

IKR 2016 CASE STUDIES

Case Study #3

Saleem works for a non-profit organization. Charity work is his passion and he is grateful that he is able to do this for a living. Saleem posts daily on social media to promote his organization's work and to encourage others to donate. He has a large network of followers on social media and all of his online activity is very pleasing to his director, Mary. Saleem notices that posts with selfies gain more "likes", "shares", and "retweets". As a result, more traffic is directed to the organization's online sites and an increased amount of donations are made. After many months of Saleem's continued success on social media, he finds himself feeling different. He constantly checks his phone to see how his posts are received. When a post doesn't get the reaction he expects, he feels down and irritable. Eventually Saleem begins to post less often and with less selfies, as it causes him too much anxiety. Mary, his director, notices the change in activity and asks him to return to his usual posting tendencies. Saleem just can't get himself to do it.

- A. What changes in Saleem's spirituality occurred to cause the shift in Saleem's activity online?
- B. Should Saleem go back to his regular posting habits?
- C. What changes in perspective can Saleem make to maintain a healthy state while posting online for his organization?

ANSWERS to IKR CASE STUDIES

Case Study #3: Answer

- A. What changes in Saleem's spirituality occurred to cause the shift in Saleem's activity online?
1. When Saleem saw the success of his posts, he began to gain more joy from the attention he received than from the satisfaction he received from knowing that he was ultimately benefiting the needy that his organization served. This continued until the joy of others' praise for him and his posts completely overshadowed his original intention behind posting about his work.
 2. Saleem lost sight of the understanding that success only comes from Allah and He only uses us and our work to promote good as He pleases.

- B. Should Saleem go back to his regular posting habits?

Yes. Healing the diseases of Saleem's heart takes priority, however, he should not stop all the good work he does in the meantime. If he finds that selfies make it too difficult to avoid showing off, that he can reduce them, and show pictures of the work instead of himself. Saleem needs to take serious steps towards remembering why he started doing his work and posting photos online in the first place. He should practice some good deeds in secret, to regain the joy in pleasing Allah swt only. He should also seek repentance from the shirk he committed, for performing good deeds for the sake of others is a form of minor shirk (associating partners with Allah). Prophet Muhammad, pbuh, said, "Verily, what I fear most for you is the lesser idolatry." And he elaborated, "It is showing off. Allah the Exalted will say to them (who show off), on the Day of Resurrection when the people are being rewarded for their deeds: Go to those whom you wished to show off in the world and look for your reward with them."(Musnad Ahmad Hadith 23119)

- C. What changes in perspective can Saleem make to maintain a healthy state while posting online for his organization? Just as mentioned in the answer for B., Saleem needs to refocus his attention back on pleasing Allah swt and doing things for His Sake, only. By understanding that practicing zuhd, or asceticism, is beneficial to the soul, Saleem can take control of his posting habits on social media. The more he practices zuhd, which includes not living for the praise of others, the more Saleem can truly detach his heart from the fleeting pleasures of this world and focus on the what will contribute for the next life.