

AS-SABIQUN

"The vanguard of Islam—the first of those who forsook their homes, and of those who gave them aid, and also those who follow them in all good deeds—well-pleased is Allah with them, as are they with Him: For them hath He prepared Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein forever: that is the supreme Felicity." (al Taubah, 9:100)

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PARADIGM SHIFT

Paradigm: *n.* 1 A pattern, example, or model. 2 An overall concept accepted by most people in an intellectual community as those in the natural sciences, because of its effectiveness in explaining a complex process, idea, or set of data.

"If you want to improve or develop in small steps, focus on attitude and behavior. If you want to move ahead in giant steps, shift your paradigm—how you see the situation and your role in it." – Abdul Alim Musa

Paradigm is a word that means a model, pattern, or set of ideas which describe some aspect of the world. Paradigms usually explain cause-and-effect relationships that scientists use to make predictions, which are then tested. If their observations do not match their predictions, they revise their paradigms. Over time, their paradigms—and their predictions—become more accurate and useful.

We also think in paradigms. Our minds construct models or ideas about the world and use them to make sense of things. Our decisions are judgements and predictions resulting from our paradigms. The more closely our paradigms match reality, the better our decisions become.

A paradigm is like a map. A map shows us where things are and how they relate to one another. When we move to a new city, a map helps us to get around. After a while, we may discard the map, replacing it with a more complicated and detailed mental map. The more we move around, the more complete our mental map—or paradigm of the city—becomes.

Likewise, we create paradigms of people, companies, ethnic groups, countries, governments, political parties—of everything; in fact, even of ourselves.

Ineffective behaviors and attitudes are often signs of wrong or incomplete paradigms. We behave ineffectively because we don't see clearly. As long as our paradigms remain ineffective, so will our behaviors. By the same token, if we change our paradigms, our behaviors and attitudes will almost surely change as well.

"Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)." (al Ra'd, 13:11)

THE “SOCIAL MIRROR”

Some of our most important paradigms are the ones we hold of our own selves (self-image or self-concept). These paradigms come, in part, from the *social mirror*. The *social mirror* is what other people say about us and how they react to us. It is their perceptions, opinions, and paradigms about us.

From this social mirror come our “self-maps,” or our images and judgements of ourselves. We hold ideas like, “*I am not a creative person,*” or “*I am good with numbers.*”

The idea that we should “live from imagination and not from memory” refers to the social mirror. The social mirror is based on our memory of how other people have treated us or reacted to us. Our potential, on the other hand, is based on what we imagine we might become. Because the information that we obtain from the social mirror is based on what other people think about us, it can be wrong or only partially correct. So, in a sense, what we see in our imaginations as our potential can actually be a more correct picture of what we are like than reflections of the social mirror are.

Our paradigms affect others. We affect other people through the paradigms that we hold of them. The social mirror is a two-way mirror. As other people are our social mirror, so are we theirs. By being aware of that relationship, we can use the principle of the social mirror to encourage people to expand their limits rather than living within them.

If we live from memory only—if we remember and reflect people’s mistakes and weaknesses—we may influence them to repeat the same mistakes. On the other hand, if we see their potential and reflect what we see, we may help them move toward their potential. Our paradigms of others may cause the problems we blame on them.

Whenever we have problems with another person, it is wise to consider the possibility that our paradigm of them could be contributing to the problem. Because paradigms create their own evidence and filter our understanding, we may be seeing problems that are not really there, or seeing them as bigger than they really are.

The virtue of focusing on our own paradigms is that *we*—not others—control our paradigms. Changing a paradigm is bound to have a positive effect. In addition, changing to a more positive paradigm will probably allow others to be more willing to hear our points of view.

At the same time, we can have faith in other people. We can believe that: 1) they have goodwill toward us and want to solve problems in a mutually-satisfying way; 2) they are capable of self-management and don’t need us to tell them what to do; 3) they may see things that we don’t see; and 4) seeing what they see might help us make a wiser choice or allow them to more clearly understand our point of view.

By exercising faith and trust in other people, we shift our focus from controlling the negative things in the relationship to freeing or releasing the positive things. This shift in focus brings about a huge change in the tone of the relationship. The positive tone created when we have faith in others lubricates the relationship between us and them, bringing to surface all of its positive qualities and capabilities, and helping it move productively through problems that challenge it.

TODAY’S GLOBAL PARADIGM SHIFT

For the first time in modern history, we find the majority of the Muslim world feeling good about itself. What makes this situation unique is that we *all* feel hopeful, optimistic, and positive about ourselves and about the future and our place in it. Not since the days of early post-colonialism has

the *Ummah* as a whole exhibited—in unison—this aura of positive expectation worldwide. Our analysis of the current situation across the world has moved us to give the present newsletter its exceptional title.

Over the last several decades, history has propelled the Islamic movement in the direction of improvement, expansion, correction, and reconditioning. This rejuvenated global Islamic consciousness is aided by a high tide reflected in the areas of common goals, sincere coordinated efforts, and the imminence of an emerging system or structure.

In our analysis, some of the important steps that have led us to today's paradigm shift are as follows:

1. Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979) and its survival
2. Defeat of the Soviet Union by the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan (1979-1989)
3. Formation of Hizbullāh, the leading group in the Islamic Resistance of Lebanon (1985)
4. Gulf War (1991)
5. September 11, 2001
6. U.S. invasion of Afghanistan (2001)
7. U.S. invasion of Iraq (2003)
8. Defeat of the Zionist invasion of Lebanon by Hizbullāh (2006)

It would take several volumes of encyclopedic literature to do justice to the significance of each step outlined above. In this newsletter, we will briefly review and analyze the more recent chain of events.

Today, the majority of Muslims worldwide believe that the United States government, along with Israeli and Saudi intelligence operatives, is responsible for designing and executing the attack on the World Trade Center which took place on September 11, 2001. Reasons are obvious, even to the political novice. This attack, blamed

on Muslims worldwide, provided the necessary justification for *global arrogance*—made up of imperialistic nations—to declare open warfare on peace-loving Muslims across the world, and to garner support for a pre-conceived agenda of expanding and solidifying a position of global political and military prominence. With radio waves, TV screens, and newspapers blasting indignation at the attack, the U.S. was enabled to invade Afghanistan. Within a few weeks' time, it subdued the Taliban. Militarily, what the Soviets were unable to do in ten years, the U.S. had seemingly done in an instant. This emboldened the U.S. government to send its forces to invade Iraq in 2003. At first, it appeared to be another easy victory. However, within a few short months, President George Bush's vision of a New World Order began to unravel.

After almost four years of humiliation at the hands of Iraqi resistance forces, the U.S. now looks weaker than the Soviets did in Afghanistan. The main point to ponder is that just as the seeming invincibility of the Soviet Union was broken by Afghanistan in the 1980s, the seeming invincibility of the U.S. has been broken in Iraq. This has caused a **shift** in the thinking of the world's people.

In early 2006, the world watched in horror as Israel blockaded Palestine, cutting off electricity and shutting down power plants and pumping stations. After a free, fair, and democratic political process in Palestine, the Islamic movement Hamās had won a resounding victory over nationalist forces. The hostile reaction by the Zionists and the U.S. government to the result of these democratic elections exposed them as global hypocrites (after all, spreading "democracy" in the Middle East had been their previously-declared ultimate goal). This provides yet another illustration of how U.S. "democracy" only means "*my way or the highway.*"

The final blow to global arrogance was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Hizbullāh, a Shi'a-based

organization in Lebanon—made a conscious decision to attack the “mighty” Zionist military, knowing full well that this attack would bring down the full weight of Zionist aggression and devastation on itself. This action of a Shi’a group on behalf of a Sunni people (the Palestinians) endeared Hizbullāh to the full body of Muslims, both Sunni and Shi’a.

*“As to those who turn (for friendship) to Allah,
His Messenger, and the (Fellowship of)
Believers—it is the Party of Allah (Hizbullāh)
that must certainly triumph.”
(Al Mā'idah, 5:56)*

The actions of Hizbullāh, and its resulting impact, indeed make up a high point in contemporary Islamic history. This move was politically brilliant, while simultaneously demonstrating spiritual and moral excellence; no less can be said of exposing oneself to the wrath of Israel and the U.S. with no visible return for oneself. We thank Hizbullāh for its selfless devotion to true Islamic brotherhood. In the meantime, Hizbullāh’s manifest victory over Israel has proven to be the apex, or final stage, in what we call a major paradigm shift.

“Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory.

“That Allah may forgive thee thy faults of the past and those to follow; fulfill His favour to thee; and guide thee on the Straight Way.

“And that Allah may help thee with powerful help.

*“It is He Who sent down Tranquility into the hearts of the Believers, that they may add Faith to their Faith—for to Allah belong the Forces of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is full of Knowledge and Wisdom.”
(al Fath, 48:1-4)*

DETAILS OF THE PARADIGM SHIFT

Paradigm defined once again is a pattern, example, model, standard, or set of ideas which explain some complex process.

When the U.S. military invaded defenseless Iraq, the U.S. government had everything going for it. As the unilateral so-called “superpower”—or hyper-power—America would “shock and awe” Iraq into submission and humiliation. As the resistance has grown with each passing day, U.S. prestige has decreased and international condemnation of the U.S. has increased.

There has been a **paradigm shift** in how the world views the U.S. The fear of U.S. disapproval has decreased worldwide, while U.S. approval loses its luster as a political currency. At the same time, peoples of the world are developing a higher self-image; that is, they see themselves as peoples able and deserving of self-determination. **Self-determination** is the act of making up one’s own mind about what to do or think without outside influence or compulsion. This includes one’s right to choose one’s own leaders and system of government. There has also been a boost in worldwide self-esteem which, translated, means that we give each other and ourselves a higher value. **Esteem**, as a verb, means to appreciate, to respect, to appraise, to have a better opinion of. Our inferiority complexes in reference to the West are disappearing and being replaced by a healthy self-concept. With this change of mind, our actions will surely follow (*insha’Allāh*). The basis of all human development is knowing or believing in God (Allah), and knowing and believing in yourself.

“Verily We have granted thee a manifest Victory.” (al Fath, 48:1)

“O ye who believe! If any from among you turn back from his Faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him—lowly with the Believers, mighty against the Rejecters, fighting in the Way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find

fault. That is the Grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth. And Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things.

“Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (Fellowship of) Believers—those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship).

“As to those who turn (for friendship) to Allah, His Messenger, and the (Fellowship of) Believers—it is the Party of Allah (Hizbullāh) that must certainly triumph.”
(*Al Mā'idah*, 5:54-56)

The Hizbullāh victory against the Zionist military is the biggest blow yet made by the global Islamic movement. In strategic terms, this victory paints a whole new picture of the Middle East. In political terms, global arrogance has suffered its greatest defeat. Arabs, as well as Muslims worldwide, now know that with fear of Allah and proper tactics, Israel can and will be defeated (*insha'Allāh*).

POSITIVE EXPECTATIONS

Abū Hurairah related that the Prophet of Allah (*saw*) once said, **“Says Allah: ‘I treat My bondsman according to his expectation and am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me secretly in his heart, I remember him in the same way. And if he remembers Me in public, I mention him in a gathering of better creatures (i.e., a group of angels).’”** (Bukhārī and Muslim)

It is written in one book of *Hadīth* commentary¹: *“The first sentence of [this] Tradition suggests that a slave of Allah receives a treatment from Him according to his expectation. If, for example, he is hopeful of Allah’s mercy and kindness, he will find Him merciful and kind. A Muslim should, therefore, entertain hope for the best from Allah and mould his life accordingly.”*

The above *hadīth* is telling us that we live in a world full of possibilities. In the case of Allah (*swt*) Himself, He is, or relates to us, according to our expectations of Him. The same must certainly be true of life itself, as it is controlled by Allah. We therefore encourage the *Ummah* to acquire higher expectations. When we view the world and our place in it, we must be hopeful and optimistic. We must expect Islam to be victorious. As we look to the future, let us visualize Islam as the dominant force for good. Picture a world where the air is clean and water is pure and natural. Visualize a world where the duty of governments is to administrate Allah’s Creation in a way that would be pleasing to Him. The custodian (*insān*) of the Creator must act as a true representative (*khalīfah*) of Him.

Allah has created a universe of balance and purpose. That balance and purpose can be restored if we visualize it, pray for it, work for it, and sacrifice for it. Let our imaginations be our guide to the future. Human memory is full of war, greed, injustice, imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, and every other ignorant -ism. Memory must not be our guide. Imagination, possibility, and positive thinking must move us forward.

Humanity stands at the threshold of a glorious new world. Let future history record that *we*—this generation—answered the call; that we made the right decision. Let it say that we decided to be our best self, that we rose to the occasion—that we helped the human being at this crucial time in human history. We are and should be optimistic about the future. *If there is a world to be lived in, why not strive to make it the best of worlds?*

Allah (*swt*) Himself is removing the physical obstacles to this glorious future, *i.e.*, America and Israel. All oppressive and imperialistic global powers are on the decline. Global Islam is on the incline. The first great battle is being fought in our minds. If we believe in our goal of establishing Islam as a global phenomenon, then we are

asking ourselves to expect the emergence and blooming of Islamic Utopianism. With Allah's aid, we can certainly reach this goal.

"Rid yourselves of your depression and apathy. Improve your methods and programs of propagation, try diligently to present Islam accurately, and resolve to establish an Islamic government. Assume the lead and join hands with the militant and freedom-loving people. An Islamic government will be established; have confidence in yourselves. You have the power, courage, and sense of strategy needed to struggle for liberty and independence. You who succeed in waking the people and inspiring them to struggle will cause imperialism and tyranny to tremble. Day by day, you are accumulating more experience and your ability to deal with the affairs of society is increasing. Once you have succeeded in overthrowing tyranny, you will certainly be capable of administering the state and

guiding the people." --Imam Ruhullah al-Musavi al-Khomeini

In today's world, great revolution and change come from the most unexpected places, *i.e.*, the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the halting of U.S. aggression in Iraq, the great victory of Hizbullāh over Zionism, and the list is bound to continue. We believe that in Somalia, Palestine, and everywhere else on the map, Islam will rise—and surprise—the world (*insha'Allāh*).

REMEMBER: Expect *falāh* (success). Expect to win for humanity.

¹ Cited from *Ma'ariful Hadīth* by Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Nu'mani.

THINGS TO DO NOW!

1. Spend at least thirty minutes a day reading the Book of Allah (the Qur'ān). The early morning, before or after *Salāt ul-Fajr*, is the best time for framing the Word of Allah.
2. Not only learn to read and recite the Qur'ān and *Hadīth*, but ponder and reflect over its deeper meanings. Also study the life of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the history of Islam and Muslims.
3. Be very conscious about physical fitness and exercise. Diet, and abstain completely from alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
4. Be neat, clean, and well-groomed, for Islam was founded on cleanliness.
5. Always be truthful, and never tell lies.
6. Fulfill your promises and agreements. Never breach a contract, regardless of circumstances.
7. Be courageous and enduring. The highest degree of courage is telling the truth in your own disfavor, keeping secrets, admitting mistakes, and controlling yourself when angry.
8. Always be serious and dignified; however, this should not prevent you from smiling or engaging in truthful jesting.
9. Always be equitable and of sound judgement in all situations. Never allow your anger to make you forget merits, nor let affection and pleasure blind you to defects. Don't allow disputes to make you ungrateful. Always speak the truth, no matter how painful it is, even if it is against yourself or against the people dearest to you.
10. Be active, energetic, and skilled in public services. You should feel happy when you offer a service to another person. You should feel compelled to visit the sick, assist the needy, support the weak, and give relief to the ill-fated, even if it is only a kind word of sympathy. Always rush to do good deeds.

11. Be compassionate, graciously excusing and forgiving others. Be tender, forbearing, and clement to people and animals and observe good manners with everyone. Observe Islamic social injunctions. Be merciful to the young and respectful to the old. Make room for your brother and sister in meetings and gatherings. Don't be noisy. Always seek permission before entering non-public places and make a courteous exit.
12. Be proficient in reading and writing. Establish a private library, no matter how small. Become familiar with the general Islamic subjects to such a degree that you are capable of forming judgements concerning day to day problems.
13. Undertake some economic enterprise. Try to establish a private business regardless of how small it might be.
14. Perform your job in the best manner you can and stay away from dishonesty and cheating. Observe your appointments and be on time.
15. Foster Islamic wealth in general by encouraging and helping Islamic economic institutions. Be careful about your money; don't let it fall into un-Islamic hands regardless of the circumstances. Eat and wear products of Islamic enterprises.
16. Contribute a portion of your wealth to the Islamic community. Pay *Zakāt*, no matter how small your income; only Allah knows what the future will bring.
17. Save a portion of your income; only Allah knows what the future will bring.
18. Strive to make your daily life Islamic in every aspect—legal, educational, economic, in your greetings and language, etc.
19. Perfect your prayers and strive to perform them within their proper time periods. Also try to pray in congregation in the masjid as often as possible.
20. Strive hard against your own soul until it is under your full control. Lower your gaze, control your emotions, and direct your sexual urge to decent and legal outlets.
21. Always cherish the intention of *jihād* and the desire for martyrdom in the way of Allah and actually prepare yourself for that.
22. Spend some time every night before going to bed on self-criticism, reflecting upon the good or bad things you have done throughout the day.
23. Avoid unnecessary luxury and all aspects of softness and laxity.
24. Know all your brothers and sisters. Love them, respect them, and help them in any way possible. Be at all meeting and seminars, being absent only when absolutely necessary.
25. Call others to Islam. Familiarize your leadership with your activities, and never undertake any action without first consulting your leadership. Keep yourself in constant spiritual and physical contact with your community and always consider yourself a soldier in the barracks awaiting a command.

ACTIVITIES AT MASJID AL-ISLAM

Salātul Jumu'ah.....Fridays @ 12:30 pm
Family Night.....first Saturday of every month

REGULAR CLASS SCHEDULE

Ta'lim..... Sundays after *Salātul Zuhr*
Islamic StudiesMondays @ 7:00 pm
Brotherhood/Leadership Class.....Tuesdays @ 7:00 pm
Prayer/Basics of Islam Class....Wednesdays @ 7:00 pm
Sisterhood (An-Nisā') Class..... Saturdays @ 11:00 am

Steps to Building a Cemented Sisterhood

An-Nisā' of Masjid al-Islam (Washington, DC)

1. Before any act, make your *niyyah* (intention) that your thoughts, words, and actions are purely for the pleasure of Allah (*swt*).
2. Call, visit, or write at least one sister per week. Remember: Allah gave us each 10,080 minutes per week. Use them wisely because Allah will make us account for each minute one Day.
3. If you hear of someone interested in Islam, make a special effort to contact them. Your positive actions will only serve to ultimately strengthen unity.
4. Make your greetings warm and sincere.
5. Be there for your sister. Share her sadness and joy. Your presence and support, as a manifestation of Allah's help, may be all she will need to help her to continue her life in Islam.
6. Don't make false promises or break promises. *Insha'Allah*, if you said you would do something, do it (if it is possible). Disappointment can destroy any feelings of trust or interest she may have in you or Islam.
7. Treat your sister with the dignity and respect that she deserves for being your sister in Islam. Keep your mind open and do not judge her. Only Allah has the right to judge.
8. Be honest in your words and actions. BE ALERT! It is easy to gossip or assume something negative about your sister and never realize your dishonesty. If your sister confides in you, do not break her trust.
9. Help your sister grow and become a better Muslimah. Advise her honestly. Be patient.
10. Don't offend you sister. Sometimes we are not as conscious as we should be about our sister's sensitivity. Be careful not to hurt your sister's feelings.
11. Learn to accept, love, and forgive your sister. We do not need to fight and bicker amongst one another. No one is perfect.
12. Make *du'a* for your sister. It is better to make *du'a* than to slander, backbite, or hold grudges.

DID YOU CHECK YOUR STEPS TODAY?

