

Reflections on Valentine's Day

As Valentine's Day approaches again, I notice the display of bright red and pink color everywhere. Shops have gorgeous red dresses on display; flower shops increase the prices of red roses; gift shops in malls are full of cute teddy bears bearing red and pink hearts; jewelry and watches have special expressions in-scripted on them. Even sweet shops have heart shaped chocolates and candies specially wrapped in red and pink on request.



All this is not happening in a foreign country, but in almost all Islamic countries!

Young men and women make plans to celebrate this day either in groups or alone with their "special friends" of the opposite gender, "ahem", behind their parents' back.

I see them shopping for special dresses to wear on this day. T-shirts, shoes, jewelry, dresses, and even red nail polish to wear with those high heels. And not to forget the abayas with shiny red hearts.

Subhan Allah, when I see this happening all around, I'm reminded of an incident during the time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). A young man comes to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and says, "O Messenger of Allah! You are more beloved to me than myself, my family and children. Sometimes when I am at home, I remember you, and I cannot wait until I come and look at you. When I contemplate about my death and your death, I know that you will be with the prophets when you enter Paradise. I fear that I might not see you when I enter Paradise."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) didn't reply, but Allah then revealed a verse which addressed the young man's concern: **"And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, then they will be in the company of those, on whom Allah has bestowed His favor, of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions."** (Qur'an, 4:69)

Subhan Allah! What fortunate young man he was to whom Allah responded from above the seven heavens. He expressed his sincere love for the best of all men. He loved the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the sake of Allah and wished to gain the

mercy, pleasure and paradise of Allah by being close to His Prophet. His mind was filled with concern for the next life.

But what about us? We are so busy following the customs and rituals of disbelievers. Loving the Prophet (peace be upon him) and following his Sunnah is not what occupies our minds. We as Muslims are neglecting the commandments of Allah and the Sunnah of our Prophet (peace be upon him). This has no doubt led to our failure. We read, observe, and witness the numerous signs and warnings of Allah, but we fail to take lessons from them or ignore them completely. The Gaza Massacre few years back, and the Muslims being oppressed in various states is like a slap on the face of every living Muslim. Like Allah is giving us continuous reminders to return to our roots. But as time passes, all reminders are lost in our short-lived memory.

Sadly, pink and red teddy bears will be the focus of our youth this week – following the ways and customs of a people who are involved in the humiliation and killing of our fellow brothers and sisters. I don't understand how, after all this, we still enjoy imitating them?

The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, ***"Whoever imitates a people is one of them."*** (Ahmad, 2/50; Abu Dawood, no. 4021)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ***"You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you (bit by bit, step by step) until even if they were to enter a lizard's hole, you would follow them."*** The Sahabah said, "O Messenger of Allah, (do u mean) the Jews and Christians?" He replied, ***"Who else?!"*** (Al-Bukhari)

Isn't this happening today? We are not only blindly following their ways, but also feel proud in doing so. We need to wake up and submit wholeheartedly to the will and commands of Allah. We need to follow the ways of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his companions and their righteous followers. Only then will we find true peace and success.

"And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger and fears Allah and is conscious of Him – it is those who are the successful." (Qur'an, 24:52)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ***"A person will be with those whom he loves (in the Hereafter)."*** (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

May Allah put in our hearts the love of those who will be in Paradise. Ameen.

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