

Calling Myself Out

These past few years have been incredibly rich yet incredibly difficult. I am one of those people constantly searching for Something. And in many ways I have found It. I feel very fulfilled in my family life. A loving, patient and purposeful husband. Joyful, bright, sweet, and interesting (if quite challenging...but, then, that's a large part of the reason they're interesting) children. And a caring and supportive extended family—relatives I've been blessed with by blood, marriage, and choice (friends). I am part of a community where I feel needed and which is full of purpose. I live in a rich and vibrant country where, again, I feel engaged and useful. And I have recently begun on a Spiritual Path (Tariqah) within Islam which has greatly enhanced my understanding of and practice of my Way of Life.

But even with all that was right outside of me, there has been something disjointed inside. I have had trouble fitting into the life that I have created for myself. At times I have felt bored, disappointed, overwhelmed, aggravated, cheated, and even hopeless. I felt that I lacked what I needed to be truly satisfied with my life. I didn't constantly feel this way, but it was more than just an occasional bad day. And I felt myself slowly becoming one those bitter and spiteful women. Those women I hate to be around. Those women I don't understand.

Recently, in addition to my daily prayers and Thikr (repetitive recitation...a form of meditation on Allah) I wrote a daily Personal Affirmation to try to combat the negativity I felt seeping into my heart. This is what I came up with:

“With the Name of Allah. I am human—in my light and my darkness. I strive to bring forth the Best that is in me. Today is

a new day and a new opportunity to bring forth my Best Self. With the help of Allah. Ameen.”

And it helped. It reminded me daily that the mistakes I as a human will inevitably make are not the End of all that I have been striving for (yeah...I can be a *little* dramatic). That each day is a new opportunity. And that who I'm longing to be is already within me and so is most definitely attainable. It definitely helped to have this daily reminder.

But today I came to a realization that I think—I hope—will help even more. I began thinking about the line in my affirmation “The Best that is in me.” What is that? I vaguely associated this with the Spirit that God has breathed into each of us, and so with God Himself. But, tangibly, what does that mean?

Christians have the concept of Man being created in God's Image. Muslims have a related concept that we are Allah's Khalifah, or Representative on Earth. We also aspire to adopt on a human scale the Qualities that Allah has told us that He possesses. So since Allah is The Creator, we also strive to be creative. Since Allah is The All Compassionate, we also strive to show compassion. Since Allah is The Patient One, we also strive to have patience. Since Allah is The Generous One, we strive to be the same.

I also remembered that this God Spirit is not only in me but in every human being that has been, currently is, or ever will be. And, indeed, in everything that Allah has created. This Best Self that I am calling out with my affirmation includes all of the wonderful qualities that Allah has endowed on all of His Creation. As a microcosm of the larger macrocosm of Creation, what is within me—within us—is immeasurable.

KHAYALAMI

So when I call out my Best Self I'm calling out the Perfect Example of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). I'm also calling out the attributes of his Noble Companions. I'm calling out the Sincerity of Abu Bakr. I'm calling out the Firm Resolve of Umar and the Generosity of Uthmaan. I'm calling out the Spiritual Depth of Ali. I'm calling out the Supportiveness of Mother Khadijah, the Prophet's wife and the first person to accept his call to Islam, and the Intelligence of Mother Ayesha, another of the Prophet's wives and one of the most prolific narrators of his traditional sayings, or Hadith. I'm calling out the Loving Attentiveness of Faatimah, the Prophet's daughter. I'm calling out the Independence of Aasiya, the righteous wife of the Pharaoh, and the Purity of Mariam (Mary), Mother of Isa (Jesus). I'm calling out the Forgiveness of Prophet Yusef (Joseph) and the Patience of Prophet Ayyub (Job). I'm calling out the Justice of Prophet Musa (Moses) and the Spirituality of Prophet Isa (Jesus). I'm calling out the Sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham). May God be pleased with them all.

I'm also calling out the Wisdom of my Mother. And the Selflessness of my Father. I'm calling out the Sociability of my sister Sia, the Organization of Ayesha, the Energy of Naomi, the Creativity of Khadijah and the Adventurousness of Serena. I'm calling out the Love of Family of my brother Toure' and the Originality of Bilal. I'm calling out the Hospitality of my In-laws. I'm calling out the Experience of my Grandparents. I'm calling out the Perseverance of the Ancestors whose names I may never know.

I'm also calling out the Best in the countless friends and associates I have made along the way. I'm calling out Meisha's Laughter. I'm calling out Ifraj's Connection with God. I'm calling out Eva's Giving Spirit. I'm calling out Shaye's Will. I'm calling out Emily's Positivity. I'm calling out Fatimah's

~MAGIC HOUR~

Authenticity. I'm calling out Laila's Generosity. I'm calling out Shakirah's Good Intentions. I'm calling out Maryam's Soft Heart.

I'm calling out the Knowledge that has been imparted by my many teachers, formal and informal, and the Knowledge that was previously imparted to them.

What's more, I'm calling out the Strength of the Trees and the Warmth of the Sun. I'm calling out the Soothing of the Wind and Water. I'm calling out the Beauty of Flowers and the Freedom of the Birds. I'm calling out the Work Ethic and Community of Ants and Bees. I'm calling out the Sweetness of Fruit and the Nourishment of Vegetables. I'm calling out the Regality of Lions and the Humility of Lambs. I'm calling out the Life-giving Force of the Planet itself. And the Majesty and Perfection of the Universe.

All of this is within me—within us—and it's what we are calling to when we aspire to our Best Selves. And to be able to frame it more concretely by seeing the God Spirit reflected all around us will, I think, make it seem more attainable and more real to me. I think—I hope. I can't say for sure that I'll still be in this space tomorrow but, for now, it's a pretty good place to be.