

God Bless the Pious Ones

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*The parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised!
Beneath it flow rivers: perpetual is the enjoyment thereof and the shade therein:
such is the End of the Righteous (Quran 13:35)*

Ever since humans have set foot on this planet, they have always divided themselves between the haves and have nots. While most of us cut this divide based on wealth, it could also be based on smartness, intelligence, shrewdness, and cunningness. In each case the law of 10/90 holds: ten percent of the population possesses ninety percent of the wealth, smartness, intelligence, shrewdness, and cunningness. The same holds true about piety. About ten percent of the Muslim population is what we call the Pious Ones, the rest are Mediocre Ones. The Pious Ones possess certain characteristics that the Mediocre Ones lack. I will list some of those characteristics in the following few pages.

You will know the Pious Ones when you see them. You will see piety dripping from their faces: "You will see them bow and prostrate themselves (in prayer) seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure. On their faces are their marks (being) the traces of their prostration (Quran 48:29)". They are very punctual in their daily prayers and fasting and try to offer most of their prayers in mosques. By the time they hit thirties they have already performed a Hajj or two. They are very particular about the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the people they socialize with.

While we, the Mediocre Ones, spend our free time watching TV, playing games, going to movies, or just having parties; they spend most of their time conducting and attending *Dars* (study circles), going on *Jawlah* (inviting people to mosque), attending classes and courses offered by Islamic organizations of their choice, or learning *Tajweed*. If nothing else, they will pull the rosary beads out of their pocket and start clicking it. It is their hobby. Just like we, the Mediocre Ones, may want to get together and have a card game or two, they will get together and will have a *Dars* or two, attend *Dawah* conferences, or abandon their home, family and job and spend few weeks in distant mosques.

Their eagerness to earn reward is unmatched. They do not mind stepping over others toes to squeeze more reward out of their life. You, the Mediocre Ones, having heard the virtues of calling Adhan, made an extra effort to go early for Friday prayer. You sat just in front of the Imam, so that you can call the Adhan. But when the time for Adhan came, one of the Pious Ones came out of nowhere and called the Adhan. You had to bite your lips. You sat through Khutbah, listening attentively. When the time for the final Adhan came, even before you could stand up, a call for Adhan started coming from the farthest distance. Apparently a more aggressive Pious One, who came late and was sitting close to the entrance, started calling Adhan. As he was calling Adhan, he moved forward cutting the lines in between and by the time he finished Adhan, he was standing next to you. Being one of the Pious Ones, he rightfully claimed his place in the hierarchy of the mosque. Once again you had to swallow your pride and stand humbly in front of AllahST.

They are so much engrossed in earning reward; they do not mind breaking few civil laws here and there. You were late for Jumma. You pulled into the parking lot. It was full. The handicap parking was vacant. Being a good citizen, you skipped that spot, and

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drove to the other end of the parking lot. After parking, you noticed that the handicap parking was taken. You waited to give the person any assistance he or she may needed. Out of the car, pops out one of the Pious Ones without any handicap. He might have gyped a handicap, but he avoided missing the Jumah prayer. Let us ask ourselves: who is more important: AllahST or one of his handicap slaves? Sometimes in their eagerness not to miss the first takbeer of the congregational prayer, you may also find them leaving their car unattended in the fire lane. Once again what is more important: standing in front of AllahST or running the risk of burning down the mosque because the fire truck could not reach the building due to the parked car? We can always raise funds to build a new mosque, but the pleasure of AllahST is too precious to be sacrificed.

They get used to doing good things so often; trivial things do not matter anymore for them. Out of the blue you decided to attend one of the regular obligatory prayers in the mosque. You took your shoes off to place them on the shoe rack. You were greeted by scattered shoes on the floor belonging to the Pious Ones who pray all the five prayers in the mosque. Why bother putting shoes in the racks, when you come to the mosque so often. If you ended up tripping, that was your fault. If you had come regularly to the mosque, you would have known how to navigate around those shoes. Even better, you would have adopted their ways.

They get used to getting preferential treatment so often, they start thinking it is their God given right. There is a party in your mosque. It is time to serve food. You take your place in the long line. While you are patiently waiting for your turn, one of the Pious Ones enters the mosque and cuts right into the line. He is served with respect because he is one of the Pious Ones. To add insult to injury, while few are still waiting for their first serve, he cuts the line again and goes for the second serve. I still vividly recall an election for a Muslim organization. There was a long line of voters with waiting time of more than an hour. The Imam of the mosque came to cast his vote. Bypassing the line, he caste his vote within few minutes and left. Excuse – he had to go back to lead the prayer.

Being at the forefront of piety, they want to keep everybody straight. They want to make sure all of us eat one hundred percent Halal food and our future generation is well rooted in Islam. In order to earn some reward, you invited the Pious Ones to your home for dinner. Before accepting the invitation they quizzed you about the source of the meat. It was not enough for you to tell them the name of the Zabeeha store; you had to provide the genealogy of the store owner. To your surprise, buying just zabeeha chicken was not enough, it also had to be hand cut; machine cut was not good enough for them. As soon as they showed up, which could be an hour or two late (they know time is on their side); the Pious ladies headed straight to your kitchen, opened the cabinet and started inspecting all the labels on boxes, cartons and bottles. If they found any of the haram ingredients on one of the labels, you received a crash course about the virtue of eating Halal. One of my acquaintances proudly boasts how she makes sure everybody eats one hundred percent Halal. One of the good things about the Pious Ones is that you get to eat home baked bread, if you ever get invited to their homes. Since it is almost impossible to buy bread without mono and diglycerides in it, they bake their own bread.

When inviting them, you must also prepare your children for a pop quiz in Islam and make sure they revise the surahs they have memorized. The Pious Ones just want to make sure that you, the Mediocre Ones, are teaching your children enough about Islam. If somehow your children flunked the quiz, be prepared for another crash course. This

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time it would be on the virtue of Islamic education. Their concern for your children's education is so overwhelming; they do not wait to be invited to give your children a pop quiz. They will throw a pop quiz on them anywhere they will find them. Once I ran into one of the Pious Ones in a Zabeeha store, a more likely place to find them. My son was with me. He was immediately bombarded with a pop quiz by the Pious One. No wonder the children of the Mediocre Ones avoid running into the Pious Ones.

Since the Pious Ones are small in numbers, they end up sitting on the executive committees and boards of more than one organization. Since all the organizations are working for the sake of Islam and AllahST, conflict of interest has never been an issue for them. They have no qualms sacrificing the interest of one organization for the sake of others. They look at the big picture. Since they work for a higher purpose, they do not even bother consulting the members of the organization they are going to jeopardize. A mosque had just gone through a big construction project and had incurred a huge debt. When the building was about to be completed, even before paying the debt, the Pious Ones started a full time Islamic school there. Though this was a big drain on the resources of the mosque, it was pale compared to providing their children education in an Islamic environment. One friend of mine was a hereditary member of a well reputed Islamic organization. He also became the president of our mosque. While serving as president, he had no misgiving using his position to promote the books of his hereditary organization in the mosque. Another acquaintance of mine, who was the vice president of an Islamic organization, had no compunction using the services and borrowing the equipment of the organization to publish his book about Islam.

Among the Pious Ones, there are what we call re-treaded Pious Ones. They used to be like us, the Mediocre Ones, and then one day out of the blue, they saw the light and overnight changed into the Pious Ones. This enlightenment did not only erase all their previous sins, it also erased their past memory. They forgot that they were once one of the Mediocre Ones. It becomes hard for them to fathom, why the Mediocre Ones do not see the light. In their enthusiasm they do not even mind scolding them for their mediocre behavior.

We must admire the Pious Ones for their unfathomable trust in AllahST. Since they are the wheeler and dealers in most of the Islamic organizations, they will not hesitate to sign contract for multimillion projects with almost no down payment. After signing the contract, they have the guts to come to the Mediocre Ones about what they just did. It is now up to the Mediocre Ones to cough up millions of dollars to save the faces of the Pious Ones and they do. Had our Pious Ones not been so reckless, we would not have had so many mosques in the United States and Canada. The Mediocre Ones might be the biggest donors for mega Muslim projects; it is the Pious Ones who deserve all the honor and credit for the hard work. In order to make sure that the new project stays on track, they sit on the board. They decide who is in and who is out, who can give Khutbah and who must not, and who is a good Muslim, who is not a good enough, and who is not a Muslim at all.

We must appreciate the devotion of the Pious Ones to mosques. The Mediocre Ones may be the builders of the mosques, but it is the Pious Ones who keep the mosque lively with daily prayers, educational programs, *Dars*, and *Jawlah*. They give the rest of us a sense of direction, and keep us straight. While the Mediocre Ones stay on the periphery, the Pious Ones are always in the thick of it. They are the heart and soul of the community. May God bless the Pious Ones.

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About the Writer:

The writer has authored “Secrets of Angels, Demons, Satan, and Jinns – Decoding their Nature through Quran and Science,” and “Atom to Adam – How, When and Where in the Light of Quran, Bible and Science (A Study of Human Origin),” both published by InstantPublishers.com (<http://instantpublisher.com/>) and “Lessons from the Qur’an,” published by Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>). These books are available from Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com/>) and Ta-Ha Publishers (<http://www.taha.co.uk/>), respectively. He has also published many essays on religious issues in the Charleston Gazette, West Virginia and written quite a few Islamic satires. He is a Chemical Engineer and possesses Master of Science degrees in Chemical Engineering and Chemistry and has Professional Engineers license from the State of Texas. His e-mail address is mnajawaid@yahoo.com.