

RESPECT and OBEDIENCE

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We feel and our readers will agree with us that we need to, irrespective of our age and educational qualifications learn about respect and obedience. Respect and obedience are central to all our relationships with all our fellow beings and for us Muslims both respect and obedience are totally necessary for following our religion and to have brotherly relationships with all irrespective of their religious beliefs or social and economic standing. Both respect and obedience must form part of everything we do. What we Muslims now generally suffer from is lack of respect for our fellow Muslims and for everyone else and a lack of obedience to what we are expected to believe and adhere to.

If our forefathers had not learnt about respect and obedience and internalised the essence of these two very important concepts, we Muslims, Surti Sunni Vohras and all others would not have embraced Islam and accepted Islam as our religion. Unfortunately, over the years and especially over recent years these two words have lost their intrinsic meanings for us. We use these words, and we hear others using these words, but they do not seem to carry their original meanings with them and because of this they fail to convey the deep meanings these words had for us Muslims.

Should we just talk about the things we have lost like the original meanings of both respect and obedience, or should we try to find ways and means to help bring back the real meanings of these very important concepts of respect and obedience? We feel as Muslims we must not simply shed tears for what we have lost but try hard to help bring back those things into our lives which have over the years helped us live with others, fellow Muslims and all others as fellow humans. We feel both the concepts of RESPECT and OBEDIENCE played very important roles in our religious as well as in our social and economic lives and these concepts we feel are needed by us to help us continue to and to live with dignity with all, Muslims as well as those with other religious beliefs.

We feel the loss of respect and obedience can be observed and experienced everywhere. We come across it when walking along streets of villages, towns and cities, at railway stations, bus stops, at weddings, when attending Janazas and when we visit our masjid for our daily prayers. Of all these places where we see the lack of respect and obedience the absence of these at our masjid is most hurting.

Most of us, we feel who attend the masjid for their namaaz do not take into consideration that they are in a place with others to comply with a very important faraiz. The way in which most of our brothers behave even when attending the Jumua prayers is most hurting. Most come on time and seldom before the prayer times and a few are always late. Besides this, most will while away their time in the Wuzu area but not take their places in the masjid. Most wait for the Jumua bayaan to finish before entering the masjid and a few wait for the Jumua Khutba to finish before they join the others in the masjid.

The reason why many of our brothers behave in the way they do is easy to arrive at. They are simply not interested in hearing what the Imaam has to say in his Bayaan because they are not interested in learning and improving themselves as Muslims.

What we have just said happens everywhere and no one seems to have the authority, not even the masjid Imaam to tell those who fail to join the Musallis in the masjid, to listen to the Bayaan and learn from what the Imaam says. Most of our Muslim brothers forget that the Imaam's role is to pass onto what he has learnt about his religion by studying the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith. The Imaam's Bayaans are not meant to impress us with his knowledge but are simply meant to make us more informed about our religion to enable us to become better practitioners.

We feel and many of our readers will agree with us that though the task of getting people to give up their habits of failing to respect one another and obeying those who are on the right path is a big task, there is a great and urgent need to dislodge our people from the behaviour they have accepted and internalised. If we all tried to help our fellow Muslims to once again acquire a habit to respect and obey, we feel changes will come about among our people. We know and we admit that the task to changing people's behaviour is not easy, but we must not give up without trying to do something about it. We all know that big mountains look very strong, but we must not forget that they are made up of small stones which can be dislodged, and the mountain's size can be reduced. Similarly, if we tried, we could bit by bit get our people to change their behaviour and become more receptive to listening, learning and obeying those who will, with ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY'S help, help them to become better at respecting and obeying those who will lead them along the right path. ■