it if it is hidden? Because it reacts in order to give victory to truth.

And when does the reaction of this strength cause destruction?

(It occurs) when a person gets confused as to when he is trying to give victory to truth, and when he is trying to give victory to his own ego.

It says in a description of the Prophet (pbuh) that he never got angry for himself, nor did he ever seek vengeance (for a wrong committed against his own person). But when someone did not fulfill the rights of Allah, then no one would be able to withstand his anger.

Before the migration, the Prophet (pbuh) would pray in the basin area in the the open space around the Ka'bah. The disbelievers would come and harm him when he was in his prayers.

I don't know if any of our young people have heard, but the Prophet (pbuh) was given the strength of forty men. I mean his physical strength.

So while he was in prostration, some of the enemies who wanted to hurt him would come and throw entrails (the innards of animals) on his back, but he wouldn't move.

Our liege-lady Fatima al-Zahra' would come and argue with these men and would remove the filth from his back. At the time, she was only about seven or eight years old. So she had her portion of chivalry too. This chivalrous young girl of eight, would stand in front of these strong men, argue with them, and remove the entrails from her father's back! But she was not defending herself, she was defending the truth.

On one occasion they strangled him until his eyes popped out. Our master Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) pushed them away saying,

"Do you intend to kill a man who just says 'My Lord is Allah'?"

Another time they beat him. Yet another time they put thorns in his way. A person who is quiet for all this period, what kind of impression do you think people would have of him? Answer me young men, young women? Someone who does not retaliate for all of this? Let's imagine that we are not talking here about the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), but an ordinary person whom the people insult, throw things at, hit and yet he does not retaliate. What type of impression do you think people would perhaps have of him? Would they consider him a strong person?

A bedouin Arab came to Makkah. The man had some money owing to him from the enemy of Allah, Abu Jahl. Abu Jahl was a strong man and he used to show himself to be courageous. He was also one of the leaders of the meeting clubs of Bani Magzum, of Quraish. He walked around like a peacock. The man came to Abu Jahl, and he saw that Abu Jahl was strutting around, showing himself to be stronger than him. So the man said to him,

'Give me back my money'.

Abu Jahl mocked him and did not even look at him.

The bedouin then came and complained to the multiples of Quraish, that this man (Abu Jahl) had taken his right. Now since the Quraish used to laugh at the Beloved of Allah (pbuh) when entrails and dirt would be put on him, and harm would come to him, and yet he would remain silent, they now wanted to see something funny played out in front of them. So they said to him,

"No one can force Abu al-Hakam, [which is the other name for Abu Jahl; Abu al-Hakam means Father of Wisdom, but he is the Father of Ignorance] to give you your money back except one man, Muhammad son of Abdullah, that one who is praying over there next to the Ka'bah."

They were intending to have a laugh at the expense of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh).

The Bedouin man went up to the Prophet (pbuh) believing what the Quraish leaders had said and mentioned what they had said to him.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said to him,

"Did they say that to you?"

Now ponder for a minute and tie the words I have just mentioned to you with the definition I gave you in the beginning. We said chivalry is a strength that is hidden, possessing insight, which reacts in order to give victory to truth.

The man said,

"Yes, that is what they said to me."

The Prophet (pbuh) got up from the place he was praying and said,

"Follow me!"

They then went to the house of Abu Jahl. The Prophet (pbuh) knocked the door hard. Abu Jahl opened the door. The bedouin who was with the Prophet (pbuh) and narrating the incident said about Abu Jahl at that time that he actually lost his colour (out of fear).

The Prophet (pbuh) said to Abu Jahl,

"Give the man back his portion of money!"

Abu Jahl replied in the affirmative,

"(I'll do that) right now oh Abu Al-Qasim."

Oh youth, Abu Jahl was one of the people who were hitting the Prophet (pbuh) and mocking him just a few days previously, if not by a few hours.

The Prophet (pbuh) said,

"Give him the money!"

And Abu Jahl responded,

"I will give him the money right now Abu Al-Qasim."

And he went away and he gave the man the money.

The Bedouin man did not understand the prank they were trying to play, so he went back to the Quraish and said,

"Thank you so much for telling me that. May Allah reward you!"

They said, "What are you talking about?"

He replied, "(You should have seen.) His face changed colour as soon as that man (the Prophet (pbuh)) went to him, and he went running to get me the money!"

So the Quraish went to Abu Jahl and said,

"What is the matter with you? We were hoping to have a joke at Muhammad's expense."

Abu Jahl said,

"If you were in my position you would have done nothing but give him the money. I swear to you, I opened the door and saw Muhammad in front of me; it was as if over his shoulder there was the mouth of an animal that would devour me if I even hesitated for a minute."

On another occasion after the migration to Madinah and after Jihad was established, there occurred some differences between the Prophet (pbuh) and some of the treacherous Jews. The Jews in Madinah were of two types; one group were treacherous; and another group were peaceful. Those who caused problems, intrigue and fought with the Muslims; the Prophet (pbuh) waged war against them.

As for those who were peaceful; the Prophet (pbuh) even passed away while his shield was ransomed to a Jewish person.

The Jews used to make gestures to each other, winking at one another and mocking the Prophet (pbuh) in the process.

(They used to say), "As-sa'm 'alayka ya Muhammad!"

[Now, sa'm is poison. So they would say "Poison be upon you oh Muhammad"] instead of saying Salam they would say sa'm.

The Prophet (pbuh) would not reply with anything except,

"And upon you too," as if he had heard them say salam.

He was patient with them once, twice, thrice and four times. Until some of them developed an illusion that they were strong and he was weak, and which led one of them to make a mistake that was to insult the very religion.

When it was something related to just his person, the Prophet (pbuh) would remain quiet. But when they made a mistake against the religion, he confronted them all alone, in their own neighbourhood. He proclaimed one powerful sentence which shook them. So they said to him,

"Take it easy oh Abu Al-Qasim, we are used to you being a clement and a fore-bearing man."

Therefore you should not react unless it is to bring victory to truth. Physical strength is an important impression of one's chivalry. But it is not enough. Because if physical power is not linked to the perception of the heart, it will digress bit by bit until it becomes an expression of transgression. And transgression has nothing to do with chivalry.

Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was a man of chivalry. All of the companions of the Prophet (pbuh) were men of chivalry. But in our master Umar (ra) it was openly manifest, even before Islam. Do you know why he became Muslim? It was a moment of chivalry. What was that moment of chivalry?

When he discovered that his sister, Fatima bint al-Khattab had become a Muslim and that she was studying the Our'an along with her husband, Umar (ra) was overtaken by his anger and he struck her across the face....this isn't the chivalry.

No one who lives the meaning of chivalry would ever lift his hand to a woman.

The chivalry came after that point. When he saw the blood trickling down the cheek of Fatima bint al Khattab, he heard her utter a word the meaning of which was,

"Does a man show his strength to a woman?"

And thus she made him review himself and acknowledge the mistake he had made.

Like we said in the definition of chivalry: It is strength or a power that has insight. Yes, it can make a mistake, but it always corrects itself.

Umar (ra) fell silent. And she could now affect him. He then said to her,

"What is this? Let me read what you are reading."

This was before he hit her. She said,

"You are dirty, you cannot touch the book!"

That was when he hit her, and when he saw what he had done, he fell silent. He then said,

"How can I read that book?"

She replied, "You go and wash yourself and then you can read!" So he went and washed.

Can you see the chivalry in his sister, Fatimah? There is another meaning of someone who possesses chivalry:

Chivalry loves chivalry and respects chivalry. When he saw the reality of her chivalry - not physical chivalry, the real chivalry – she made him aware of an even higher standard of chivalry. She would never have been able to bring herself to say anything to him before this. She would hide the scriptures of the Qur'an before. But when the courage she possessed inside came out, it came under the influence of her chivalry.

So Umar went and read. He was affected and his heart opened to Islam, and he asked,

"Where is the Messenger of God?"

Fatimah bint al-Khattab was fearful for the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), because she still did not trust her brother. The fearful companion who hid away when Umar (ra) approached and who was teaching Fatimah bin al Khattab and her husband the Qur'an, came out and said,

"He is in Dar Al-Argam."

So Umar went to Dar al-Argam and knocked on the door. Some of the companions looked out of the window and saw him standing at the door. Umar (ra) used to harm the weak companions that became Muslim. He could not stand anyone declaring their Islam in front of him. So they feared for the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) and said,

"Oh Messenger of Allah, Umar is at the door!"

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Open the door."

They said: "But it's Umar!"

The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Let it be Umar. Open the door!"

When they opened the door Umar (ra) entered. When he came close to the Prophet of Allah (pbuh), the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) grabbed and took hold of him by the collars of his garment. Umar said that at that moment he felt like a small boy in the grip of a big man. The prophet of Allah (pbuh) said to him.

"Oh Umar, is it not time for your heart to believe?"

Notice this – a few days before, Umar (ra) used to bring harm to the Prophet of Allah (pbuh), and the Prophet (pbuh) would be quiet. Remember we said; chivalry is a strength that has insight. The last message which Umar needed to enter Islam was to be convinced that Islam was powerful. (So what the Prophet (pbuh) was doing was showing him Islam's power.) That was because Umar (ra) did not want to be with those who were weak.

At that point Umar (ra) proclaimed,

"I bear witness that there is no divinity but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah."

After that Islam became openly apparent in Makkah and the manifestation of Islam occurred in Makkah.

When people were harmed and the Companions began migrating to Madinah, they migrated in secret. Umar (ra), before going on his Hijrah, took his shawl and started encircling the Ka'bah. He went past a group of foolish disbelievers of Quraish, who were considered to be from amongst big leaders. They said to him,

"Where are you going ibn Al-Khattab?"

"I'm going to migrate to Madinah. Whoever wants his mother to mourn for him, or to make his wife a widow, or to orphan his children, let him follow me."

So he walked out in open daylight, to show the power of Islam.

Do you believe that he is powerful?

This powerful man was made to cry by a woman, because of his chivalry. When he was walking along one night as the Khalifah of the Muslims - he would walk around himself to inspect the state of his community - he heard children crying and their mother trying to pacify them. He also saw a fire lit in the house, which indicated that the woman was cooking something. He said to her,

"Why are they crying?"

She replied, "They are hungry."

Umar (ra) said, "Are you not cooking something for them? I see a fire burning in the house."

"No, there's no food in there," she responded, "These are just some stones I have put in boiling water and I keep turning the pot so the children think that I am cooking something until they fall asleep. Allah will ask Umar about this!"

She didn't know it was Umar (ra) she was talking to. So he said to her,

"What does Umar have to do with this? Had he known you were hungry he would have given you something."

She said, "How can he govern the Muslims and not know their condition?"

Umar (ra) did not even respond to her. He left and went to the treasury of the Muslims, and carried a bag of grain to her house. Some of the companions ran to him and asked,

"Let me help you?"

He pushed them away and replied with tears running down his face,

"Leave me alone, you will not be able to carry my sins for me on the Day of Judgement!" Umar (ra) sought permission, entered the house and with his own hands started to cook the food for her and her children. It comes in some narrations that the smoke from the food pervaded through his beard. His beard used to be very thick. The smoke pervaded his beard while his tears drenched it too, all the time saying,

"Oh God of Umar, do not burn these white hairs in the fire of hell."

Chivalry in its essence is to cultivate this earth by being the representative of Allah on this earth. One of the meanings of it is to preserve life, not to end life, except in dire necessity.

This meaning of chivalry was manifested by a woman who herself had chivalry - one of the Ansar the wife of Umar ibn Jumuh

In the battle of Uhud, the disbelievers were directing their main efforts against the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) himself. They were aiming their arrows straight at him. She was seen to put her shoulder and her arm out, to take the arrows instead of the Prophet (pbuh). So her chivalry was in the protection of the life of the Prophet (pbuh).

Chivalry is to cultivate the Earth.

When these strong companions migrated from Makkah to Madinah, some of them worked as farmers on the land; some of them worked as traders buying and selling; some of them worked as carpenters and some of them worked as blacksmiths, all to cultivate the Earth.

Chivalry necessitates mercy. Whoever does not have mercy in his heart has no chivalry in his heart.

Chivalry is the ability to make a distinction between a decision made for the sake of the ego, and a decision made in the self for the sake of manifesting truth on the Earth

I will conclude with two words because time has caught up with us.

First, chivalry's place is inside you, not outside. Do you know where it dwells? It resides in that point in time when you can say to yourself, "No!"

Every time you are able to respond with 'No' to your ego, you will be one who possesses chivalry.

Imagine your ego to be like another person in front of you who is wrestling with you with everything it wants of all its lusts and desires. If it overpowers you, you've been defeated by it. If you overcome it, then you defeat it, and you are a possessor of chivalry. That's why the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) said,

"The strong man is not the one who can overcome another when he wrestles him. The strong man is the one who can control himself when he is angry."

How many times are you able to beat yourself when you are angry and how many times has your anger overcome you? Who can train himself and wrestle with his own ego. It's a decision you can leave this meeting with.

Imagine your ego to be the wooden dummy or punching bag they use for training. See how much you can beat it. Or imagine it to be another fighter in front of you. You will find that sometimes your ego beats you. That's ok. But don't let it beat you every time otherwise you will become weak.

When call for Fajr prayer sounds, you know that Fajr has come upon you, and your ego says,

"Oh I'm tired, I stayed up late, let's sleep".

Are you one of those people that say, "Ok let's go to sleep"? In that case you are weak. You have been beaten in that round. Say to it,

"No no no, get up and pray".

But it says, "No I want to sleep."

Say to it, "Prayer is nice."

It says, "No sleep!"

Say to it, "If you just get up and make ablution and pray..."

It says, "What is wrong with you, do you want to sleep or not?!"

Who is going to beat who?

Imagine yourself walking in the street, someone edges you on and says,

"Oh you're just a weakling, you can't fight! You're just a coward, you can't steal with me, you wouldn't dare! If you're a man, take some of this, try it! Try these drugs. Go on! Try it!"

Where is the manhood there? Your ego starts saying,

"Go on, show him you're a man!"

But is it chivalry to prove to others that you are a man? Or to prove to yourself you are a man. Or is a woman's chivalry to prove to herself she is chivalrous?

The last point.

Take the definition you were given about chivalry, and study the biography of the Prophet of Allah (pbuh). Read it once, twice, thrice, four, five times - read it seven times even. From the first time you read it, see how many instances of chivalry you are able to extract. Make a note every time you

see a situation where you think this definition of chivalry is displayed. Record it. Look at how many situations of chivalry you are able to notice in the first reading.

If you continue in this manner, by the time you've read it seven times, you would have found innumerable more situations than you did the first time. Do the same for the biographies of the Prophet's companions and his family (may Allah be pleased with all of them). And do the same for the biographies of the Imams.

Abu Hanifah (may Allah have mercy upon him) used to live next to a neighbour, who would wait for Abu Hanifah's companions to sit together for a lesson. Then he would pull out the lute and start playing it and singing loudly. He had an irritating voice as well, yet he used to think that his voice was so beautiful and that he is so chivalrous. He used to sing things about how much of a knight he was, how gallant he was, saying,

"They lost me at the battle line, I was at the frontline with them, and they forgot me behind..."

The students, whilst listening to this, became irritated. They would say to the Imam, "Go to the authorities and complain about him."

And the Imam would say, "He is my neighbour."

They said, "Ok, you don't have to do anything. Just give us permission and we will go over there and hit him, and sort him out."

Imam Abu Hanifah replied, "No, he is my neighbour."

One night, they could not hear him, it was all quiet. During the lesson the Imam stopped, having realised he couldn not hear the man's voice. He asked.

"What happened to the man they missed out on in the battle lines?"

The students starting laughing. So the Imam asked, 'What's the matter?'

The students replied, "Oh, Allah took care of him for you...the police came and put him in prison."

So Abu Hanifah got up and left the lesson. He said, "He is my neighbour. I am obliged to intercede on his behalf." So he went to the Khalifah's residence and knocked on the door.

Look at the strength of Abu Hanifah. He did not even have to go to the police, he could have gone straight to the ruler to complain about his him. He could have shown his neighbour a point but instead, he went straight to the Khalifah to intercede for him.

When Abu Hanifah knocked at the door of the Khalifah, the guard at the door asked,

"Who is it?"

He said, "Abu Hanifah al Nu'man."

The guard asked (surprisingly), "Abu Hanifah? What can i do for you?"

Imam Abu Hanifah said, "I want to speak to the Khalifah."

He said, He's asleep."

The Imam said, "Wake him up!"

The doorman was not even able to refuse Abu Hanifah's request, so he went to the Khalifah's room, woke him up and said to him,

"Abu Hanifah is at the door."

The Khalifah replied: "Are you insane? Abu Hanifah does not come during the daytime, are you telling me he's come in the middle of the night? He only comes when we have to request for him."

The guard said: "He's at the door"

The Khalifah said, "Give me a moment, let me put my clothes on and I'll be there. And he came out with humility and respect saying,

"Oh Imam, what has happened?"

Imam Abu Hanifah replied, "I hear my neighbour is in prison. If he is being unjustly treated, I want him released right now. And if he has done something to someone, I will take responsibility on his behalf!"

Look at the quality of modesty in the chivalry that Imam Abu Hanifah possessed. He doesn't go to the Khalifah except in this case. He doesn't go the Khalifah for his own needs. (He was above going to the ruler for worldly, petty things. He only went to help people.)

It is not chivalrous to pull out your British passport when someone is mistreating you and to say, "I'm British, you can't do anything. Give me my rights!"

But when it's time to give your dues, you say, "Oh, it's got nothing to do with me, I'm Muslim."

The Khalifah said to him, "Ok, let us leave it until tomorrow and I will get him out."

The Imam said, "No, now oh Amir al Mu'minin, if you wish."

So the Khalifah ordered that the man be released

On their way back Imam Abu Hanifah was walking in front and his neighbour behind him. So Abu Hanifah started singing the same song that the man used to sing, in the same tune,

"They lost me at the battle line, I was at the frontline with them, and they forgot me behind..."

The man started crying, saying, "I am the one who lost myself, oh Imam."

That man became one of the great scholars of Islam, and a student of Abu Hanifah.

Do you know why I have told you this story?

When you read the biography of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them), you will see that the distillation of chivalry is when a person introduces a change in their society for the better. The one who cannot bring a change for the better in their self or their society, has no chivalry.

The chivalry of Abu Hanifah was able to change that drunkard man who used to stay up at night singing, into a man of greatness.

The chivalry of the master of creation, our Liege-lord Muhammad (pbuh), after 1400 years, is remembered here in London. It has changed the lives of 1.3 billion people on the Earth. This is the same man who was never satiated with barley bread for two days in a row.

I hope that each of you read the biography of the Prophet (pbuh) and the biography of the righteous people, and introspect, and see what changes one is able to bring about in one's self and in those around you. You will discover that the secret is in the loftiness of one's aspiration.

These are just the keys, as they say. Maybe if Allah prolongs our lives and we can visit another time, we can do a three day course on chivalry.

May Allah bless you all. I ask Allah to grant us all perfect steadfastness, and that He inspire us to all that which He Loves and is Pleased with for He is Alone Worthy and Capable of that.

Oh Allah grant freedom to the nation of our liege-lord Muhammad (pbuh), and assist and grant victory to the Ummah of our liege-lord Muhammad (pbuh), through the honour of our liege-lord Muhammad (pbuh).

Make us from amongst the best of them who benefit them. Honour us with the the inner realities of this chivalry.

Make manifest in our hearts the lights of the secrets of the Prophetic inheritance, which will prepare us for perfect truthfulness with You, oh Most Generous!

Reward handsomely whoever was a means of this gathering and accept from us and them (our efforts). Bless all those who are present.

Make us return to You in the most beautiful manner. Cause us to turn in repentance to You sincerely and purify our bodies, hearts and souls with it (this repentance).

May Allah's Blessings and Salutations be upon our liege-lord Muhammad, his folk and companions.

> All Praise is due to Allah Lord of the Worlds Al Fatihah.

اللهم صل و سلم علي نقطة دائرة النبوة و علي آله و صحبه أهل المجد و الفتوة