

Admit mistakes and ask for pardon

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

If from a vessel containing water a single drop is found to be brackish, it means that all of the liquid is undrinkable. We need to sample only one drop to know with certainty what the rest will be like. Much the same is true of human personality. It is like an over-brimming vessel, which keeps on shedding drops for other people to savour, to find sweet or brackish as the case may be.

Small instances of an individual's behaviour and quite short interludes in his company are generally sufficient to tell us what his overall personality is like. A thoughtless remark, an unfair manoeuvre, a failure to give much-needed sympathy or support, a devious transaction — all these are the plain indicators, like those brackish drops of water from the larger vessel, which indicate the lack of integrity or callousness of the person you are dealing with.

The human personality has the same homogeneity as water. A single human weakness cannot therefore be considered in isolation, as if it were an exception. It has to be looked upon as being representative of the entire personality. If an individual proves unreliable in one matter, he is likely to evince the same unreliability in other matters; if he is guilty of untrustworthiness on one occasion, the chances are that this trait will show up time and time again. There is only one kind of person who is an exception to that rule, and that is the one who subjects his own behaviour to constant re-appraisal, who is continually scrutinizing himself for weaknesses and faults and who, once having found such faults, wastes no time in rooting them out.

A man who has made a mistake can completely erase the marks of what is an unfortunate experience for others by admitting his mistake and begging forgiveness. A man displays his true mettle when he sees his own wrong actions for what they are, and humbly asks forgiveness.