

MYM LITERATURE

Islamic Activism: More Than A Hobby?

by Arif Kabir

Where Muslims come home to reflect

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“I’m going to make her happy, Inshā’Allāh”.

One day, I went with my mother to the local grocery store to pick up some food that she needed for her cooking. After we picked up all of the necessary food parcels, we made our way to the checkout aisle. I was determined to make my mom happy, so I decided that I wouldn’t allow my mom to pick up anything from the shopping cart and that instead, I’d do it all by myself. With this firm determination, I quickly began picking up all of the groceries. When I saw that she had picked up some to help me, I hastily took them from her and placed it on the queue without giving it any more thought.

When I looked up, I saw that there was hurt on my mom’s face as she asked why I took it from her like that. Man, did I feel horrible. Here I was, trying to make her happy, but instead my actions had the total opposite effect. I quickly explained myself and apologized, but I couldn’t stop musing about what happened.

It made me reflect that many times, we have noble intentions but we end up doing more harm than good. We sometimes get so swept up in the work that we are performing that we forget what we are working towards.

I find this to hold especially true when it comes to Islamic activism; I’ve noticed that there tends to be certain ‘practicing’

Muslim youth who have become enthralled by the world of Islamic activism. Instead of spending their time playing sports, watching TV, or chilling with friends, they are now engaged in a now hobby entitled, “Islamic Activism (2.o)”.

Here’s how it works: you join a special clique of friends who use Islamic phrases after every other word, you write and design with an Islamic slant, you create special Twitter lists for Shuyookh, you buy Islamic-themed apparel, you tailgate Muslim gatherings, and your room’s sports posters are now replaced with posters of Islamic events. Your sphere of social activity and entertainment have now moved into the Islamic realm.

Now, there may not be anything necessarily wrong with this ‘world’ (I certainly count myself as being in it), but since it’s so frighteningly close to resembling mundane and worldly hobbies, we must actively work on safeguarding ourselves from being consumed by the work itself. Many people live to work when they should actually be working to live. Similarly, we shouldn’t ever make Islamic activism the ends in it of itself, but rather the means for the ultimate end, Jannah.

We, as current and/or aspiring Islamic activists, must continually remember our goal and work on our intentions. It’s easy to become an ‘Islamic superstar’ nowadays, especially with the ease of publishing (whether via writing, audio, or video) and with the accessibility of volumes of Islamic knowledge at our fingertips. However, no matter the amount of trials that come our way, we remain steadfast on our religion and we try to do everything for the sake of Allah (glorified and exalted be He) alone instead of doing it to just become more popular in the local MSA or in Islamic social circles . It’s scary to imagine that all of our deeds may go to waste if they’re not for Allah, but it’s also exciting to know that our good deeds may be infinitely multiplied

based on our level of sincerity.

Most importantly, we must not forget ourselves and our goal for being involved all of this Islamic activism. Every Muslim will be alone on the Day of Judgment, and the only thing that can save him are his good deeds and Allah's Mercy. Muslims are definitely born philanthropists, but they're not only that; they are also entrepreneurs looking for ways to capitalize on opportunities that can help themselves get granted into Paradise. My local [AlMaghrib Institute](#) Ameerah summed it up nicely in a personal example,

"I'm pretty protective of my time in the class, in the breaks I'm ready to serve the people, Q&A time as well although I'd prefer to be taking my notes or reviewing what I've typed and making corrections. I really feel those who plan these events i.e. the volunteers are most in need of taking the class and should not be the ones missing the most from it. It's important to not lose sight of the goal, we are serving the people for the sake of Allah, not just so others can benefit but so we ourselves also benefit."

It's not only about others, but it is also about becoming better people ourselves. It should never be the case that we are hastening our Salah when we suddenly remember that there's an urgent task that immediately needs to be attended to. It should never be that we leave our personal Duas and Qur'an recitations to go and make a Facebook invitation for an Islamic event. It should never be that we shun our parents' calls for an important conference call. If that's the case, then our intentions and our priorities may be in the wrong place. Just like in the shopping queue incident, we may actually be hurting ourselves and our mission as opposed to being of benefit.

We can see that our own Prophet(may Allah's peace and blessings

be upon him) never once failed to distinguish the means from the ends, even in the throes of death. He, may Allah's peace and blessing be upon him, worked harder than any of us, but he never forgot Allah and the ultimate end. A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported,

When the Prophet was healthy, he used to say, "No soul of a Prophet is taken until he has been shown his place in Paradise and then he is given the choice." When death approached him while his head was on my thigh, he became unconscious and then recovered consciousness. He then looked at the ceiling of the house and said, "O Allah! (with) the highest companions." I said (to myself), "He is not going to choose (to stay with) us." Then I understood what he meant when he said that to us when he was healthy. The last words he spoke were, "O Allah! (with) the highest companions."

The Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) could have stayed with us and just kept on working. However, he picked the ultimate companionship because that was what he was actually working for and looking forward to at the end of the day. The Prophet had already completed his assigned task on Earth so now given the choice between this world and the next, the answer was easy for our beloved Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). He picked the highest companionship.

May Allah (glorified and exalted be He) accept our Islamic activism for His sake, may He purify our intentions, and may He admit us into the company of the righteous in Jannah. Ameen...