



Myth of talent in the work of Deen

Mirza Yawar Baig

In our rush to apply modern techniques to the work of Da'awa it appears to me that we sometimes tend to focus on the wrong things. For example, when we are looking for people to recruit we follow the same route that a normal employer would follow to recruit employees i.e. we look for people who have talents and qualifications that we ourselves lack. This method works in business and industry because the employer is himself deficient and is trying to build a team that complements his deficiencies.

In the work Allah ﷻ who is free from all deficiencies a person's talent has no meaning in itself. It is a useful thing to have provided there is something else before that. And that something else, the pre-requisite, is a connection with Allah ﷻ. To be able to do the work of Islam the first and foremost thing that one needs, is to be accepted by Allah ﷻ. Once this acceptance is achieved, everything else follows. This is easy to understand when we realize that in the work of Islam, the 'employer' needs nothing and can give anything He wishes to whoever He wishes. The key is to be accepted by Him first. So look for the connection with Allah ﷻ.

Allah ﷻ used the same logic in His choice of Anbiya. He didn't always pick the most talented, educated, charismatic, wealthy or beautiful. He picked the most sincere, passionate, perseverant and courageous. Allah ﷻ then taught him what he needed to know and helped him with resources that he did not have and with forces that he could not see. Allah ﷻ said:

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ

Al Baqara 2:282 So fear Allah; and Allah teaches you.

A very good example of this is in the story of Musa (AS) where Allah ﷻ said:

وَأَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَى
إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي
إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ
فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَتَرْدَىٰ
وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَا مُوسَىٰ
قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّأُ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَآرِبُ أُخْرَىٰ
قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَا مُوسَىٰ
فَأَلْقَاهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَىٰ
قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَىٰ

Ta-Ha 20:13. "And I have chosen you. So listen to that which is inspired to you. **14.** "Verily! I am Allah! La ilaha illa Ana (none has the right to be worshipped but I), so worship Me, and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) for My Remembrance. **15.** "Verily, the Hour is coming and My Will is to keep it hidden that every person may be rewarded for that which he strives. **16.** "Therefore, let not the one who believes not therein (i.e. in the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, Paradise and Hell, etc.), but follows his own lusts, divert you therefrom, lest you perish. **17.** "And what is that in your right hand, O Musa (Moses)?" **18.** He said: "This is my stick, whereon I lean, and wherewith I beat down branches for my sheep, and wherein I find other uses." **19.** (Allah) said: "Cast it down, O Musa (Moses)!" **20.** He cast it down, and behold! It was a snake, moving quickly. **21.** Allah said: "Grasp it, and fear not, We shall return it to its former state."

Allah ﷻ taught Musa (AS) the essence of Tawheed and Tawakkul – to look to Allah ﷻ alone for help and to know that the Maqlooq can neither benefit nor harm by themselves. That all benefit or harm happens only as a result of Allah ﷻ's order and His Will. For the Nabi to do the work of Da'awa it was essential to cut off all his connections and expectations from the Duniya and join him with Himself. Only then would the Nabi have the power of the connection to face the greatest force on earth of the time, the Pharaoh of Egypt, standing alone in his court with only his staff in his hand.

Allah ﷻ describes that scene:

قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ
قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ
قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهُ أَلَا تَسْتَمِعُونَ
قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
قَالَ إِنَّ رَسُولَكُمْ الَّذِي أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُونٌ
قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Ash-Shua'ra 26:23. Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "And what is the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists)?" **24.** Musa (Moses) said: "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty." **25.** Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said to those around: "Do you not hear (what he says)?" **26.** Musa (Moses) said: "Your Lord and the Lord of your ancient fathers!" **27.** Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "Verily, your Messenger who has been sent to you is a madman!" **28.** Musa (Moses) said: "Lord of the east and the west, and all that is between them, if you did but understand!"

Musa (AS) had learnt his lesson well. After all his teacher was Allah ﷻ himself. So though he was brought up in the palace of the Pharaoh and should have been intimidated by his splendor and power, he wasn't. It is clear from this conversation that Musa (AS) is not listening to the Pharaoh but to another voice that is speaking to him in his heart and the majesty and power of which far outshadows the temporal, worldly power of the Pharaoh and his kingdom. In the end the Pharaoh calls him mad, but Musa (AS) only speaks of the majesty of his Rabb, the Rabb of everything and says those words which are in the heart of every Da'ae of Islam – 'If you did but understand!'

Allah ﷻ did the same with Rasoolullah ﷺ. He cut off all his worldly sources of support and then supported him directly. Allah ﷻ taught him to rely only on Himself and not look to anything in the world for support. He mentioned:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَى
وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى
وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى

Ad-Duha 93: 6 Did He not find you (O Muhammad) an orphan and gave you a refuge? **7.** And He found you unaware (Qur'an, its laws, and Prophethood) and guided you? **8.** And He found you poor, and made you rich (self-sufficient with self-contentment)?

Allah ﷻ also taught Rasoolullah ﷺ how to maintain this connection; this source of strength without which the work of Deen is impossible. He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُ

فَمِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا
أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا
إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا
إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْءًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

Muzzammil 73: 1. O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ)!
2. Stand (to pray) all night, except a little. **3.** Half of it, or a little less than that, **4.**
Or a little more; and recite the Qur'an (aloud) in a slow, (pleasant tone and) style.
5. Verily, We shall send down to you a weighty Word (The Revelation.). **6.** Verily,
the rising by night (for Tahajjud prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for
governing (the soul), and most suitable for (understanding) the Word (of Allah).

And when the Sahaba tended to veer off-track and rely on material strength,
Allah ﷻ immediately corrected them.

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ
عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّذَبِّرِينَ
ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مَن بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

Tawba 9: 25. Truly Allah has given you victory on many battle fields, and on the
Day of Hunain (battle) when you rejoiced at your great number but it availed you
nothing and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you, then you turned back in

flight. 26. Then Allah did send down His Sakinah (calmness, tranquility and reassurance, etc.) on the Messenger (Muhammad), and on the believers, and sent down forces (angels) which you saw not, and punished the disbelievers. Such is the recompense of disbelievers. 27. Then after that Allah will accept the repentance of whom He will. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Allah ﷻ converted their victory into a rout and then when the core group of Sahaba rallied around Rasoolullah ﷺ, responding to his call, Allah ﷻ sent down the angels to help them and re-converted defeat into victory. And then Allah ﷻ revealed the Ayaat which spelled out clearly what had happened and why so that the lesson would be learnt well. The Sahaba learnt that lesson so well that Khalid bin Waleed (RA) was able to face an army of 200,000 Romans with just 10,000 Sahaba and when he was asked if he wasn't afraid, he replied, 'Muslims have never been give victory based on their numbers.' That is the power of being accepted by Allah ﷻ because only then will one be guided, protected and supported with forces not visible to the eyes.

It is clear (and certainly logically as well) that before we can expect to do the work of Allah ﷻ, we must first become accepted by Him. We must get the job first, to be able to do the job. So we must apply, beg, plead, show our ability, sincerity and willingness so that Allah ﷻ accepts us for that most significant and honorable of jobs – the job of the best people on earth – the Anbiya of Allah ﷻ. Only when we are accepted, can we expect to get the powers, authority, resources, forces, knowledge and the understanding to carry out the work satisfactorily.

Allah ﷻ will give all those provided we first prove ourselves worthy of His attention and the work of His Deen.

So when we recruit people for the work of Deen we need to look for signs of Taqwa because that is the only guarantee of guidance. So what are the signs of Taqwa? There are four:

- 1. Observable obedience to the Shari'ah and Sunnah**
- 2. Akhlaaq**
- 3. Ikhlaas**
- 4. Sabr**
- 5. Absence of the 'piety complex' – desire for self-importance**

1. Observable obedience to the Shari'ah and Sunnah:

Someone asked Sayyidina Omar ibn Al Khattab (RA) about the Taqwa of a person and he replied, 'When Rasoolullah ﷺ was alive, he used to receive Wahi about the internal state (Imaan) of people. Today we don't receive any Wahi. So we will go by what we can see.' That is the principle for us to judge if someone is Muttaqi or not. We need to see to what extent the person observes the rules of the Shari'ah and Sunnah. If a person prays we know that he is Muslim but if he does not pray and willfully neglects to pray then we can't testify that he is a Muslim because Rasoolullah ﷺ said that the one neglects prayer is not a Muslim.

Not praying and denying its obligation is seen as disbelief and places the person outside the religion of Islam. All scholars agree on this point. They base their opinion on several Ahadith and Ayaat, some of which are:

Jabir (RA) reports that the Prophet, (SAS) said, "Between a person and disbelief is discarding prayer." (Related by Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah.)

Buraidah (RA) reported that the Prophet, (SAS) said, "The pact between us and them is prayer. Whoever abandons it is a disbeliever." (Related by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi, anNasa'i and Ibn Majah.)

العهد الذي بيننا و بينهم الصلاة فمن تركها فقد كفر

"Al-'ahd-ulladhi baynanaa wa baynahum assalaatu, fa man tarakaha faqad kafara"

"The covenant between us and them (the kuffar) is the prayer. So whoever leaves it has committed kufr."

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn al-'Aas (RA) reported that the Prophet, (SAS) one day mentioned the prayer and said, "Whoever guards and observes his prayer, they will be a light and a proof and a savior for him on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever does not guard and observe them, they will not be a light or a proof or a savior for him. On the Day of Resurrection, he will be with Qarun, Fir'aun, Haman and Ubayy ibn Khalf." (Related by Ahmad, at-Tabarani and Ibn Hibban)

That one who does not pray will be with the leaders of the unbelievers in the Hereafter makes it evident that such a person is an unbeliever.

Says Ibn al-Qayyim (RA), "The one who does not pray may be preoccupied with his wealth, kingdom, position or business. If one is kept away from his prayers by his wealth, he will be with Qarun. One whose kingdom keeps him away from the prayers will be with Haman, and one whose business keeps him away from the prayers will be with Ubayy ibn Khalf."

Says 'Abdullah ibn Shaiq al-'Aqeely (RA), "The companions of Muhammad, (SAS) did not consider the abandonment of any act, with the exception of prayer, as being disbelief." (Related by at-Tirmidhi and al-Hakim, who said it met al-Bukahri's and Muslim's conditions.)

Says Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Mirwazi (RA), "I heard Ishaq say, 'It is authentic (that) the Prophet (SAS) (said or ruled): One who does not pray is an unbeliever.'" It is from the Prophet (SAS) himself that one who intentionally does not pray until the time for the prayer is over is an unbeliever."

Says Ibn Hazm (RA), "It has come from 'Umar, 'Abdurahman ibn 'Auf, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Abu Hurairah and other companions that anyone who skips one obligatory prayer until its time has finished becomes an apostate. We find no difference of opinion among them on this point." This was mentioned by al-Mundhiri in at-Targheeb wa atTarheeb. Then he comments, "A group of companions and those who came after them believed that an intentional decision to skip one prayer until its time is completely finished makes one an unbeliever. The people of this opinion include 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah and Abu ad-Darda'. Among the non-companions who shared this view were Ibn Hanbal, Ishaq ibn Rahwaih, 'Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak, an-Nakha'i, al-Hakim ibn 'Utaibah, Abu Ayyub as-Sakhtiyani, Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Shaibah, Zuhair ibn Harb, and others.

There are also Ayaat of Qur'an which testify to the fact that leaving Salah is Kufr and will lead the individual to the Jahannam. Allah ﷻ said:

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ

قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ

Muddathir 74: 42-43

“What caused you to enter Hell?” They will say,

“We were not of those who used to pray (Salah).”

So observance of the rules of Shari’ah and Sunnah is a primary consideration. In the Shari’ah one must look to see if the person fulfills all Faraa’idh, observes Halaal and Haraam and then look for other things like the amount of Qur’an a person knows, whether he does Nawaafil Ibaadah and so on.

Among both men and women, observance of the dress code is among the Faraa’idh most often neglected. The Hijab is Fardh for the woman and one who does not do Hijab is deliberately disobeying the order of Allah ﷻ and is committing Haraam.

Then one must look to see his attitude towards the Sunnah. The beard is the first thing to check in the Sunnah because anyone who deliberately chooses a style that not only differs from the style of Rasoolullah ﷺ but which he expressly prohibited is deliberately disobeying him. All the Imams of Fiqh have declared shaving the beard to be a major sin and the one who does it to be a Faasiq wal Faajir.

Allah ﷻ mentioned the importance of following Rasoolullah ﷺ and of obeying him in many places.

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Al Ahzaab 33:21. *Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much.*

Allah ﷻ made obedience to Rasoolullah ﷺ a condition of Imaan and swore an oath.

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ
حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Nisa 44:65. *But no, by your Rabb, they can have no Faith, until they make you (O Muhammad) judge in all disputes between them, and find in themselves no resistance against your decisions, and accept (them) with full submission.*

Allah ﷻ insists on unconditional obedience of His Messenger ﷺ's orders

إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَنْ يَقُولُوا سَمِعْنَا
وَأَطَعْنَا وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

Nur 24:51. *The only saying of the faithful believers, when they are called to Allah (His Words, the Qur'an) and His Messenger, to judge between them, is that they say: "We hear and we obey." And such are the prosperous ones (who will live forever in Paradise).*

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا لِمُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ
أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا

Al Ahzaab 33: 36 *It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their*

decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.

For those who refuse to obey Rasoolullah ﷺ, Allah ﷻ threatened to wipe out their deeds.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا أَعْمَالَكُمْ

Muhammad 47:33. *O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad) and render not vain your deeds.*

Finally Allah ﷻ gave blanket orders that whatever Rasoolullah ﷺ orders is to be done and whatever he prohibits is not to be done.

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ

Hashr 59: 7 *And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it) and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Severe in punishment.*

It must be abundantly clear to anyone with a modicum of intelligence and Taqwa that to deliberately disobey Rasoolullah ﷺ is Haraam and a major sin and to continue to do that despite being warned leads to Kufr.

Those who shave their beards must pause for a moment as they stand before the mirror and ask themselves this question; 'What on earth do I think I am doing?' It is not for us here to do more than state the case as clearly and unambiguously as possible. It is not within the scope of this paper to list out all the forms that

disobedience takes but merely to give some illustrative examples, which I have done. It is for those who are recruiting to ask themselves what kind of people they want to recruit for the work of Allah ﷻ. People who love Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and love to obey them or people who love themselves and their own desires more and have no hesitation in disobeying Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ in the process. It is illogical and insane to imagine that one who disobeys Allah ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ can actually do the work of Da'awa of Islam.

Naturally one who disobeys Allah ﷻ and Rasoolullah ﷺ can't claim to have the acceptance of Allah ﷻ for the work of His Deen and so would have failed the most basic and first test until he/she corrects their wrong Aqeeda and A'amaal.

2. Akhlaaq

The second most important element to look for is Akhlaaq (Manners). In this I include the other two elements of Akhlaaq; Mu'amilaat (Dealings) and Mua'ashirat (Society). This is the element that others can see and which influences others towards or away from Islam and Muslims. Very often we see Muslims who observe the outward aspects of the Shari'ah and Sunnah but whose manners, dealings and social environment leaves much to be desired. They cheat, lie, speak ill of others, laugh at people behind their backs, expose the weaknesses of others, and behave in ways that lack dignity, honor and integrity. Such people are very harmful for the organization to have because they are an example of evil that drives people away from Islam. Such people reinforce stereotypes and give ammunition to those who want to attack Islam. Once again, we go by what we can see and don't delve into or speculate on anyone intentions. We are not aware of the hidden so we can only go by what we can see. For anyone intending to do

the work of Islam it is essential that they deport themselves as Standard Bearers of Islam and constantly live with the awareness that Allah ﷻ is watching them.

3. Ikhlāas

The third element to look for is Ikhlāas (Sincerity). Now this may seem strange because sincerity resides in the heart and we just said that we don't know what is in the heart. However there are signs of sincerity that are clearly visible which one must look for. Some of these are:

1. Contribution without seeking recognition, fame or material return
2. Actively avoiding publicity and public office and show of any kind
3. Actively avoiding authority over others
4. Putting others forward and recognizing their effort while playing down one's own
5. Volunteering to do more than one's prescribed job

It is not prohibited to take leadership positions when you are the best one for the job and when others compel you to do so. What is prohibited is to seek them, canvass for them and to make effort to gain such positions. Ikhlāas of one's Niyyah is the most important element of building one's connection with Allah ﷻ. Pride (Kibr), looking down on others, seeking fame and so on are the things that destroy Ikhlāas.

4. Sabr

Sabr is what Allah ﷻ advocated for the Da'ee when He said:

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

Asr 103: 3 *Except those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds, and recommend one another to the truth (i.e. order one another to perform all kinds of good deeds (Al-Ma'ruf) which Allah has ordained, and abstain from all kinds of sins and evil deeds (Al-Munkar) which Allah has forbidden), and recommend one another to patience (for the suffering which one may encounter in Allah's Cause)*

Sabr is that which leads to a person building a connection with Allah ﷻ. Sabr in Islam is not the listless acceptance of status quo but to make every effort to achieve one's goal and then to leave the result in the hands of Allah ﷻ. Sabr is not to complain in hardship and to be thankful in plenty (Shukr). Sabr is not to retaliate in response to bad behavior or to attacks on yourself when you invite people to Allah ﷻ. Sabr is to accept without complaint the hardship that comes with inviting to Islam knowing that it is the means of great goodness in the Duniya wal Aakhira.

5. Absence of the 'Piety Complex' – desire for self-importance

Finally we come to one of the biggest dangers that lies in wait for the one who has turned to Allah ﷻ and has decided to dedicate his life to the service of His Deen; The Piety Complex. This is a deception of Shaytaan which leads the individual to consider himself to be superior to others who are merely human and to have a high opinion of his own piety. Signs of this are an unnecessarily serious demeanor, a measured tread while walking so that the incumbent appears to be a ship in full sail proceeding majestically to its destination. A very reliable sign of this fatal illness is a marked tendency to pronounce 'fatawa' against all and sundry at the drop of a prayer cap usually preceded with the phrase, 'In my

opinion'; and to take offence if someone points out that 'personal opinion' is not Daleel in Deen. Another sign is being overly critical of everyone and everything and making harsh statements about other's actions or statements from a position of barely concealed arrogance. Such people forget what Allah ﷻ said to Musa (AS) when he sent him to the Pharaoh:

فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى

Taha 20: 44. *"And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah."*

The instruction to Musa (AS) was for his own training and not because of any doubt or hope about the Pharaoh. Allah ﷻ knew what the Pharaoh would do but the intention was to train Musa (AS) to work with his own people whose guidance was the main purpose of Musa (AS)'s mission. It shows us the importance of softness and humility in the conduct and deportment of the Da'awee as a pre-requisite of success in his mission.

Allah ﷻ prescribed the method of Da'awa and said:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِهِمْ بِآيَاتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ

Nahl 16:125 *Invite (mankind, O Muhammad) to the Way of your Lord (i.e. Islam) with wisdom (i.e. with the Divine Inspiration and the Qur'an) and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows*

best who has gone astray from His Path, and He is the Best Aware of those who are guided.

Allah ﷻ specifically warned us against ascribing purity to ourselves and imagining that we are superior to others. He said:

فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى

Najm 53:32 *So ascribe not purity to yourselves. He knows best him who fears Allah and who is a Muttaqi*

In Sura Al Kahaf Allah ﷻ also mentions the story of Musa (AS) and his seeking knowledge from another slave of Allah ﷻ when he was himself the Nabi of the time and a Sahibul Kitab wal Shari'ah. Allah ﷻ could have ordered the other person to go to Musa (AS) to teach him but He sent Musa (AS) to the teacher. Allah ﷻ wanted to underline the importance of the teacher and the position of the learner; that he should make the effort to learn and take the time and trouble to go to the teacher as a mark of his need.

This points us to another issue related with the 'Piety Complex' where those suffering from it feel themselves free (Musthathna) from the need for guidance of mentors and teachers. This is a very dangerous delusion. Anyone who feels that he needs no guidance, no Islah (correction) and no mentorship is opening the door to Kibr (arrogance) which leads directly to Allah ﷻ's wrath. The safety for the individual lies in always remembering that no matter how learned he may consider himself to be, no matter how much adulation may be heaped on his head by the world, no matter how much fame and wealth may be laid at his feet; essentially he is a sinner, prone to mistakes and always in need of feedback,

correction and guidance. Always in need of a Murabbi (coach/mentor); someone who will tell him what he needs to hear, as opposed to what he likes to hear. This is the safety net which will guard him from destruction. Anyone who disregards critical feedback, disrespects elders/teachers/seniors and those who have preceded him in faith, understanding and submission to Allah ﷻ, is digging his own grave and creating the means for his own destruction. Allah ﷻ reminded us that we need to value our elders and seniors and to make dua for them:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ
وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

Hashr 59:10 *And those who came after them say: "Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.*

Those who are constantly focused on the faults of others and have a tendency to run them down and to try to show themselves up as superior in comparison must reflect on this and other Ayaat of the Qur'an and on numerous incidents from the Seerah of Rasoolullah ﷺ and the lives of the Sahaba and compare their conduct to the standard of conduct that Allah ﷻ held up for us to emulate. Self-righteousness leads to arrogance and arrogance leads to destruction.

Conclusion

When we look for and recruit such people, who have these qualities then Insha'Allah we would have recruited someone who has the acceptance of Allah ﷻ for His work. For such a person Allah ﷻ then makes the work easy and opens

doors for him and provides for him from sources he couldn't imagine. Allah ﷻ said:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا
وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ

Talaaq 65:2And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty). **3.** And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine. And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him. Verily, Allah will accomplish his purpose.

Such people are the ones who know how to take from the treasures of Allah ﷻ. They dedicate their lives for Allah ﷻ, never disobey Him, love Him and His Messenger ﷺ above all else, follow the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ closely and don't care about anyone else's opinion in the matter of obeying Allah ﷻ or following the Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ. Allah ﷻ praised this attitude and called it a favor from Him and said that He would be sufficient for such people.

It is clear from this Ayat that it is to be accepted by Allah ﷻ for the work of His Deen that one must strive for. All the rest will follow. Allah ﷻ will then guide such a person and protect him from harm and ease his difficulty and make him successful in his work. Allah ﷻ made it clear that He accepts only such people.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ
وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا
يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Ma'aida 5: 54. *O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion (Islam), Allah will bring a people whom He will love and they will love Him; humble towards the believers, stern towards the disbelievers, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the blame of the blamers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He wills. And Allah is All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Knower.*

Finally I would like to remind myself and you that in our search for suitable people let us not forget that we need to measure ourselves also against the same standards and ask ourselves, 'How can I become accepted by Allah ﷻ?'

When Sayyidina Omar bin Abdul Aziz (RA) was dying, his brother in law, the son of Malik bin Marwan came to him and said, 'You have left nothing for your children. If you allow me, I will give each of them some money (and he mentioned a large sum) so that they can take care of themselves.'

Omar bin Abdul Aziz (RA) said, 'I have taught them how to take from the treasures of Allah ﷻ. If they need anything they will ask Him and He will give them. They don't need you or anyone else.'

That is the importance of Tarbiyya which enables us to build a connection with Allah ﷻ such that when we ask, He will give.

I ask Allah ﷻ for His favor.



Mirza Yawar Baig

International Speaker, Trainer, Corporate Consultant, specializing in Leadership Development helping technical specialists transition into Management and Leadership roles. Founder, **YAWAR BAIG & ASSOCIATES©** Yawar teaches leadership in the United States, India, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Yawar received his initial Islamic education in Jamia Ilahiyaat Nooria in Hyderabad and later at the feet of Ulama and Shuyookh in Saudi Arabia, India and America. Yawar speaks on Islam internationally especially about the importance of Muslims becoming Standard Bearers of Islam in order to showcase Islam for the World. Yawar has taught, engineers, teachers, businessmen, police officers and administrators on three continents and speaks five languages. Yawar specializes in helping family businesses transition from being ‘Person-led to becoming Process-driven’. He is a life coach and mentor for prominent family businesses in India, South Africa & Sri Lanka. He transcends cultural boundaries by blending Eastern values with Western systems. Yawar brings to bear his varied experience in bauxite mining, tea & rubber plantations, tourism marketing and teaching which gives him the advantage of speaking from the perspective of a practitioner and not merely as a theorist. Yawar’s style comprises openness, commitment to quality and value-based professionalism.

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