

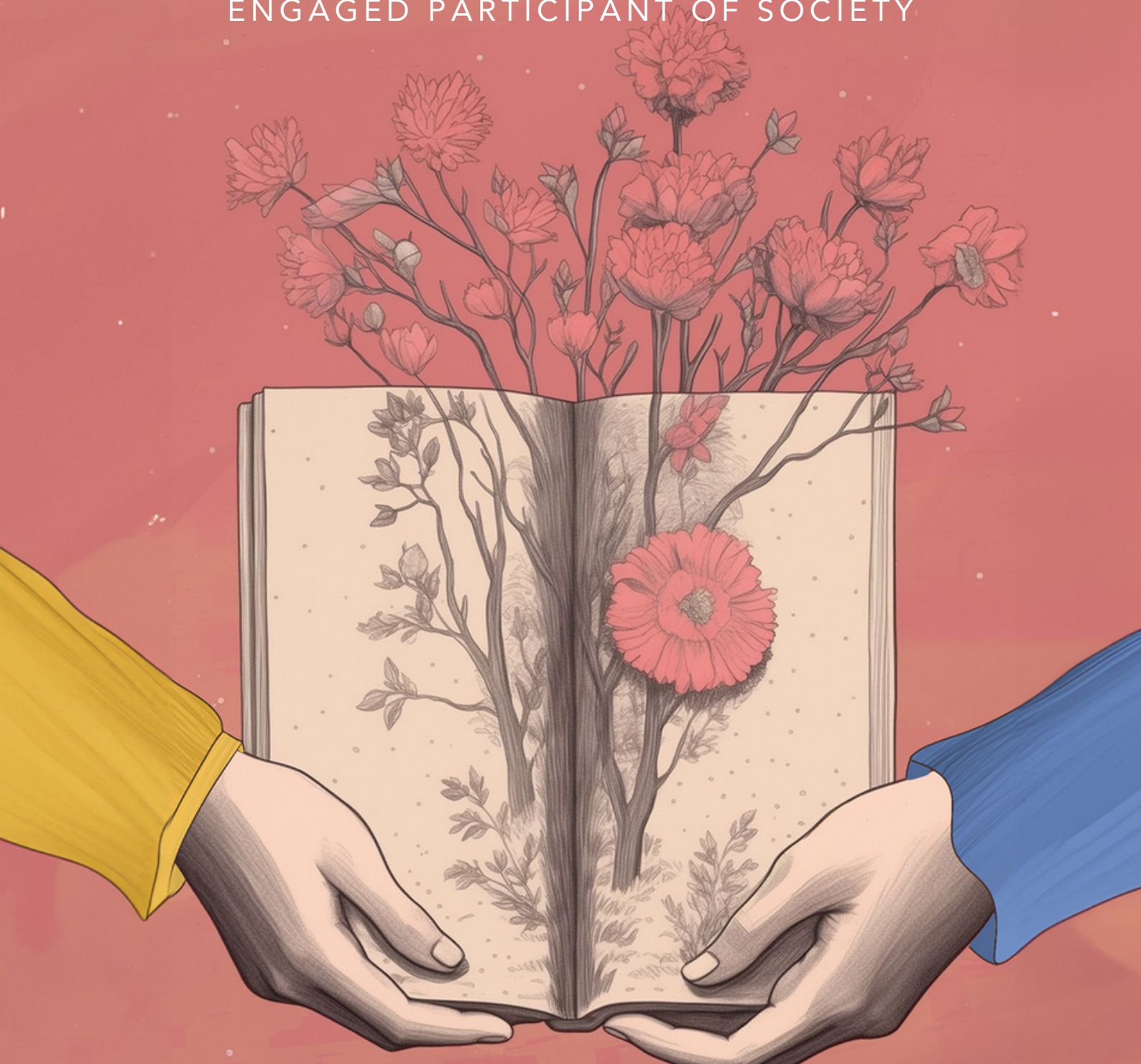
the knowledge
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with Ustazah
Marhamah S.

A Divine Match

EP 5: HOW SOLAH AND ZAKAT GUIDE OUR
INWARD AND OUTWARD BEHAVIOUR AS AN
ENGAGED PARTICIPANT OF SOCIETY



CHAPTER MARKERS



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Chapter 1:

STRIKING A BALANCE



Spend What Allah has Provided

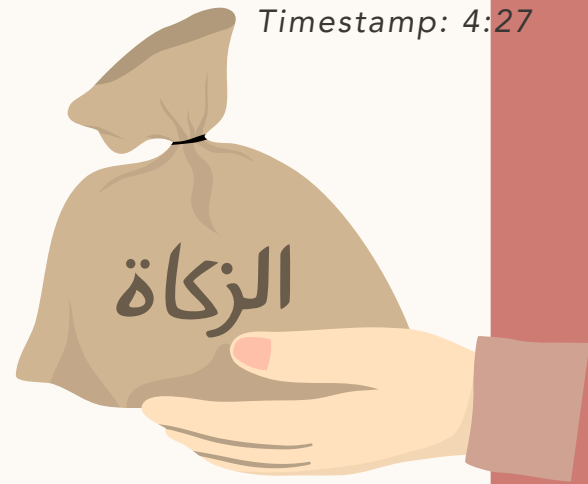
- We play many different roles in life but tend to forget about our role as members of society. After all, we are supposed to be رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ Rahmatan Lil 'Alamin (Mercy for the whole world), not just a mercy to our family, our spouse or kids. We need to be merciful to everyone and everything we interact with!

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them, (Al-Baqarah 2:3)

- Linguistically, to spend in this verse means 'to part from our money' or 'to give nafaqah' (financial support to our dependents for their necessities). It can also mean 'to give something of ourselves' whether our time, resources, energy etc. When this word is used for livestock, it means they are well-fed.

On Zakah and Nafaqah



- When we talk about *Nafaqah*, it is not always about money; it is about giving from ourselves (and this may look different from person to person).
- Our definition of *Ibadah* cannot be narrow and limiting. Islam is more than just Solah. Perhaps we pressure ourselves when we see others doing something, and we assume we have to do the same to be a good Muslim. **The contexts of our lives are different, so how can it look the same for everyone?**
- Before the commandment of *Zakah* came, Allah told those who believed to give from themselves through this verse. Hence, when *Zakah* became mandatory, this verse was considered abrogated. *Zakah* takes precedence over 'giving from themselves'.



Prayer and Charity

- Prayer and Charity are mentioned together at least 26 times in the Quran (though 'Solah' is mentioned on its own in several other verses). What is the significance of them being mentioned together?
- Solah (Prayer) is obligated upon so it is the Right of Allah upon us. It doesn't benefit Allah, but us.
- One fact about charity that we often overlook is that the right of charity belongs to the *Asnaf* (beneficiaries). Hence, it would be wrong of us to withhold charity which is the right of those who deserve it.
- Similarly, our *Nafaqah* is the right of our dependents. We are not giving them *nafaqah* out of our favour on them, but because it is obligated for them to receive it.

Did You Know?

When
Sayyidatina
Aisha RA
gave charity,
she would
perfume it.

*(because she understood the
rights of the person she was
giving to)*





Balance is Key in Islam

- Charity is two-way - it needs both the giver and the recipient. Instead of feeling good about ourselves after giving charity, we should be grateful that we were able to fulfil the rights of others and perform a good deed.
- While the benefit of charity is outward and mostly on others, such as the Asnaf, the benefit of Solah is inward and only on ourselves. In summary, Solah is our internal and Charity is our external.

Lesson #1: Balance is key in Islam and Society.

- If we only do internal work that benefits ourselves (without putting anything out of ourselves), there is no balance in our faith.
- Hence, the significance of prayer and charity being mentioned together is Him emphasizing that there needs to be balance. Our Iman and Taqwa are not only about focusing on ourselves.

Two-Way Balance

- It is no use thinking only about ourselves, our peace, and being in our bubble if there is anarchy outside.
- Practising Islam looks different in different environments. Sometimes, **we have to create the space for us to practice our faith and to be practising and mindful Muslims** who are conscious of our responsibilities and obligations.
- We feel uneasy about all the oppression that is taking worldwide because we want to do something for them. We want to address the issue.
- **It is in our innate nature of being human to need balance.** When we focus too much on ourselves or on others, naturally we will feel an imbalance.



Believers Are Connected

- The responsibility to ourselves is as important as our responsibility to others. Both must equally matter to us.

"The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever". (Bukhari and Muslim)

- For example, when we see another Muslim overseas (especially in a non-Muslim country), we smile at them because we feel connected to them.
- Or when our family members disagree, we try our best to be their mediator because we feel uneasy until their issue is resolved. Their conflict affects us.
- In Islam, we are taught to never leave anyone behind. It is never just about the Self in our Deen.



الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

***Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer,
and spend out of what We have provided for
them, (Al-Baqarah 2:3)***

- What Allah provides to each one of us is different. This emphasises that whatever we spend out of ourselves needs a limit, and shouldn't be done at the expense of ourselves.
- A husband has to give his wife nafaqah in terms of shelter, clothes, food, surplus to keep a clean house etc. There is Rahmah (mercy) in Allah not specifying how nafaqah should be provided because we all have different needs.
- In addition, what each husband has and can provide varies too. This is why we need to be aware of who we marry and what they can provide for us that is suitable to our needs.



A Perfect Ecosystem

Lesson #2: Prayer and charity is an ecosystem that is both perfect and perfected for each other.

- When we try to perfect our prayer (by performing it on time or performing extra supererogatory prayers) and we reach a point where we feel good about our prayers, it motivates us to perfect other parts of our lives.
- If our prayers are not perfect but we always give to others in charity, we will eventually come closer to Allah and hence, help us to perfect our prayers too. Everything is interconnected in this ecosystem.
- Likewise, an individual and community are in an ecosystem where they give and receive from each other.



Prayer is Followed by Charity

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

‘They are’ those who establish prayer and donate from what We have provided for them. (Al-Anfal 8:3)

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

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الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

‘those’ who establish prayer, pay alms-tax, and have sure faith in the Hereafter. (An-Naml 27:3)

- The order is always the same - prayer is followed by charity. We have to take care of our internal, and the external will follow. It is hard for us to reflect externally on what we don't feel internally.

The Hypocrites

who “perform” outward good deeds but their inwards are bad

The Believers

who struggle both internally and externally

The Companions

who were great outwardly but their inwards were even better.





STUDY BREAK





Chapter 2:

BUILDING A FUNCTIONAL SOCIETY



The Benefits of Giving

- Linguistically, *Zakah* shares the same root word with '*Zaki*' which means '**to purify something**' or '**to increase and grow in Barakah**'.
- When we give *Zakah*, we are purifying our wealth since our wealth is not entirely ours; there are other's rights in it.
- In addition, the act of giving *Zakah* even though obligatory and can be hard to do, **helps to purify us**.
- Research shows that the happiness index of those who spend on others ranks higher than those who spend on themselves.
- **There is an indescribable joy in giving**, such as the joy from knowing that Allah is pleased with us and the joy from being allowed to make someone's life easier.



When we
give to
others, it
balances
us out!

Woe to the Hypocrites

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ (١) فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ (٢) وَلَا
يَحُضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ (٣) فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ (٤) الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ
صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ (٥) الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ (٦) وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ (٧)

Have you seen the one who denies the 'final' Judgment? That is the one who repulses the orphan, and does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those 'hypocrites' who pray, yet are unmindful of their prayers; those who 'only' show off, and refuse to give 'even the simplest' aid. (Al-Ma'un 107:1-7)

- وَيْلٌ (Woe) have two meanings - internally, it can mean 'to have a deep-seated sorrow'. Outwardly, it means 'destruction' and 'torment'.
- This reiterates the importance of prayers and charity to our inward and outward selves. If we don't do them, the 'woe' that will befall us will affect us internally and externally. With one word, Allah demonstrates how we can be destroyed.

- In Singapore, the government used to try to eradicate mosquitoes. When they did that, dengue became prevalent and brought about the risk of sickness and even, death! To solve this issue, they had to reintroduce a different breed of mosquitoes.
- We may think mosquitoes are small and a pest, but they play a huge role in balancing the universe, and removing them ends up destroying the ecosystem.
- Surah Al-Ma'un is an extreme example of this mosquito issue. We are not removing just one thing; we are destroying the whole ecosystem because we are not doing any of the things that help to maintain the ecosystem.
- Just like cooking, if we take out an ingredient, the dish will not taste the same.



Every Obligation is a Way to Allah

- Similarly, if we remove ourselves from the society we live in, it cannot function the way it should. Allah is always purposeful - if we are still alive, it means there is still a need for us in society.
- When there is nobody to receive, who are we supposed to give to?
- Every obligation is a way to Allah! For example, our children play a huge role in our Iman. Without them, one way to Allah is taken away from us. **#mindsetshift**
- While we are alive, every single path to Allah is still open to us until the day we die.



Every single
path to Allah
is still open
to us until
the day we
die.

Pillars of Society

- Solah is the pillar of our Iman, and it is often emphasized no matter which level of faith we are currently in. This is because it solidifies our foundation, without which, our faith will crumble.
- As individuals, we are the pillars of society. Each one of us will build a foundation for a righteous society.
- We need to scatter ourselves in different fields so that there is Muslim female representation in different industries. For example, we need more Muslim creatives because media is such a powerful too, especially today.



Chapter 3:

BELIEVERS AS GUARDIANS



Sinking a Ship

Narrated An-Nu`man bin Bashir:

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The example of the person abiding by Allah's orders and limits (or the one who abides by the limits and regulations prescribed by Allah) in comparison to the one who do wrong and violate Allah's limits and orders is like the example of people drawing lots for seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part while the others in the lower part ; those in the, lower part have to pass by those in the upper one to get water, and that troubled the latter. One of them (i.e. the people in the lower part) took an ax and started making a hole in the bottom of the boat. The people of the upper part came and asked him, (saying), 'What is wrong with you?' He replied, "You have been troubled much by my (coming up to you), and I have to get water.' **Now if they prevent him from doing that they will save him and themselves, but if they leave him (to do what he wants), they will destroy him and themselves."** (Bukhari)



Those Closest to Us

- One small hole is all it takes for the boat to sink. Similarly, it takes only one corrupted person to sink a society. For a society to be righteous and functional, it needs righteous people as its pillars.
- According to this hadith, one of the seven who will receive the shade of Allah on the Day of Judgement is a just ruler.
- Why? Because it is difficult to be a ruler and not think of oneself. If we receive a bonus at work, for example, do we think of others?
- **The people closest to us deserve our charity and good treatment first:** The pillars in a building need to be able to support the entire infrastructure, but the pillars need to be close and well-divided so that the building won't crumble.
- If everyone takes care of the people closest to them and also the people around them, the society will be thriving!



'Infaq' is to
provide to
those
closest to
us first.



Being a Wali to Those Around Us

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise. (At-Tawbah 9:71)

- Allah is our *Wali* (Guardian). We entrust to Him our affairs and trust that He will take care of us. Similarly, believers should have that amount of care towards each other. We have to be someone who is trusted and who will ensure the affairs of others are looked after. **We have to be the *Wali* to the people around us.**
- A father can only be the *wali* if he has fulfilled the responsibility of being a father.

A Trusted Member of the Society

- We are always looking at the eyes of whom Allah loves. We can stop ourselves from judging and having preconceived notions of others, by reminding ourselves that we might just be interacting with a Wali (Friend) of Allah.
- We have to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities at our respective homes, workplaces or societies, and be someone who is trusted by others and also have trust that we will be taken care of by others.
- **What we give, we will also receive. <3**
- Allah has placed us wherever we are for a reason. He purposefully made us citizens of a country for many reasons. Everything has a purpose!

HEART WORK

ACTION:

Reflect on the state of your prayers and make an action plan how to improve your prayers so that you don't fall into the criteria of a hypocrite.

REFLECTION:

Do you withhold from giving to your closest ones? If so, what are your fears and how can you overcome it to become someone whom others trust and feel safe to come for help?

CONTRIBUTION:

Take this opportunity to give to your dearest and closest, or invite them to pray together in your home.