

**University of Health Sciences,  
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*And we have made some of you as a trial for others: will you have patience? Surah Al Furqan 25:20*

It's been a tough week for Buni; he's been on-call every single night. His surgical internship has seen him go through some grueling work-weeks but last night had been his busiest and in many respects worst, yet! Not a wink of sleep – the run-around between Emergency, Operation Theater and surgical ward has left him completely drained and jittery. He's lost count of the cups of coffee he's downed to keep himself alert and awake.

Come morning, his energy is completely sapped; he's been walking around like a zombie, waiting for his colleagues to relieve him! The workload is insane and he does not feel human; in fact, he feels ready to eat-off anyone's head that dares cross his path. He's wondering how much more he can take before he snaps. It does not seem too far...

Where are his colleagues – and incidentally his best friends – Juni and Huni?! They were supposed to show up half an hour ago and relieve him of his duty!

"This is not right," says a little voice inside his head. "You should not let them get away with this; you have seen how they have been coming later and later for their morning call the whole week?"

"I must practice patience; my profession demands it." He shakes his head and calms that little voice for the time-being. However, in his heart Buni knows that the voice is right; they have been coming later and later and he's not been able to say anything to them, feeling that he might jeopardize their old friendship.

"They are taking advantage of you." This time the voice is a bit louder. "Their behavior is nonchalant and irresponsible. This is highly unprofessional in my opinion."

"They are my friends. They will be here soon!" With growing unease, Buni shushes the voice one last time.

He must practice patience, he tells himself! That is what his clinical training and professionalism demands from him. His head is spinning with fatigue now and the little voice in his head – the one that had constantly been telling him that his friends should not take advantage and should be punctual – has now turned into a nagging loud yell.

Finally, after much frustrated pacing around in the ward, they show up! Forty-five minutes late and completely unapologetic; walking around and checking up on patients as if nothing is amiss.

“See, your friends don’t care about you!” shrieks the voice in his head at full volume.

Buni, now really fuming inside, stands there glaring at his colleagues, furiously debating what to do. He wants to confront them but his regard for his friendship holds him in check! Frustrated, he storms out of the ward without saying a word. He does not feel good inside! He feels like punching someone.

What unfolds next is a series of unfortunate events; fuelled by misplaced anger, lack of timely communication, negativity and a healthy dose of karma. It presents the domino effect of unprovoked impoliteness and rude behaviors

The first person to cross Buni’s path is the morning janitor. As always, his mopping and whistling both are a little off the mark. Uh-oh! His mop accidentally brushes against Buni’s feet! He is so dead, thinks Buni.

“What the hell is wrong with you?” screams Buni in a disrespectful tone. “Are you blind? Can’t you see what you are doing?” he ends his tirade with a profanity and storms back into the ward. The on-duty guard comforts the shaken Shukoor.

Next, a young kid running around in the ward and disturbing everyone is chastised by Buni; the surprised mother comforts the child. Later at home the same kid screams at his younger brother for making fun of him after losing a video-game. His brother, taken aback, mopes in a corner, scared and sad.

Buni gets a verbal thrashing from his senior professor for not knowing how to correctly read the ECG; his friends comfort him as he sulks in the staff room.

The surgical ward nurse gets mad at a patient for being irresponsible about his health. The same nurse is severely rebuked by another patient’s attendant for being negligent about changing his dressings.

The morning janitor trips and falls over another janitor’s mop, as he leans over to clean a window; he loses his temper and reprimands with a series of expletives without consideration that the other janitor is a lady.

Later, it becomes a night of reflection and regret for everyone who is involved in this debacle. Buni is kept awake by what he said to the janitor and how he was rewarded with worse attitude from his senior. The nurse cannot help but make the connection between her verbal treatment of a patient and her subsequent embarrassing encounter with the attendant, as she tosses in her bed. The janitor realizes his mistake as he chases sleep unsuccessfully; he should not have taken out his anger for Dr. Buni on another fellow janitor. They realize how the other person must have felt once they feel the hurt themselves! Every one of them sees their mistake and is regretful! It sure is a night of Karmic contemplation!

The hospital staff involved in this unfortunate communication disaster decides to attend a workshop on Communication Skills so they can learn how not to repeat their mistakes again – becoming better communicators, professionals and above-all, better human beings.

*Epilogue:* These are our societal woes – lack of patience; inability to be up front about how we feel, at the right time and with the right people; always taking out our anger on the ones with less power and prestige than us; being loud and using disrespectful words when expressing our annoyance and anger; hardly making the connection that what goes around and comes around!

Only reflection in-action and on-action can help us perfect our communication with others. It is our moral, religious, humanistic and professional duty!

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