

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **So You Think You Can Judge!**

Pause for a moment right now and think of all the judgements you made today about yourself and others. Be honest. Like it or not, the truth is that we all judge ourselves and others. It is innate in humans to judge. The brother with the beard judges the brother who is clean-shaven. The nikaabi sister judges the hijaabi sister who judges the non-hijaabi sister. The Shaafi judges the Hanafi. The Arab judges the Non-Arab. Sadly, this is the state of our ummah currently.

It is vital to understand that when you judge someone, you are focussing on character. ALLAH is the only true judge of character because character is displayed through deeds and deeds are initiated through intentions. Only ALLAH knows people's intentions and the real reason behind a particular deed. Not all good deeds have halal intentions.

When you judge another, you are attacking their character and forgetting to acknowledge their circumstances. I judged my non-muslim neighbour a few months back because she was cold with me when I invited her over for lunch on Eid. She was abrupt and closed the door in haste. I judged her immediately, thinking she was racist and Islamophobic. Astaghfirullah! Later that week, I ran into her and she told me that she was upset that day when I had shown up at her door. She had lost her investment property in a fire and was terribly stressed and shocked from the tragic event. My heart broke for her. Next few days I spent judging myself with negative self-talk. I begged ALLAH to forgive me and foster compassion within me for others. It was then I realised that I had to forgive myself too in the process. Self-compassion and self-forgiveness are essential to lead a life of non-judgment.

7 Ways To Stop Judging

1. **Remind yourself that ONLY ALLAH is Al-Hakam, the only judge.**

2. **Become self-aware of your prejudices and biases.** Do not be governed by them. Challenge them. I grew up in a family that programmed me into believing that Muslims were traitors and Islam was dark arts. I am grateful that I challenged my belief system much earlier in life. Alhumdolillah, today I am Muslim.
3. **Acknowledge the truth that EVERYONE IS BEING TESTED.** It doesn't matter who it is, all of us are fighting our very own individual battles. People act and behave differently when they have challenging circumstances. Help them, make duaa for them, instead of judging them. Haven't you had a bad day in your life where you blew your lid off at someone?
4. **Look for goodness in everyone, in every situation.** There is kheir in everything. Alhumdolillah!
5. **Find yourself in another.** Tell yourself that the other person is "just like me". The realisation that we are all beings who hurt, who cry, who laugh and who love, and who are capable of being mean to others, brings us closer in humanity. Remember that everyone has an equal right to experiencing joy and peace.
6. **See the big picture.** You are on your path. Another person is on his/her own path. People don't need to be on the same path as you. We all have different lessons to learn. Remain on your path with faith and trust in ALLAH to help you and others remain on the straight path.
7. **Seek knowledge through clarification, instead of preconceived notions.** If you disagree with someone, ask them to explain their point of view. Seek to understand, not argue. Listen to understand, not debate. Understanding dissolves barriers and creates respect and harmony.

In Shaa ALLAH, next week we will explore the topic: **Reboot Your Imaan**

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