

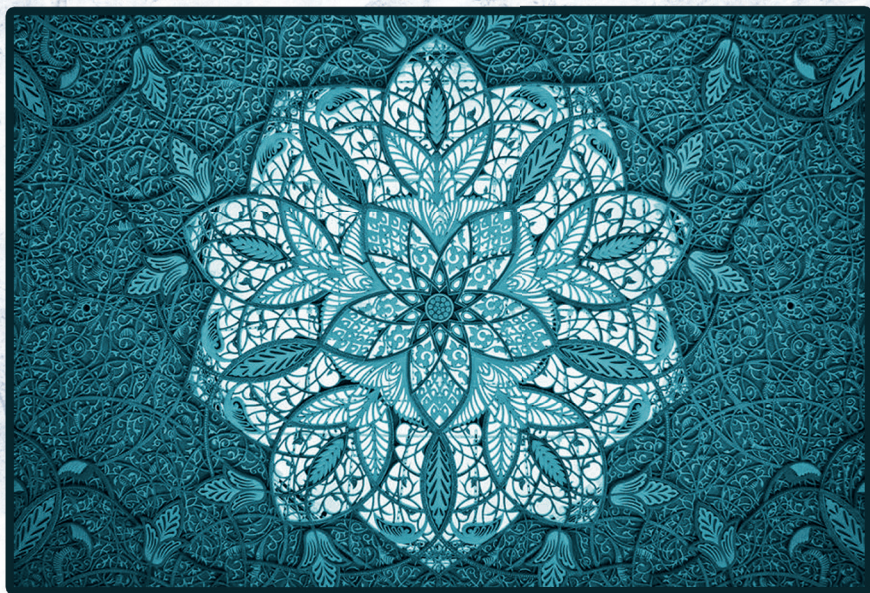
*A collection of thought provoking articles
to deepen one's understanding of Islām and inspire practise*

INSPIRATIONS

~ Volume 1 ~



**By Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā
Muhammad Saleem Dhorat ḥafīzahullāh**
(Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Islāmīc Da'wah Academy, Leicester, UK)



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Inspirations (Volume 1)

by Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafīẓahullāh*

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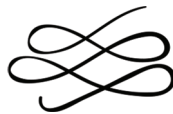
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Transliteration Guide

Consonants

ء	‘ *	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	‘ *	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

* when medial can also denote sākin e.g. ta’murūn (تَامُرُون); bil-ma’rūf (بِالْمَعْرُوف)

Vowels

Short	َ	a	ِ	i	ُ	u
Long	َ	ā	ِ	ī	ُ	ū
Diphthongs	َ	ay	َ	aw		

Salutations

سُبْحَانَكَ subḥānahū wa ta’ālā (Pure is He from all imperfections and He is Sublime)

رَحْمَتُكَ ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wasallam (May Allāh send His Special Mercy upon him and send blessings)

سَلَامُكَ ‘alayhis salām (Peace be upon him)

رَضِيَكَ raḍiyallāhu ‘anhu (May Allāh be pleased with him)

رَضِيَكَ raḍiyallāhu ‘anhā (May Allāh be pleased with her)

رَضِيَكَ raḍiyallāhu ‘anhum (May Allāh be pleased with them)

رَحْمَتُكَ raḥmatullāhi ‘alayh (May Allāh have mercy on him)



Foreword

In every era, Allāh ﷻ chooses certain individuals for the blessed task of preserving and propagating His Dīn. The late Grand Muftī of Pakistan, Muftī Muḥammad Shafī‘ ‘Uthmānī ṣāhib ﷺ, stated that the success of mankind requires two things: Kitābullāh (the Book of Allāh) and Rijālullāh (the Men of Allāh). A book alone is not sufficient for the instruction and nurturing of man, which is why Allāh ﷻ sent His Prophets ﷺ, and after them until the last day, He sends the people of Allāh ﷻ, through whose company and guidance one can tread the Straight Path. Through their knowledge and understanding of Islām, these noble personalities benefit not only the people of their era, but also the generations to come.

The Esteemed Author

From amongst this special group of people is an illustrious and revered ‘Ālim of our time, my most affectionate teacher and shaykh, the Beloved of the ‘Ulamā and Mashāyikh, Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Saleem Dhorat ḥafīẓahullāh. It is indeed a favour of the Almighty to witness the blessed presence of the respected Shaykh in our era and to be able to benefit from him first hand. It is inspiring to observe his sincere and tireless efforts to preserve and spread the beautiful teachings of Islām in their pure and pristine form and the sheer breadth of his accomplishments is astounding. Over the last thirty years, the respected Shaykh has taken on a vast array of responsibilities in order to serve the Ummah, including the role of

teacher, principal, administrator, author, lecturer, spiritual mentor and reformer. He has travelled extensively throughout the UK and the world to enlighten hearts with the love of Allāh ﷻ, and for seventeen years has served as the Shaykhul-Ḥadīth at the Islāmīc Da‘wah Academy (IDA), conveying the treasures of Aḥādīth to the new generation.

Having graduated from the ‘ālimiyyah course at Dārul-‘Ulūm Bury in 1986, he taught at his alma mater until the sad demise of his father, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm Dhorat ؒ, in 1991. His subsequent return to his home town of Leicester to serve his mother was to be a historical moment. That very year Allāh ﷻ inspired the respected Shaykh to establish the IDA. From its humble beginnings – one student and one teacher – the Academy has grown into a flourishing centre of Islamic academic and spiritual excellence that we see before us today. Furthermore, the respected Shaykh – a true friend of Allāh ﷻ – has achieved phenomenal acceptance among the masses, as well as the students of Dīn, contemporary ‘Ulamā and pious elders.

The myriad of services and activities of the IDA are clear for all to see, yet it is important to appreciate just how much of a pioneering role the honourable Shaykh has played over the last three decades. One of his most significant contributions is being the first scholar in the UK of the Deobandi heritage, to serve the Dīn in the English language. Through the Grace of Allāh ﷻ, he realised as early as his student days how critical it was to reach out to the coming generations, anticipating that over time they would lose touch with their mother tongues. Thus, the 1990s witnessed the introduction of lessons on the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, publication of leaflets and booklets, the much-emulated monthly programmes and the Annual Youth Conference, all in the English language and accessible to the youth. Such efforts have been a source of guidance for thousands, young and old, and instrumental in safeguarding their faith. He

continues to devote significant time and effort to personally nurture the young generation with great affection and dedication.

A sign of the acceptance of the Shaykh's sincere efforts can be gauged by how many 'Ulamā have gone on to emulate and adopt his pioneering initiatives in their own services for Dīn here and abroad. A few years after the establishment of the Academy, a leading pious personality of our time, Shaykh Mawlānā 'Abdullāh Kāpodrawi ṣāhib ﷺ remarked to the honourable Shaykh, "Mawlānā! After observing the 'Ulamā emulating you in the many different ways of serving the Muslim community, were you to close the Academy and retire, inshā'allāh, you will continue receiving reward, as you have set a path for people and they are taking ideas from your work."

There is so much I could write about my respected Shaykh, but for the sake of brevity I turn my attention to his literary efforts. In our modern technological age, where new mediums such as the internet and social media have led to an unprecedented volume of easily accessible information, the Muslim Ummah faces the challenge of sourcing authentic and reliable Islamic knowledge. Through his published articles, leaflets and booklets, both online and in print, the honourable Shaykh continues to make an invaluable contribution to address this void. He is from the very few personalities whose works propagate the timeless, beautiful and authentic teachings of Islām along with conveying timely, practical and insightful guidance to the Ummah on contemporary issues and developments in the world. His penned words have been an anchor of reassurance and a beacon of hope during the challenging times the Ummah has faced in the last couple of decades.

A Moment of History

The Shaykh's passion for serving the Dīn through the written word can perhaps be best appreciated through his first ever article, an

extract of which is presented below:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ۝ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
 الْأَكْرَمُ ۝ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ۝

Read! In the name of your Lord, who created. Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood. Read! And your Lord is the Most-Bountiful, He who taught by the pen. (96:1-4)

These are the very first verses of the Glorious Qur'ān revealed to Nabī Muḥammad ﷺ. They declare that man's existence is not an accident of history, but part of a Divine Plan. He who created man has also provided for him (through revelations), all that he needs for the good of life: whether that be in physical nature or in moral and spiritual nature.

For one who wishes to secure peace in this life and in the eternal life to come, the Glorious Qur'ān is the book of guidance and Nabī ﷺ is the model to be followed. From the golden age of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the Khulafā' until this day, the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, Tābi'īn, Muḥaddithīn, Mufasssīrīn, Fuqahā, Ṣufiyā and 'Ulamā have endeavoured to convey these beautiful teachings in different ways utilising different methods and mediums. One of these mediums is the pen which is mentioned in the very first verses of the Glorious Qur'ān.

Pen – a Great Blessing of Allāh ﷻ

It is difficult to picture what the state of the world would be without the 'pen'.

The pen has played and will continue to play, an active role in educating people. It is the only medium of education mentioned in the first verses of the Glorious Qur'ān; thus high-

lighting the importance of this small object in the human's mind from the very outset.

After the Truce of Ḥudaybiyyah, Nabī ﷺ used this very pen to propagate the Dīn and sent letters to the sovereigns of the world inviting them towards Islām. It is the very pen with which the Qur'ān was preserved on leaves and papers.

It is the very pen with which the Muḥaddithīn preserved the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ in the form of Al-Bukhārī, Muslim, At-Tirmidhī, An-Nasa'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah etc.

It is the very pen with which the Ṣaḥābah ؓ, Tābi'īn, Fuqahā and 'Ulamā preserved the oceans of knowledge that were hidden in the depths of their minds and hearts and passed it on to us.

It is the very pen which extricates people from darkness to light and from ignorance to knowledge.

It is the very pen with which the Mutakallimīn of the Ummah have been able to present the correct 'aqidah (belief) to the Ummah.

It is the very pen by which the false 'aqā'id (beliefs) have been refuted and the uneducated and unwary were guided.

It is due to these attributes of the pen that Allāh ﷻ opens Sūratul-Qalam (The Pen) in these words:

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ﴿١﴾

Nūn, By the pen and what they write.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ says:

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْقَلَمَ

Indeed, the first object Allāh created was the pen.¹

1 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: السنّة chapter: القدر Ḥadīth: 4620, Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: التفسير chapter: سورة ن والقلم Ḥadīth: 3598

Hasan Başrī ﷺ says:

مِدَادُ الْعُلَمَاءِ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ دَمِ الشُّهَدَاءِ

*The ink of the ‘Ulamā is more virtuous than the blood of the martyrs.*²

Qatādah ﷺ says:

الْقَلَمُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمَةٌ، لَوْلَا الْقَلَمُ لَمْ يَكُنْ دِينٌ، وَلَمْ يَصْلُحْ عَيْشٌ

*The pen is a great blessing and favour of Allah ﷻ. If the pen did not exist, Dīn would not have existed and life would have been impossible.*³

The pen is such a great blessing and such a useful object that one can summarise all its qualities in one sentence: ‘The pen is mightier than the sword’.

My Wish


Since 1983, whilst I was studying at Dārul-‘Ulūm Bury, I continuously felt that this great medium for spreading the Dīn is not being widely utilised in the English language as is the requirement of the present age.

The more I thought and pondered over this need, the more I became restless. During these eight long years, I continued to supplicate and ask help from Allāh ﷻ, the Only Helper. And on many occasions, despite not having the capability, initiated a move towards this goal with a firm resolution that if Allāh ﷻ grants me the courage and the opportunity, I will, inshā allāh, spread the Dīn of Allāh ﷻ through the means of literature utilising this great Favour of Allāh ﷻ – the pen. However, everything has its appointed time.

It was the 3rd of July 1991, when I was teaching in Dārul-

2 Al-Asrārul-Marfū‘ah fil-Akhbārīl-Mawḍū‘ah p.303


3 Ad-Durrul-Manthūr fit-Tafsīr bil-Ma’t’hūr Part: 15 p.526

‘Ulūm Bury, that I heard the shocking news of the sudden demise of my father, Ḥaḍrat Ḥāfiẓ Ibrahim Dhorat , due to which I had to regretfully end my career as a teacher in Dārul-‘Ulūm Bury, to serve my mother in my home town of Leicester.

Immediately on moving to Leicester, I turned my full attention towards fulfilling my long wish and concentrated on publishing Islamic literature which could present the knowledge of Islām in its pristine purity to all Muslims, whether male or female, young or old.

Through the infinite Mercy and Grace of Allah , thus began the honourable Shaykh’s literary efforts which continue to this day.

Compilation of This Book

As many of the Shaykh’s written works have been in the form of articles over the years, through the sheer Grace of Allāh , an initiative to gather these scattered pearls into book form commenced, so that a wider audience can benefit. A group of ‘Ulamā and associates, under the supervision of the Shaykh, reviewed and referenced a selection of these articles and Alḥamdulillāh, the first volume is now ready.

The book is entitled, ‘Inspirations’, as readers will find herein inspirational words on a wide range of subjects covering beliefs, worship, social life, good character and dealings and transactions. Furthermore, the Shaykh clears current day misconceptions with regards to Islamic teachings, and provides guidance regarding contemporary matters. It is my earnest appeal that this book be read either daily or weekly as a family, so that all family members can develop a true understanding of Dīn and a shared zeal to practically implement the advices mentioned within. This will enable us to perfect our Islām and become valued members of society. The ‘Ulamā will find this book to be an invaluable resource, due to the deep insight and practical guidance covering a breadth of topics

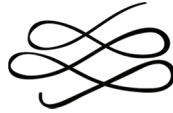
which they can convey to the Ummah, in particular when imparting lectures. Inshā'allāh, this book will inspire readers to strive for peace and contentment in this worldly life and the everlasting comforts of Jannah.

We pray to Allāh ﷻ that He grants acceptance to this effort of my beloved honourable Shaykh and grants him the ability to continue to serve the Dīn with good health and in the manner that is most pleasing to Allāh ﷻ. May Allāh ﷻ lengthen his shadow over the Ummah and grant him more barakah in his sincerity, knowledge, actions and works. May Allāh ﷻ spread the teachings of my Shaykh far and wide so that more and more people can benefit from them and may He grant barakah to the ongoing work of compiling further volumes, so they too can reach the public in the near future. Āmīn.

(Mawlānā) Ahmed Patel

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24th Sha'bān 1440 AH / 29th April 2019





1. Wisdom Behind Natural Disasters

Allāh ﷻ is Al-Ḥākīm (the Ruler), only that which He permits can happen in the universe. He is also Al-Ḥakīm (the Most-Wise), whatever He does is full of wisdom. How can we, the creation, with our limited intellect possibly comprehend His Divine Wisdom? We frequently witness events that defy logic at the time, yet within hours, days or weeks, we are forced to admit that what had happened was truly a blessing in disguise.

An event in the life of one of our pious predecessors, Shaykh Dhunnūn Miṣrī رحمه الله, helps to illustrate this point. He narrates:

One day, I left my home intending to wash my clothes when all of a sudden I caught sight of a huge scorpion. With the intention of observing the Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ, I followed it until it reached the shore of the River Nile. A frog emerged from the water and the scorpion quickly crawled onto its back. The frog then proceeded to swim to the opposite bank with the scorpion on its back. I entered the water and followed them to observe in more detail. Upon reaching the other side of the Nile, the scorpion jumped off the frog's back onto dry land. I also came out from the water treading behind the scorpion until it led me to a place where I saw a young man lying in deep sleep under the shade of a tree who appeared to be intoxicated. I assumed that the scorpion had come from the other side of the river especially to sting this man, but I could not comprehend the Wisdom of Allāh ﷻ behind this act.

Suddenly a poisonous snake appeared out of nowhere and headed for the young man. Just as the snake was about to bite him,

the scorpion sprang and, clinging to the snake's head, stung it until it dropped dead on the ground. After accomplishing this task ordained by Allāh ﷻ, the scorpion left the scene and headed back towards the water where the frog was waiting to carry it back to the other side of the Nile.

At this point, Shaykh Dhunnūn Miṣrī ﷺ recited a few couplets:

يَا رَاقِدًا وَ الْجَلِيلُ يَحْفَظُهُ مِنْ كُلِّ سُوءٍ يَكُونُ فِي الظُّلُمِ
كَيْفَ تَنَامُ الْعُيُونُ عَنْ مَلِكٍ تَأْتِيكَ مِنْهُ فَوَائِدُ النِّعَمِ

*O the one sleeping while the Great Almighty is protecting you;
From every evil that happens in the dark;
How can your eyes become negligent from a King?
From Whom you are receiving the benefits of so many blessings.*

The young man awoke upon hearing these couplets. Shaykh Dhunnūn Miṣrī ﷺ informed him of what had occurred and he immediately repented to Allāh ﷻ.¹

Without observing the full series of these events, which human could have comprehended what Allāh ﷻ was doing? Let us therefore view every incident and event on this earth, including the recent tsunami,² with this in mind that Allāh ﷻ is Al-Ḥākīm and He is also Al-Ḥakīm. Instead of wasting time discussing the details of this tragic incident, let us contemplate over the Power of Allāh ﷻ and remember the inevitable, death and the reckoning. Let us repent sincerely, turn over a new leaf and make the most of our lives before anything harmful strikes us due to our wrong-doings.

Let us pray for the ones affected by the recent disaster and assist them in whatever way we can to alleviate their pain and suffering. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said,

1 Hayātul-Ḥaywān, part 2, p.185

2 This article was written following the devastating Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami on 26th December 2004.

الْخَلْقُ عِيَالُ اللَّهِ فَأَحَبُّ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَى عِيَالِهِ

All the creation (the humans and the animals) are the ‘iyāl (dependants under the care) of Allāh, and the most beloved to Allāh from all the creation is the one who does good to His ‘iyāl.³

In another Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَتُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ وَتَدْفَعُ مِيتَةَ الشُّوْءِ

Truly, ṣadaqah extinguishes the Anger of the Rabb and prevents an evil death.⁴



The Most-Beneficent

3 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: الزَّكَاةُ chapter: التحريض على صدقة التطوع Ḥadīth: 7448

4 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الزَّكَاةُ chapter: ما جاء في فضل الصدقة Ḥadīth: 665



2. A New Year Begins

Moments passing in the form of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years remind us that everything in this world will ultimately come to an end. The arrival of Muḥarram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, reminds us that yet another year of our lives has passed and we have moved a year nearer to the Hereafter. Sayyidunā Abū Dardā رضي الله عنه and Ḥasan Baṣrī رضي الله عنه have both said:

إِبْنِ آدَمَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ أَيَّامٌ فَكُلَّمَا ذَهَبَ يَوْمٌ ذَهَبَ بَعْضُكَ

O son of Ādam, You are nothing but days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you passes.⁵

This is the reality; our lives are decreasing with every moment that passes, and it is up to us to make the best use of these precious moments we have been blessed with. It is worth remembering the advice of Sayyidunā ‘Alī رضي الله عنه:

ارْتَحَلَتِ الدُّنْيَا مُدْبِرَةً، وَارْتَحَلَتِ الْآخِرَةُ مُقْبِلَةً، وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِّنْهُمَا بُنُونَ، فَكُونُوا مِنْ أَبْنَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ، وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنْ أَبْنَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، فَإِنَّ الْيَوْمَ عَمَلٌ وَلَا حِسَابَ، وَغَدًا حِسَابٌ وَلَا عَمَلٌ

The world is departing, with its back towards us, and the Ākhirah is approaching from the front. Both have sons (i.e. those who are loyal to them and strive for them). So, be from the sons of the Ākhirah, and do not be from the sons of the world, because today is the time for practice, not reckoning, and tomorrow will be the time for reckoning and not practice.⁶

5 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: الرّهد وقصر الأمل Ḥadīth: 10663; Ḥilyatul-Awliyā wa Ṭabaqātul-Aṣfiyā, part 2, p.148

6 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الزّقاق chapter: في الأمل وطوله

Many people wonder how they should celebrate the new year. For a Muslim, the method is simple: we need to take stock of the past twelve months and determine whether we spent them in becoming the sons of this world or the sons of the Hereafter. Did we exert the effort necessary to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ during that period? Did we use the time that has passed in the obedience of Allāh ﷻ? Did we use the blessings bestowed upon us in accordance with the Wishes of our Creator?

If the answers are positive, we should be grateful to our Creator by doing more good, and if the answers are negative, we should repent sincerely and turn over a new leaf. Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ says:

حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسِبُوا وَزِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُوزَنُوا، وَتَأْهَبُوا
لِلْعَرْضِ الْأَكْبَرِ

Take account of yourselves (in this world) before you are reckoned (in the Hereafter by the Creator). And weigh your deeds before they are weighed. And prepare for the Great Summoning.⁷

Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says:

كَيْفَ نَفْرَحُ وَالْمَوْتُ مِنْ وَرَائِنَا وَالْقَبْرُ أَمَامَنَا وَالْقِيَامَةُ مُوعِدُنَا وَعَلَى جَهَنَّمَ
طَرِيقُنَا وَبَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَوْقِفُنَا

How can we rejoice when death is behind us, the grave is before us, Qiyāmah is our appointed time (awaits us), we will have to cross over Jahannam and stand in the Court of Allāh, Our Rabb.⁸

Life is a blessing and should be used in doing good. Once when asked, ‘Who is the best type of person?’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

7 Tafsīrul-Qur’ānil-‘Azīm, part 1, p.134

8 Ihya ‘Ulūmid-Dīn, part 4, p.184

مَنْ طَالَ عُمُرُهُ وَحَسُنَ عَمَلُهُ

He whose life is long and whose deeds are good.⁹

So when a new year begins, we must ponder over the previous year. We must learn from our mistakes of the past and ensure we do not commit them again in the future. We must turn to Allāh ﷻ, ask for forgiveness and repent sincerely. We must make a firm resolution that from now on we will live a life that will bring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

الْكَيِّسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

The clever one is he who subjugates his nafs and works for what is to come after death...¹⁰



The Most-Merciful

9 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الزَّهْد chapter: ما جاء في طول العمر للمؤمن Ḥadīth: 2484

10 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صفة القيامة والرقائق والورع عن رسول الله ﷺ Ḥadīth: 2628



3. Lessons Learnt from a Friend's Departure

A very dear friend and a highly respected ‘Ālim, Mawlānā Muḥammad Ilyās Qāsmī Banglorī ﷺ, departed from this world for his everlasting abode on 23rd February 2005 at the age of 41. May Allāh ﷻ forgive his shortcomings, elevate his status in Jannatul-Firdaws and grant him the company of the Ambiyā ﷺ, ṣiddīqīn, shuhadā and the ṣāliḥīn. Āmīn.

On Saturday 12th February 2005, Mawlānā, as was his practice, attended the IDA’s Annual Youth Conference in Leicester. After spending the night in Leicester, he spent a good part of Sunday with me, during which he discussed many of his intentions and plans regarding the service of Dīn, displaying particular concern for the youth. At ‘Ishā time he departed for London with his lovely children and was accompanied by Mawlānā Muhammad Ali, Mawlānā Sajid and Mawlānā Shuayb (graduates of the IDA). He reached home at around midnight. The following day (Monday) he performed ṣalāh with congregation in his local maṣjid, where he had been the Imām and khaṭīb for the past 21 years.

It was not until after ‘Ishā ṣalāh that I received a phone call from a friend, brother Ibrahim Lunat, informing me of Mawlānā being hospitalised due to a stroke. I left for London immediately with Muftī Ibrahim and Muftī Sulayman (lecturers at the IDA) and Mawlānā Shuayb and we made our way to the Whipps Cross Hospital where he was being treated. When I arrived at his bedside, I found Mawlānā in poor health, but very patient and courageous as always. He shared a few final words with me before falling asleep. I could not make out what he was saying due to the severity of the

stroke, but I could clearly hear the word ‘madrasah’ over and over again. Hence, his last conversation was regarding Dīnī education.

The following events unfolded very quickly: on Tuesday morning he went into a coma, having fallen victim to a second stroke. He was taken for an operation to remove a blood clot and according to the doctors the operation went well. Nevertheless, Mawlānā was unable to recover from this state. Finally, the soul of Mawlānā Ilyās ﷺ departed for the everlasting bliss, inshā’allāh. He was laid to rest with approximately 1,000 attendees at his janāzah ṣalāh, amongst whom were a large number of ‘Ulamā. May Allāh ﷻ enshroud his grave with His Mercy and grant him a lofty status in the Hereafter. Āmīn.

We all believe that death is inevitable, that it can strike without notice and that we all have to return to Allāh ﷻ. However, the sudden departure of a very close friend at the age of 41 has most definitely forced me to reflect over certain lessons that should always remain in our hearts and minds:

1. Death is around the corner. It strikes at its appointed time without discriminating between old and young; thus, we should remain prepared at all times.

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ

Indeed, when the specified time of Allāh (the time of death) comes, it is not delayed... (71:4)

2. We should be very careful about how and where we spend our time. What if death strikes whilst we are sinning and disobeying Allāh ﷻ? How will we face Allāh ﷻ?

يُبْعَثُ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ عَلَىٰ مَا مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ

Every servant (of Allāh ﷻ) will be resurrected in the state

in which he died.¹¹

3. We should live our lives in such a manner that our state of affairs with Allāh ﷻ is clear. Everything due upon us should be discharged without delay, e.g. qadā ṣalāh, qadā ṣawm, outstanding zakāh etc.
4. We should treat everyone with love and affection in our daily lives, and our matters and dealings with all should be clear at all times. This will save us from regret in this world and in the life of the Hereafter.
5. Our waṣiyyah should at all times be in place. Along with details of how our estate is to be administered, it should contain those wishes and desires that we would like executed during our illness and after our departure, always remaining within the limits of Dīn.
6. Mawlānā Ilyās ؒ was from among the fortunate ones; he spent his final moments in a good environment, doing good, and left this world with his final conversation being a religious one. All those who knew him will agree that he lived a good life, a life of piety and service to Dīn and the creation of Allāh ﷻ. Hence, Allāh ﷻ granted him a good departure too. Mullā 'Alī Qārī ؒ has quoted a famous Arabic saying:

كَمَا تَعِيشُونَ تَمُوتُونَ وَكَمَا تَمُوتُونَ تُحْشَرُونَ

The way you live is the way you will die, and the way you die is the way you will be resurrected.¹²

Let us all turn to Allāh ﷻ and resolve to live a life that will please Him. Readers are humbly requested to pray for the respected Mawlānā, his wife, children and family.

11 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الجَنَّةُ وصفة نعيمها وأهلها chapter: الأمر بحسن الظن بالله تعالى عند الموت Hadīth: 2984

12 Mirqātul-Mafātiḥ, part 1, p.219



4. Was Islām Spread by the Sword?

Of the many misconceptions spread about Islām, a popular one is that Islām was spread by the sword. This no doubt plays a major role in misleading those who are unaware of the true teachings of the great religion of Islām.

However, those making this allegation cannot cite a single incident from authentic sources as proof. Even after a brief study of Islamic history, the baselessness of their claim immediately comes to the fore. Who converted Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ at the point of a sword? Who forced Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ؓ, Sayyidunā Ṣuhayb ؓ, Sayyidah Sumayyah ؓ and Sayyidunā Zayd ؓ to become Muslims?

Let us take a look at two incidents from the life of our Beloved Rasūl ﷺ when the enemy were at his mercy, yet not a single soul was forced to accept Islām.

When the fort of Khaybar was liberated in 7 AH,¹³ Nabī ﷺ decided to expel its inhabitants from there, for they had long conspired against the Muslims. Not only had they instigated the non-believers of Makkah Mukarramah to launch an attack on the Muslims, they had also supported the hypocrites of Madīnah Munawwarah against Nabī ﷺ and the Muslims.¹⁴

The people of Khaybar proposed to Nabī ﷺ that he allow them to stay and cultivate the land, sharing its profits. Nabī ﷺ overlooked their past mischievousness and agreed to this request by

¹³ Zādul-Ma‘ād, part 3, p.275

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.300-01

not only allowing them to stay, but also securing for them a means of survival.¹⁵ It was agreed that the people of Khaybar would be allowed to keep half of the harvest, whilst the other half would be given to the Muslims. The level of equality was such that Nabī ﷺ would send Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah ﷺ to divide the produce into two equal parts and give priority to the people of Khaybar, allowing them to choose the part that they preferred. The people of Khaybar used to say that the earth and the skies are in place due to such justice.¹⁶

Let us go a stage further and take a brief look at the behaviour of Nabī ﷺ on the occasion of the Liberation of Makkah Mukarramah.

In Ramaḍān 8 AH, after much hardship and struggle, Nabī ﷺ was blessed by Allāh ﷻ with the honour of entering Makkah Mukarramah as the liberator of the blessed sanctuary from polytheism.¹⁷ He entered in such a manner that, to this day, the world can only look back and admire and revere him as undoubtedly a mercy for all. He entered with such humbleness that he was sharing his camel with Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd ﷺ,¹⁸ the son of his freed slave. Head lowered out of humility to Allāh ﷻ the Almighty, his blessed beard was touching the saddle.¹⁹ The proclamation, ‘today is the day of mercy’, echoed in the valley of Makkah Mukarramah.²⁰

After performing ṣalāh in the Baytullāh, Nabī ﷺ came out and found the Quraysh standing before him. Memories of past tortures at the hands of the Quraysh would have crossed his mind, but he was far above any thoughts of revenge. He addressed the Quraysh

15 As-Sīratun-Nabawīyyah (Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣallābī), part 2, p.327

16 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: البيوع chapter: المساقاة في Ḥadīth: 3365

17 Zādul-Ma‘ād, part 3, p.344

18 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: المغازي chapter: دخول النبي من أعلى مكة Ḥadīth: 4271

19 As-Sīratun-Nabawīyyah (‘Allāmah Abul-Ḥasan ‘Alī An-Nadwī ﷺ), p.452

20 Faṭḥul-Bārī, part 12, p.505

with the words, ‘I will say the same thing that Sayyidunā Yūsuf عليه السلام said to his brothers: “There will be no reproach on you today (i.e. no revenge will be taken. I have forgiven you). Go, you are all free.”’²¹

The Muslims did not force Islām on anyone because there was no need to. Islām is the Religion of Allāh ﷻ, the religion of all the Prophets ﷺ, the religion of truth; it is a complete way of life. Whoever looks at it fairly without being biased, with the intention of only looking for the truth, will quickly accept Allāh ﷻ as his Creator and Muḥammad as His Final Messenger ﷺ.

Dozens of incidents recorded in authentic sources bear testimony to the fact that people embraced Islām wholeheartedly without any force or fear. Their acceptance was solely on the basis that Islām is the best system for human needs, guaranteeing peace and progress to all. Let us cite just two examples:

1. Nabī ﷺ sent some cavalymen towards Najd and they captured a man from the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfah, Sayyidunā Thumāmah ibn Uthāl رضي الله عنه. They fastened him to one of the pillars of the masjid. Nabī ﷺ went to him and said, ‘What do you have, O Thumāmah?’

He replied, ‘I have goodness, O Muḥammad. If you should kill me, you would kill a person who deserves to be killed and if you should favour me (by setting me free), you would do a favour to one who will be grateful, and if you want wealth, then ask for whatever you want.’

He was left until the next day when Nabī ﷺ said to him, ‘What do you have, O Thumāmah?’

He said, ‘What I told you earlier; if you favour me, you would do a favour to one who will be grateful.’

21 Zādul-Ma‘ād, part 3, pp.354-55

Nabī ﷺ left him until the following day when he said, ‘What do you have, O Thumāmah?’

He said, ‘I have got what I told you.’

Upon this, Nabī ﷺ said, ‘Release Thumāmah.’

Sayyidunā Thumāmah ؓ went to a date palm orchard near the masjid, took a bath and then entered the masjid and said, ‘I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh and I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh. O Muḥammad, by Allāh! There was no face on the surface of the earth more disliked by me than yours, but now your face has become the most beloved face to me. By Allāh! There was no religion more disliked by me than yours, but now it is the most beloved religion to me. By Allāh! There was no city more disliked by me than your city, but now it is the most beloved city to me.’²²

2. Sayyidunā Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh ؓ narrates that he travelled in an expedition towards Najd along with Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When Rasūlullāh ﷺ returned, he too returned along with him. It was the time for afternoon rest whilst they were passing through a valley full of thorny trees. Rasūlullāh ﷺ dismounted and the people dispersed amongst the thorny trees, seeking the shade of the trees. Rasūlullāh ﷺ also took shade under a tree and hung his sword on it. Sayyidunā Jābir ؓ says: We slept for a while when Rasūlullāh ﷺ suddenly called us and we went to him, only to find a bedouin sitting near him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said, ‘This (bedouin) took my sword out of its sheath while I was asleep. When I woke up, the naked sword was in his hand and he said to me, “Who will save you from me?” I replied, “Allāh.” Now here he is, sitting.’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ did not punish him.²³

Nabī ﷺ let him go free. He (the bedouin) then went back to his

22 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: المغازي chapter: وفد بني حنيفة Ḥadīth: 4355

23 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: المغازي chapter: غزوة ذات الرقاع Ḥadīth: 4122

people and told them, ‘I have come back to you from the best of mankind.’²⁴

Imām Wāqidi ﷺ says, ‘He accepted Islām and also became a means of many others embracing Islām.’²⁵

If such incidents are not enough to banish the common misconception that Islām was spread by the sword, let us take another approach: in this age of freedom and independence, despite all the negative propaganda, is Islām not the fastest growing religion in the world? Should one not question why this is? Which sword resulted in the many modern day converts to Islām? The beautiful character of Nabī ﷺ and the appealing teachings of the Religion of Allāh ﷻ are the ‘swords’ that compel people to accept Islām.



The Master

24 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند جابر بن عبد الله رضي الله عنه Ḥadīth: 14929

25 Irshādus-Sārī, part 6, p.335



5. The Exam of Life

Recently, the students of the Islāmic Da‘wah Academy underwent their mid-year examinations.²⁶ Following the exams, a prize giving ceremony was held. As I sat and observed the students, I could see happiness and joy on the faces of those being rewarded for their achievements, along with regret and sorrow on the faces of those who had shown negligence and slackness in their studies and in their revision and preparation for the exams.

I began thinking that everything in this world holds lessons for us. Madrasah, school, college and university exams come and go, but by spending a little time reflecting upon them, we are able to derive some important lessons.

The exam process has three stages:

1. Revision and preparation.
2. The examination itself.
3. The results and awards.

Let us take a look at each stage and see what lessons we can derive.

Revision and Preparation

Before sitting an exam, a student needs to prepare and revise thoroughly. In any class there will be two categories of students: those who had worked hard and exerted themselves; and those who had been overpowered by the nafs and remained neglectful of their studies.

26 This article was written following mid-year examinations at the IDA in 2005.

Similar is the case of our lives in this world. Allāh ﷻ sent us into this world to be tested. Thus, from childhood to the time we reach bulūgh (puberty), we are supposed to learn and make preparations for these tests. The better we prepare, the more equipped we will be to gain success in our exams.

The Exam

After the preparation stage comes the examination stage. A student will carefully and thoughtfully write his exam paper using the knowledge he has acquired through his revision and preparation. The better he revised, the easier it will be to answer the questions successfully.

Likewise, the exam paper for every person in this world starts from the time he becomes bāligh (reaches puberty). At every step there is a question to answer: ‘Should I do this or not?’ The decision a person takes is his answer to the question, and it is noted, whether right or wrong.

Often, a student makes an error despite knowing the correct answer, and upon noticing it immediately uses correction fluid to correct the error.

Similarly, knowing that everyone is vulnerable to error, in the shape of sins and wrongdoings, Allāh ﷻ has also created a ‘correction fluid’ for His servants; tawbah and istighfār. A person is therefore able to erase any sinful portion of his life and make amends before submitting his answers to his Creator.

The Results and Awards

Once the exam paper has been completed or the time for the exam has finished, the papers are collected for marking. Students who had answered all the questions will feel content, whilst those who had not will feel regret. There will be those who eagerly await the

results, and those who feel regret and wish to go back and rewrite their paper.

In the same way, once death arrives to indicate that time is up in the examination of life, everyone will look back at their lives and what they see will dictate how they feel. Those who exerted every effort and utilised each and every second in trying to acquire the highest grades possible, will look forward to meeting their Rabb and being presented with their results. Those who failed to do this and wasted the precious moments of their lives in futile and unlawful activities, will feel regret and wish to re-write the ‘paper’ of their life.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا
فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ

Until, when death comes to one of them, he will say, ‘My Rabb! Send me back, so that I may do good in that (world) which I have left behind!’ (23:99-100)

Next, the exam papers are marked and a prize giving ceremony is arranged, in which the students are rewarded for their achievements and their names are announced in front of the gathering. The successful students stand up with joy and happiness to receive their prizes.

Similarly, one’s Book of Deeds on the Day of Qiyāmah will be the exam paper that was written, and Allāh ﷻ will mark it. The prize giving ceremony will have the largest possible audience, with every creation present from Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ until the last human to walk on the face of the earth. Allāh ﷻ will reward every individual for his toil and effort and the angel Sayyidunā Jibra’īl ﷺ will announce the names of the successful ones.

Those who are successful will be proud of their results and achievements and boast about them, as Allāh ﷻ states:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ۖ فَيَقُولُ هَآؤُمَا قَرُوءَاكِتَابِي ۖ

As for him who is given his Book of Deeds in his right hand, he will say, 'Here! Read my Book!' (69:19)

وَجُوهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ ۖ ضَآحِكَةٌ مُّتَبَشِّرَةٌ ۚ

Many faces on that Day will be bright. Laughing, rejoicing. (80:38-39)

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْصَرَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۝

As for those whose faces will turn bright, they will rest in the Mercy of Allāh (Paradise). They will live there forever. (3:107)

As for those who failed to prepare, there will be nothing but disgrace and everlasting failure.

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ ۖ فَيَقُولُ يَلَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِي ۖ

As for him who will be given his Book of Deeds in his left hand, he will say: 'I wish that I had not been given my Book!' (69:25)

وَوُجُوهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ ۖ تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ ۚ

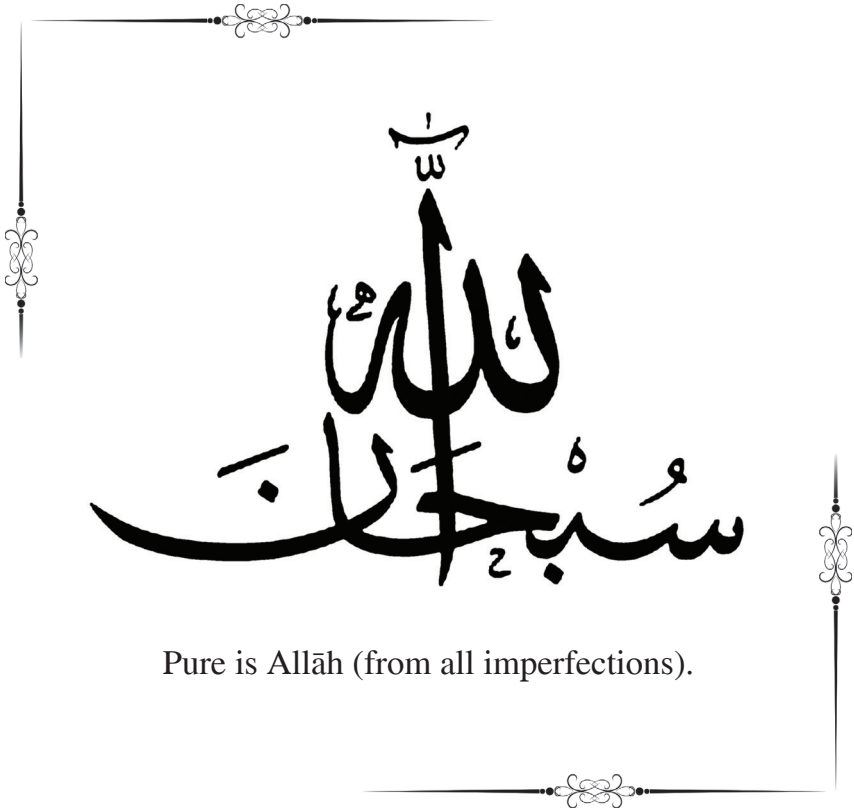
And many faces, on that Day, will be stained with dust, covered by darkness. (80:40-41)

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ۝

...As for those whose faces turn dark, (to them it will be said): 'Did you disbelieve after accepting Faith? Now taste the torment (in Hell) due to your disbelief.' (3:106)

So dear readers, every moment in this world represents a question from our exam paper of life and our actions are the answers. The battle between the good and bad within ourselves will remain, with Shayṭān and the nafs encouraging us to sin, and an angel

and thoughts from Allāh ﷻ encouraging us not to. The choices we make will determine the outcome of our paper, which will be marked on the Day of Qiyāmah. Those who pass will gain eternal entry into Jannah; whilst those who fail will face the everlasting torments and tortures of Jahannam. May Allāh ﷻ grant us the ability to answer every question in life correctly and gain the everlasting pleasures of the Hereafter. Āmīn.





6. Five Steps to Safeguarding Time

Time is a priceless bounty of Allāh ﷻ that many of us do not realise and value. If we ask ourselves ‘what is time?’ the answer will be: seconds, minutes, hours, days and years. If seconds, minutes, hours, days and years are ‘time’, then it would be correct to conclude that whoever wastes time is in reality wasting away precious moments of his life.

Many of us waste this invaluable commodity without any consideration, causing ourselves irreparable harm and loss. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْمُورٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ: الصَّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

Two favours (of Allāh ﷻ) are such that many people are in loss regarding them: (they are) health and free time.²⁷

Weekends and holidays are the most common examples of when we have free time at hand but do not utilise it in fruitful activities. We engage in activities that are useless or, worse still, bring the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ due to being unlawful. With the summer holidays approaching,²⁸ let us reflect on our losses and make a firm resolution not to waste a single moment in the future.

By adopting the following guidelines, we will be guaranteed safety from wasting this invaluable Bounty of Allāh ﷻ.

1. Prepare a Timetable

This is a very effective method of safeguarding time. We should

27 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الرِّقَاق chapter: لاَ عِيشَ إِلَّا عِيشُ الْآخِرَةِ Ḥadīth: 6420

28 This article was written prior to the summer holidays of 2005.

prepare a daily timetable and follow it meticulously. Whatever time has been allocated for a particular task, we must ensure that the task is executed within that time and not delayed. We should also be careful not to carry out any other activity within that set time, without first completing the task that was allocated for it.

In short, we should carry out every task at its appointed time.

2. Refrain from Useless Activities

We should never engage ourselves in activities that do not bring any benefit, either in this world or the Hereafter. Whenever deciding to do anything, we should pose the question ‘is it beneficial for me or not?’. If the answer is no, then we should stay distant from such an action.

3. Abstain from Unnecessary Gatherings

As far as possible, we should avoid participating in gatherings which are of no benefit. The more we intermingle, the more time will be wasted. These days, our get-togethers do not only contribute to wasting time, but also consist of many sins. Backbiting, slandering etc. make up the main topics of discussion. So we should try our best to abstain from unnecessarily interacting with people.

4. Safeguard the Tongue

Whenever the need arises to talk, we should do so keeping full control over our speech. We should try to keep conversation to a minimum, keeping the rule ‘assess then speak’ in mind. This will aid in avoiding futile talk. We should keep the tongue engaged in dhikr as much as possible.

5. Muḥāsabah

We should set aside a time daily when we sit and contemplate over the past twenty-four hours. Doing so will keep us

informed about where our time is being spent. For every good, express gratitude to Allāh ﷻ and ask for the ability to carry out such actions in the future. As for any wrong, seek forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ immediately and make a firm intention not to do so again.

In conclusion, do not waste time. Avoid opportunities for futile talk. Spend every precious second of life in acquiring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and the eternal bliss of Paradise. Spend it in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ, recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān, studying books of Sirah and other beneficial topics. Spend time in serving parents, the sick, the needy and the creation of Allāh ﷻ.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to do good and safeguard our time. Āmīn.



The Most-Sanctified



7. Peace, Not Terror

Two Reasons for Grief

Yet again, a horrific tragedy has claimed many innocent lives.²⁹ Everybody feels for the victims and for their families and friends who have experienced so much pain and grief. The loss of life, the carnage and destruction, and a heightened sense of fear and apprehension among the public are just some of the sad consequences of these horrific bombings and deserve the strongest condemnation.

The hearts of Muslims are crying because of the consequences of these terrible acts, but we are also grieving for an additional reason: the lessons of mercy and tolerance taught by Nabī ﷺ have again been contravened. As a result, Islām will, in all likelihood, be wrongly portrayed and misunderstood throughout the world. For those who wish to defame Islām, these actions strengthen their ability to spread misinformation about our peaceful and just religion.

Mercy: The Essence of Islām

Love, kindness, care and mercy are basic teachings in Islām. There are dozens of statements of our Beloved Rasūl ﷺ to this effect.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

مَنْ لَا يَرْحَمُ لَا يُرْحَمُ

The one who is not merciful will not be shown mercy.³⁰

29 This article was written in light of the tragic events that took place in London on 7th July 2005.

30 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الأدب chapter: رحمة الناس والبهائم Ḥadīth: 6018

إِنَّمَا يَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الرَّحَمَاءَ

From amongst His bondsmen, Allāh ﷻ showers His Mercy upon those only who are merciful.³¹

إِرْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمَكُم مَّن فِي السَّمَاءِ

Have mercy on the dwellers of the earth, the One in the heavens will have mercy on you.³²

Muslims have been instructed to be merciful to the whole of mankind, Muslims and non-Muslims. In fact, the teachings of Islām even stress kindness to animals.

الْخَلْقُ عِيَالُ اللَّهِ، فَأَحَبُّ الْخَلْقِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ إِلَى عِيَالِهِ

All the creation (the humans and the animals) are the ‘iyāl (dependants under the care) of Allāh, and the most beloved to Allāh from all the creation is the one who does good to His ‘iyāl.³³

اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي هَذِهِ الْبَهَائِمِ الْمُعْجَمَةِ، فَارْكَبُوهَا صَالِحَةً

Fear Allāh regarding these speechless animals; mount them when they are fit (i.e. they have fully rested).³⁴

أَنَّ رَجُلًا رَأَى كَلْبًا يَأْكُلُ الْقَرَى مِنَ الْعَطَشِ، فَأَخَذَ الرَّجُلُ خُفَّهُ، فَجَعَلَ يَغْرِفُ لَهُ بِهِ حَتَّى أَرَوَاهُ، فَشَكَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ، فَأَدْخَلَهُ الْجَنَّةَ

A man saw a dog eating moist earth due to severe thirst so he took his leather sock (and filled it with water). He then began pouring water for the dog with his leather sock until he quenched its thirst. Allāh appreciated his deed and granted him entry into Paradise.³⁵

Islām is a religion of justice, peace, mercy and kindness and detests

31 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الجناز chapter: ... يعذب الميت ببعض بكاء أهله عليه. Hadīth: 1294

32 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: البر والصلة chapter: ما جاء في رحمة المسلمين Hadīth: 2038

33 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: الزكوة chapter: التحريض على صدقة التطوع Hadīth: 7448

34 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الجهاد chapter: البهائم على الدواب والبهائم Hadīth: 2536

35 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الوضوء chapter: الماء الذي يغسل به شعر الإنسان Hadīth: 176

oppression, terror, hatred and cruelty. Taking an innocent life, be it a Muslim or non-Muslim, in any part of the world, is an act of murder and is strongly forbidden in Islām. In order to explain its severity, Allāh ﷻ has likened the killing of one person to that of killing the entire mankind, and saving the life of one person to that of saving the entire mankind.³⁶

What Muslims Need to Do

At this moment in time, the issue of the London bombings is dominating the headlines of the world's media, and Islām has once again become a hot topic of discussion. Thus, it is an opportunity for us to talk to our Muslim and non-Muslim brothers and sisters about the peace, mercy and tolerance that is actually taught by Islām. We must acquire a sound knowledge of Islām and its teachings and familiarise ourselves with the life of Nabī ﷺ, who was a mercy for all the worlds. We must engage in discussions and conversations with our colleagues of other faiths at work, college or school and explain to them the beautiful teachings of the Dīn of Allāh ﷻ. During these difficult circumstances and moments of trial, we must also exercise patience and live in peace and harmony with all, to ensure that the peaceful cohesion that has prevailed in our societies remains intact.

Keeping the advices above in mind, let us fully turn to the Almighty Allāh ﷻ, for every state of affairs is in His Hands and it is only He who can help and assist us all. We must seek forgiveness for our sins and for following our unlawful desires, and begin to fulfil the obligations upon us.

We pray to Him that the oppression and terror that has overtaken the world, resulting in innocent people dying every day, comes to an end and that peace prevails, not only in this country but throughout the world. We pray for all the necessary means required to bring this about, so that all of mankind may live in total peace and harmony.

36 Sūratul-Mā'idah, verse 32



8. True Appreciation of Rajab

With the advent of Rajab, the seventh month of the Islamic calendar, Muslims remember the great miracle of the Beloved Nabī of Allāh ﷺ, the Mi‘rāj, which is commonly believed to have taken place in this month.³⁷ During this miracle, Rasūlullāh ﷺ travelled with his body and soul from Makkah Mukarramah to Baytul-Maqdis, and from there to the seven heavens and beyond and returned³⁸ all in a split second.³⁹

The first part of the journey, from Makkah Mukarramah to Al-Masjidul-Aqṣā, is called the Isrā and is mentioned in the Glorious Qur’ān.⁴⁰ The second part of the journey, from Al-Masjidul-Aqṣā to the heavens and beyond, is known as the Mi‘rāj.⁴¹ The great Mufasssir ‘Allāmah Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله has enumerated twenty-five Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم who have narrated this second part of the journey from Rasūlullāh ﷺ.⁴²

With regards to Mi‘rāj and the month of Rajab, let us keep the following points in mind:

- Auspicious nights such as Laylatul-Qadr, Laylatul-Barā’ah and Laylatul-Jumu‘ah are full of virtue and blessing, but the difference between them and the night of Mi‘rāj is that this night was prominent in blessings only on the particular night when Nabī ﷺ made this blessed journey. The blessedness and prominence

37 As-Sīratun-Nabawiyyah (‘Allāmah Abul-Ḥasan ‘Alī An-Nadwī رحمه الله), p.217

38 Fiqhus-Sunnah, p.116

39 At-Taḥrīr wat-Tanwīr, part 15, p.15

40 Sūratul-Isrā, verse 1

41 As-Sīratun-Nabawiyyah (‘Allāmah Abul-Ḥasan ‘Alī An-Nadwī رحمه الله), p.217

42 Tafsīrul-Qur’ānil-‘Aẓīm, part 5, p.45

does not return every year. Therefore, to make special arrangements of any sort or to engage in ‘ibādah during this night, assuming it to be blessed, is baseless. There is no record of Rasūlullāh ﷺ or the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ celebrating the night of Mi‘rāj.

- This great miracle is commonly believed to have taken place on the 27th night of the Islamic month of Rajab.⁴³ However, the ‘Ulamā hold differing opinions about the exact date.

Hāfiẓ Ibn Hajar Al-‘Asqalānī رحمه الله، the commentator of Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, has quoted more than ten different opinions for the possible date of Mi‘rāj.⁴⁴ If this night was meant to be observed and spent in ‘ibādah, there would have been no difference amongst the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, for their ‘ibādah would have clearly defined the time of occurrence.

- The incident of Mi‘rāj is truly an extraordinary event and a blessing not bestowed upon any other prophet, angel or other creation of Allāh ﷻ, neither before nor after. The correct way of truly celebrating and appreciating this great event is to remember the very precious gift that Allāh ﷻ sent for us on that night i.e. ṣalāh. The performance of the five daily ṣalāh is the Mi‘rāj for the believers, as through ṣalāh they receive the honour of conversing with Allāh ﷻ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا كَانَ فِي الصَّلَاةِ، فَإِنَّمَا يُنَاجِي رَبَّهُ

A faithful believer, while in ṣalāh, converses privately with his Rabb...⁴⁵

Allāh ﷻ says in a Al-Hadīthul-Qudsī:

قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ: فَنِصْفُهَا لِي، وَنِصْفُهَا لِعَبْدِي،
وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: اقْرَأُوا يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ:

43 As-Sīratun-Nabawīyyah (‘Allāmah Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī An-Nadwī رحمه الله), p.217

44 Fathul-Bārī, part 11, pp.382-83

45 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الصَّلَاة chapter: السُّبُحُ وَتَحْتَ قَدَمِهِ الْيَسْرَى: Ḥadīth: 413

{الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ}، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: حَمْدِي عَبْدِي، يَقُولُ:
 {الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ}، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: أَثْنَى عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي، يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ:
 {مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ}، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: مَجَّدَنِي عَبْدِي وَهَذِهِ آيَةُ بَيْنِي
 وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي، يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ: {إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ}، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ: هَذِهِ
 بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي، وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ: {اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
 صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ}، يَقُولُ اللَّهُ:
 فَهَؤُلَاءِ لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

‘I have divided the ṣalāh (Sūratul-Fātiḥah) into two halves between Me and My slave; half is for Me and half is for My slave, and My slave will receive whatever he asks for.’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ said: Read (Sūratul-Fātiḥah)! (Because when) the slave says: ‘All Praise is for Allāh, the Rabb of all the worlds,’ Allāh ﷻ says: ‘My slave has praised Me.’ He (the slave) says: ‘The Most-Beneficent, the Most-Merciful,’ Allāh ﷻ says: ‘My slave has lauded Me.’ The slave says: ‘Owner of the Day of Recompense,’ Allāh ﷻ says: ‘My slave has glorified Me, and this coming verse is between Me and My slave.’ The slave says: ‘You (Alone) do we worship and from You (Alone) do we seek help,’ Allāh says: ‘This is between Me and My slave, and My slave will receive whatever he asks for.’ The slave says: ‘Guide us to the Straight Path, the path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who have incurred Your Displeasure nor of those who have gone astray,’ Allāh ﷻ says: ‘These are for My slave, and My slave will receive whatever he asks for.’⁴⁶

By understanding the position of ṣalāh in Islām, one can conclude that only that person who values the gift of Mi‘rāj can truly claim to have understood Mi‘rāj.

When the month of Rajab would arrive, Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to make the following du‘ā:

46 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الصَّلَاة chapter: من ترك القراءة في صلاته بفاتحة الكتاب: Hadīth: 813

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي رَجَبٍ وَشَعْبَانَ، وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ

O Allāh! Grant us barakah in the months of Rajab and Sha‘bān and make us reach the month of Ramaḍān.⁴⁷

Therefore, it is desirable to recite this du‘ā on the advent of Rajab. Upon the commencement of Rajab, everyone should focus their attention on making preparations for the blessed month of Ramaḍān. This preparation is a spiritual one and entails fulfilling one’s duties to Allāh ﷻ, especially in areas where one is lacking.

Preparing for Ramaḍān from the month of Rajab is just like getting into a car and putting it in first gear. Begin to observe the compulsory and obligatory acts from now so that by the time Ramaḍān sets in, you are in fifth gear practising many optional acts of worship as well.

May Allāh ﷻ give us the tawfīq to practise upon His entire Dīn according to the teachings of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ, and may He enable us to start making preparations for the month of Ramaḍān from now. Āmīn.



The (One) Safe (from all defects)

47 Al-Mu‘jamul-Awsat, Ḥadīth: 3939



9. Guidelines for Ramaḍān

Once again the month of Ramaḍān dawns upon us with all its blessings and mercies. From the moment the moon is sighted and the blessed month commences, we can be sure to find every second filled with mercies and barakāt. From day one, Allāh ﷻ will begin to liberate His servants from the Fire of Hell and through His Mercy, make them deserving of the bounties of Paradise. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

إِذَا جَاءَ رَمَضَانُ فَتُحْتَأَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ وَتُغْلَقُ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ وَصُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

When Ramaḍān comes, the doors of Jannah are opened and the doors of Jahannam are closed and the shayāṭīn are chained up.⁴⁸

To understand the value and importance of this most blessed month, we only need to look at how our Beloved Nabī ﷺ used to anticipate its arrival. Upon the advent of Rajab, sixty days or so before Ramaḍān, he would say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي رَجَبٍ وَشَعْبَانَ، وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ

O Allāh! Grant us barakah in the months of Rajab and Sha‘bān and make us reach the month of Ramaḍān.⁴⁹

This du‘ā shows that Nabī ﷺ, despite being constantly anxious to meet his Creator, strongly desired to remain alive until Ramaḍān in order to reap its benefits.

The month of Ramaḍān is a month of mercy, forgiveness and

48 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: فضل شهر رمضان Ḥadīth: 1091

49 Al-Mu‘jamul-Awsaṭ, Ḥadīth: 3939

deliverance from the fire of Jahannam; during it the doors of Jannah are opened, the doors of Jahannam are closed and the shayāṭīn are chained up. It is a month of goodness and goodness only. In this month, the acquisition of the Pleasure and Nearness of our Creator is made easy.

Therefore, we should endeavour to spend it without wasting a single moment. As a guideline, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. Abstinence from Sins

Sins, whether major or minor, should be understood for what they are, i.e. disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. If the thought of a sin comes into our minds, we should think, ‘How can I disobey Allāh ﷻ who has created me and blessed me with so many favours?’ Ramaḍān itself is such a great gift from Allāh ﷻ that to disobey Him in it would be the height of ingratitude and wretchedness.

2. Tawbah and Istighfār

The month of Ramaḍān has been bestowed upon us by the Merciful Creator to cleanse us from the filth of sins and to strengthen us in taqwā in the future. Hence, self-reckoning and seeking repentance should be done in abundance. We should ask Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness for our past sins with a regretful heart, resolve not to commit any sin in the future and ask Him for His Guidance and help to remain steadfast. The month of Ramaḍān is also to help us make a u-turn, to leave the path that leads to Jahannam and embark upon the path that will take us to Jannah by repenting sincerely. Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur’an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it

was prescribed for those that came before you, so that you can become muttaqīn. (2:183)

My late mentor and Shaykh, Ḥājī Muḥammad Fārūq رحمته الله used to recommend that during the month of Ramaḍān we should beseech Allāh ﷻ frequently in the following manner:

‘O Allāh! You created the month of Ramaḍān to make us muttaqīn servants, so by Your Grace and Favour turn us into Your muttaqīn servants.’

3. Do Not Waste Any Time

Even outside Ramaḍān, every second of our lives is extremely precious, as it has the potential of being used to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and earn great reward. During this blessed month, these moments become even more precious, hence we should take even more care to use this gift correctly.

4. Tilāwah (recitation) of the Qur’ān in Abundance

The Qur’ān has a special connection with Ramaḍān, as it was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān.⁵⁰ Sayyidunā Jibra’īl عليه السلام would recite the whole Qur’ān to Rasūlullāh ﷺ and vice versa during this month.⁵¹ The pious predecessors took great care in engaging themselves in the recitation of the Qur’ān as much as possible during this month.

5. Du‘ā

Engage in du‘ā as frequently as possible, asking for all your needs of this world and the Hereafter, beseeching the Creator with conviction that He will grant what you are asking from Him. Do not be neglectful, especially during those moments wherein acceptance is guaranteed, e.g. tahajjud ṣalāh,⁵² prior to iḥṭār (breaking fast).⁵³

50 Sūratul-Baqarah, verse 185

51 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: كيف كان بدء الوحي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم chapter: بدء الوحي Ḥadīth: 6

52 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الدعاء في الصلاة من آخر الليل chapter: التهجد Ḥadīth: 1152

53 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: الصيام chapter: لا ترد دعوته Ḥadīth: 1739

6. Spending Time in the Masjid

Perform all ṣalāh with jamā‘ah (congregation). In addition to ṣalāh, we should try to spend as much time as possible in the masjid, the House of Allāh ﷻ, where special mercies descend. We should remain engaged in ‘ibādah with the intention of nafl i‘tikāf for as long as we are there. We should also endeavour to spend the last ten days in i‘tikāf, for it was the regular practice of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ after he migrated to Madīnah Munawwarah.⁵⁴

7. Refrain from all Sins

Fasting should not only be confined to refraining from eating, drinking and cohabitation; we should abstain from everything forbidden by Allāh ﷻ, including lustful glances, ghībah (backbiting), consumption of ḥarām, etc.

8. Make Resolutions

Most importantly, reflect upon your life and make resolutions for the future regarding your religious progress. Having repented from all past sins and adopted good deeds through the blessings of Ramaḍān, we should also firmly resolve to continue improving our relationship with our Creator in the future.

These guidelines, if adhered to, will inshā‘allāh grant us the opportunity to reap the fruits of Ramaḍān.

As we pass through the final days of Sha‘bān, let us not be neglectful. Let us start preparing now and not delay any further. Let us immediately turn to Allāh ﷻ, repent, seek His Forgiveness, and busy ourselves in rectifying our lives and freeing ourselves from all types of sins. Let us make a firm resolution that we will value this coming Ramaḍān and leave no stone unturned in striving to achieve the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and become one of His muttaqī servants.

54 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإعتكاف chapter: الإعتكاف في المساجد كلها
Ḥadīth: 2036



10. Ādāb of the Ḥaramayn

The opportunity to visit the sacred cities of Makkah Mukarramah and Madīnah Munawwarah is indeed a great blessing and favour, which Allāh ﷻ bestows upon His chosen servants. The journey is one in which the servant, despite all his shortcomings, has the honour of being the guest of his Master and Creator, Allāh ﷻ. Almost every traveller to these blessed lands entertains the wish of being able to reside in them forever.

However, it is worth pondering over the verdict of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمه الله regarding a Muslim settling in the blessed places. He was of the opinion that it is makrūh for the common people to reside in the blessed places, due to the fact that it would lead them towards eventually losing the importance and sacredness with which these places should be regarded. Sooner or later it would result in them behaving in a negligent and disrespectful manner.⁵⁵

This is evident in the behaviour of the majority of the visitors who, after initially appreciating the new environment, soon change their attitude. Sad but true. This is the case for many of us when we visit the blessed lands. Activities which are contrary to the Dīn take place, and the respect that should be observed by every Muslim soon disappears, whether he be a visitor or a local resident.

The following are just some examples of actions many of us carelessly engage in, and by doing so, violate the rights of the two Ḥarams. They should be avoided at all costs, whether one is visit-

55 Raddul-Muhtār ‘alad-Durri-Mukhtār, part 2, p.524

ing with the purpose of performing ‘umrah or ḥajj, or residing in these blessed places:

- **Talking in the Ḥaram**

Despite all the emphasis placed on remaining silent whilst in a masjid and being fully aware of the many virtues of engaging in ‘ibādah, we engage in long conversations on themes related to worldly matters. This should be completely avoided. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

يَأْتِي عَلَى النَّاسِ زَمَانٌ يَكُونُ حَدِيثُهُمْ فِي مَسَاجِدِهِمْ فِي أَمْرِ دُنْيَاهُمْ، فَلَا تُجَالِسُوهُمْ، فَلَيْسَ لِلَّهِ فِيهِمْ حَاجَةٌ

There will come a time upon people when they will talk about worldly affairs in the masjid. On such occasions, do not sit with them. Allāh does not need such people.⁵⁶

- **Using Mobiles in the Ḥaram**

The ringing of mobile phones within the masājid, to the extent that they even ring during ṣalāh, has become obnoxiously common. It is commonly observed that people use their mobile phones whilst reading the Qur’ān, doing ṭawāf and often those engaged in ṣalāh are disturbed by people using their phones. We must remember to switch off our phones in these sacred places, or even better, abstain from entering with them in the first place. It is strange how we switch off mobile phones in our local masājid but use them freely in the Ḥaramayn!

- **Socialising**

The practice of going out of one’s way to meet fellow visitors just for the sake of socialising should be avoided, as it amounts to a waste of valuable time. Use every second of your time in doing good. You have your whole life in which to socialise with them when you return.

56 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: فضائل المشي الى المساجد chapter: Ḥadīth: 2962

- **Eating Out in Restaurants**

Just for the sake of tasting different types of foods, we sacrifice precious time in which we could be gaining rewards. Some people go as far as missing ṣalāh in the Ḥaram Sharīf due to eating out.

- **Committing Sins**

Disobedience to Allāh ﷻ should be avoided at all costs. Casting lustful glances and backbiting are the most common forms of sinning. We must exert extraordinary efforts to refrain from all sins and make a firm resolution to remain steadfast on this upon our return.

- **Spending Time Shopping**

Rather than remaining in the sacred Masājīd to perform ‘ibādah, we tend to spend a huge amount of time shopping. In reality, the majority of the items that are sold there are also available back home. Rather than starting to shop as soon as we arrive, we should confine the purchasing of our gifts and non-essential items to the last two or three days of our stay in each city and fix certain hours for shopping, so that even these last days are not totally wasted. This will help to ensure that we spend as much time as possible in ‘ibādah.

- **Watching Television**

The fact that a television set is found in nearly every hotel room does not mean that we should watch it. Moreover, some people engage in watching movies etc. Such actions should be shunned for they bring the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ.

- **Looking at the Faults of Others**

We have a tendency to look at the mistakes and faults of others. We forget that every person around us is either a visitor or resident of the cities of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ. Is it appropriate

to disgrace either the guest of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ or an inhabitant of their cities?

- **‘Ibādah Void of Spirituality**

Whether it be ṭawāf, greeting Nabī ﷺ or other acts of worship, our devotions have all become mere rituals, to the extent that we perform ‘umrah every year during our holidays simply because it has become a trend. We need to perform ‘ibādah with a sense of the sacredness of the place and the greatness of the Creator, with the sole intention of pleasing Him only.

‘Virtues of Ḥajj’ by Shaykhul-Ḥadīth, Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ṣāhib ﷺ, is a recommended read. It will help us to rectify our behaviour and reacquaint ourselves with the sacredness of the places we are visiting and the significance of the actions we are carrying out.



The Giver of Peace



11. The Spirit of Uḍḥiyah (Animal Sacrifice)

During the months following Ramaḍān, Muslims around the world remember the life of the great Prophet and Friend of Allāh ﷺ, Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ. A life full of sacrifice and submission to the Will of Allāh ﷻ.

At a very young age, when in need of the support of his father, Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ had to leave him. Then in his old age, when in need of the support of his young son, he was commanded by Allāh ﷻ to sacrifice him. Without hesitation, he was ready to submit to the Will of his Creator. Allāh ﷻ says:

فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يٰ بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَىٰ فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ مَاذَا تَرَىٰ ۚ قَالَ يَٰ أَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۝ فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَ تَلَّهُ لِلْجَبِينِ ۝ وَ نَادَيْنَاهُ أَنْ يَٰ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ۝ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا ؕ إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلَاءُ الْمُبِينُ ۝

Thereafter, when he (his son) reached an age in which he was able to work with him, he said: ‘O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you, so consider what is your view?’ He said: ‘O my dear father! Do what you are commanded. Allāh willing, you will find me among the patient ones.’

So when they both submitted (to the Will of Allāh ﷻ), and he laid him down on his forehead, and We called out to him: ‘O Ibrāhīm! You have indeed fulfilled the dream.’ Surely, this is how we reward those who do good. This was definitely a decisive test. (37:102-106)

Allāh ﷻ granted this action of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ so much ac-

ceptance that He made the uḍḥiyah a symbol of this great act. When asked by the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ what uḍḥiyah is, Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied:

سُنَّةُ آبَائِكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

It is the sunnah of your father Ibrāhīm.⁵⁷

The act of uḍḥiyah carries enormous rewards and the Pleasure of our Rabb. Nabī ﷺ said:

مَا عَمَلٍ أَدْمِيٍّ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَوْمَ النَّحْرِ أَحَبَّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ إِهْرَاقِ الدَّمِ، إِنَّهُ لَيَأْتِي
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بِقُرُونِهَا وَأَشْعَارِهَا وَأَظْلَافِهَا، وَأَنَّ الدَّمَ لَيَقَعُ مِنَ اللَّهِ بِمَكَانٍ قَبْلَ
أَنْ يَقَعَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ، فَطَيَّبُوا بِهَا نَفْسًا

The son of Ādam does no deed on the day of uḍḥiyah dearer to Allāh than the sacrificing of animals. It (the sacrificed animal) will come on the Day of Qiyāmah with its horns, its hair and its hooves (to be weighed). The sacrifice is accepted by Allāh before the blood reaches the ground. Therefore, sacrifice with a happy heart.⁵⁸

Once, the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ asked Rasūlullāh ﷺ regarding the benefits of uḍḥiyah. He answered: ‘A reward for every hair.’

They asked: ‘And wool, O Rasūlullāh?’

He said: ‘A reward for every fibre of the wool.’⁵⁹

Therefore, everyone who is able to offer uḍḥiyah should do so and acquire the rewards promised in the Aḥādīth.

Who is Required to do Uḍḥiyah?

Uḍḥiyah is wājib upon every Muslim of sound mind, who is mature and muqīm, i.e. a person not regarded as a traveller by the Dīn, and who during any of the days of uḍḥiyah (10th, 11th and

57 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند الكوفيين Ḥadīth: 19283

58 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: فضل الأضحية chapter: ما جاء في فضل الأضحية Ḥadīth: 1569

59 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند الكوفيين Ḥadīth: 19283

12th Dhul-Ḥijjah) possesses wealth in any form, be it gold, silver, cash, merchandise etc., which is surplus to his basic needs and equal to the amount that makes zakāh obligatory i.e. niṣāb (being 612.36 grams of silver or its equivalent in cash).⁶⁰ One should note that it is not necessary for this amount of wealth to be in one's possession for an entire lunar year.⁶¹ The obligation of uḍḥiyah is established simply if wealth equivalent to the threshold for zakāh is possessed during these specified days.⁶²

Some Misconceptions Regarding Uḍḥiyah

Here, I would like to clarify some common misconceptions regarding this 'ibādah.

1. One common misconception regarding uḍḥiyah is that it is merely a virtuous deed; it brings reward to the one who performs it and there is no blame or sin if it is not done. This is a serious misunderstanding. Uḍḥiyah is likely to be wājib upon most people in the UK.
2. The second misunderstanding is assuming that the obligation of uḍḥiyah is shared between the entire household. This results in those members of the household upon whom uḍḥiyah is incumbent performing just one between them, feeling that the obligation has been fulfilled. This is not so. If a man possesses the niṣāb of zakāh, one uḍḥiyah is wājib upon him. If his wife also possesses the niṣāb, she will have to perform a separate uḍḥiyah. Similarly, if any of the children meet the requirements of wājib uḍḥiyah, it will be compulsory on each one of them as well.
3. Another common misconception is that uḍḥiyah is carried out to allow people to eat meat that is considered blessed. With this

60 Badāi' uṣ-Ṣanā'i', part 6, pp.281-85

61 Ibid., p.288

62 Ibid., p.285

in mind, they are satisfied with eating uḍḥiyah meat that has reached them from others and do not feel it necessary to perform their own uḍḥiyah. There is no doubt that uḍḥiyah meat is blessed, as uḍḥiyah is the re-enactment of the sacrifice made by Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ, the friend of Allāh ﷻ, but more importantly it is an obligation that must be fulfilled. Such people should worry about discharging the obligation of uḍḥiyah and not merely be content with partaking of its blessed meat.

4. In many households, the father performs uḍḥiyah on behalf of all his family members without their knowledge or without their explicit or indicative consent for him to do so. We should understand that without such knowledge and consent, any uḍḥiyah performed on behalf of someone else will only amount to a nafl uḍḥiyah.⁶³ Therefore, in the case of a father arranging the uḍḥiyah for his dependants, the dependants should make him their wakīl (agent) in order for these sacrifices to fulfil the obligation of uḍḥiyah upon them.

It is clear from the above that we must familiarise ourselves with the masā'il and injunctions of uḍḥiyah. These masā'il can be learnt from various books as well as through consulting the 'Ulamā and Muftīs.

The Spirit of Sacrifice in Uḍḥiyah

Just as the name itself suggests, uḍḥiyah should be carried out taking its literal meaning into consideration. Generally, we arrange for our qurbānī to be carried out at a cheap price in a poor country. No doubt this fulfils the obligation, but it is not the type of qurbānī that Allāh ﷻ would like to see. We will not experience the spirit of uḍḥiyah until we carry out the obligation by sacrificing a sheep in our own country, which is often equivalent to, or even more than, sacrificing a cow elsewhere. Allāh ﷻ has provided for us in

63 Ibid., p.291

abundance so we should express our shukr (gratitude) to Allāh ﷻ and not be miserly.

So by all means, we should offer an uḍḥiyah in needy countries, but we should also offer one in our own locality. By doing so, we too can better experience the spirit of uḍḥiyah.

The Custom of Our Pious Predecessors

During the three days of uḍḥiyah, Shaykhul-Ḥadīth Ḥaḍrat Shaykh Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﷺ used to consume only the uḍḥiyah meat and would not consume any other food items with it. The Shaykh would say that during these days we are the guests of Allāh ﷻ and that the meat of uḍḥiyah is His Hospitality. We can gather from this how much importance our pious predecessors gave to qurbānī.

In addition to performing the wājib uḍḥiyah, a person should endeavour to perform as many nafl uḍḥiyahs as possible. We should offer uḍḥiyah on behalf of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, our parents, our teachers, our Mashāyikh, our well-wishers and benefactors, and also one on behalf of the whole Ummah. We may also perform uḍḥiyah on behalf of the various Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, alternating between them on different occasions. The same applies for the awliyā (friends of Allāh ﷻ), the Muḥaddithīn and the a’immah, all of whom we are indebted to.

My honourable father, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm Dhorāt ﷺ, used to keep an annual record of nafl uḍḥiyahs performed on behalf of all these great personalities. He also used to perform nafl uḍḥiyah every year on behalf of his parents and his Shaykh.


In this manner, our intended reward will reach the pious in the Hereafter and, inshā’allāh, will be a reason for them to search for us on the Day of Judgement. We should also make this practice a habit whenever we have the opportunity to spend in the Path of

Allāh ﷻ. These acts will prove spiritually beneficial for our lives in this world and the Hereafter.

May Allāh ﷻ give us the ability to offer uḍḥiyah in its true spirit, not feeling it a burden, but with zeal and eagerness. Āmīn.



All Praise is for Allāh.





12. Misinterpretation, Misunderstanding & Misrepresentation

Throughout history, Allāh ﷻ sent Ambiyā ﷺ for the guidance of mankind. They invited people towards goodness and virtue and instructed them to renounce sins. Some fortunate souls accepted their invitation and entered the circle of believers. Others rejected their call and remained non-believers. Among the non-believers were two groups: those who recognised the truth but rejected it and misinterpreted it, and those who did not get the opportunity to recognise and understand the reality of the true message because they were under the influence of those who had already rejected the message. The vast majority of non-believers fell into the second category. This pattern has repeated itself throughout history.

History also shows us that the first group, determined on rejecting the truth despite their knowledge, has always attempted to misguide the second group through misinterpretation and distortion. Sadly, this is what happened during the lifetime of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ. A tiny minority, Abū Jahl and the like, who thoroughly understood the reality of Islām, denied it and portrayed Islām to the masses as something alien and evil. In spite of this minority's acknowledgement of the truth of the message brought by Rasūlullāh ﷺ, personal interests led them to reject it and oppose Nabī ﷺ. They made it their goal to churn out propaganda against him to prevent people from getting a chance to get close and judge the prophetic message for themselves.

As a result of this campaign carried out by a handful of influential individuals set on distorting the truth, it was inevitable that the neutral people, who made up the masses, would misunder-

stand the true message of Islām. The majority of people remained ignorant of the reality of Islām, not understanding it and therefore not accepting it, and merely followed their leaders. So while the minority were occupied with misinterpretation, the majority were left to their misunderstandings.

If we carefully study the environment we are in, we can only conclude that we are in a similar situation. The non-Muslims are divided into two groups: the majority have become the victims of misunderstanding through the misinterpretation of a handful of people who control the media. The noble character, exemplary life and beautiful teachings of the Beloved Nabī of Allāh ﷺ are being distorted, and seeds of misunderstanding about the Dīn of Allāh ﷻ, Islām, are being planted into the hearts and minds of the masses.

This is not surprising, for history bears testimony that this has always been the case. However, the similarity between the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and our own age ends when we carefully assess the lives of the Muslims and their behaviour.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ performed the duty of representing Islām perfectly, whereas Muslims today are failing in their duty to give a correct picture of Islām. Because the Companions ﷺ gave a correct representation of Islām, misunderstandings were dispelled at every step and people flocked towards the true religion. Our fault lies in not making a proper attempt to eradicate misunderstandings that are being sown in people's minds throughout the world. Instead of representing Islām properly, we are actually misrepresenting it. We are falling short in our duty to learn about Islām, practice it and convey it to others. We are failing the whole world when we fail to be true ambassadors of Islām.

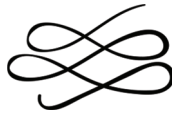
How do we start representing Islām correctly? The answer is simple: study and learn the teachings of Islām, put them into

practice and convey them to others verbally and practically. As a principle, we must keep in mind the following guidelines of Rasūlullāh ﷺ at all times:

إِتَّقِ اللَّهَ حَيْثُمَا كُنْتَ وَأَتَّبِعِ السَّيِّئَةَ الْحَسَنَةَ تَمْحُهَا وَخَالِقِ النَّاسَ بِخُلُقٍ حَسَنٍ
 Fear Allāh wherever you are. Follow a bad deed with a good deed, it will wipe out (the bad deed). Deal with people with the best of manners.⁶⁴

- The first thing we need to remember is to fear Allāh ﷻ wherever we are. In every aspect of our lives we must adopt taqwā by fulfilling the Rights of Allāh ﷻ and the rights of His creation. If we ever slip and commit a bad deed, then;
- We should follow it up with such good deeds that wipe out the negative spiritual and social effects of the bad deed.
- It is also essential that we deal with people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, with the good morals and excellent character taught by our merciful Nabī ﷺ.

Implementing these three directives will inshā'allāh make us spiritually strong and enable us to interact with non-Muslims, giving them the opportunity to see the true picture of Islām.



64 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الصَّلَاة chapter: ما جاء في معاشره الناس Ḥadīth: 1987



13. The Best ﷺ

‘Allāmah ‘Aynī رحمہ اللہ, the well-known commentator of Şaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, states that there can be three reasons for loving and admiring a person: beauty; virtue and excellence; or some favour conferred by the person.⁶⁵ If we carefully look at the people we admire and love and ask ourselves as to why we have love for them, the answer will inevitably be one of the three reasons mentioned above.

Throughout the centuries, Muslims the world over have loved and admired Muḥammad ﷺ, the Messenger of Allāh ﷻ, more than anyone or anything else. To a Muslim, Rasūlullāh ﷺ is more beloved than anything. The books of history are filled with episodes that bear testimony to this fact.

Ḥaḍrat Muftī Muhammad Taqī Usmani *ḥafīẓahullāh* describes the extent of the love the first generation of Muslims, the Şaḥābah رضی اللہ عنہم, had for Nabī ﷺ. He writes that were Allāh ﷻ to have promised to increase the life of Nabī ﷺ by just one second if all the Şaḥābah رضی اللہ عنہم (numbering over a hundred thousand) gave their lives in return, they would all have willingly given their lives in order to increase the life of their beloved by one second.⁶⁶

The question is, why do the Muslims have so much love and admiration for Muḥammad ﷺ? The answer is simple: their beloved was simply the best. He was not only handsome but the most handsome. He did not possess only one or a few excellences,

65 ‘Umdatul-Qārī, part 1, p.144

66 Discourses on Islamic Way of Life, part 2, p.228

he was the embodiment of excellences. His countless favours were not confined to Muslims only, but rather the whole of humanity is indebted to him for he brought them the light through which they can escape from the darkness of ignorance.

One only needs to study the speech of Sayyidunā Ja'far عليه السلام, which he delivered in the court of Negus (King of Abyssinia), to understand this fact. Sayyidunā Ja'far عليه السلام said:

أَيُّهَا الْمَلِكُ ، كُنَّا قَوْمًا أَهْلَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ ، نَعْبُدُ الْأَصْنَامَ ، وَنَأْكُلُ الْمَيْتَةَ ، وَنَأْتِي
الْفَوَاحِشَ ، وَنَقْطَعُ الْأَرْحَامَ ، وَنُسِيءُ الْجَوَارَ ، وَنَأْكُلُ الْقَوِيَّ مِنْ الضَّعِيفِ ،
فَكُنَّا عَلَى ذَلِكَ حَتَّى بَعَثَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا مِنَّا ، نَعْرِفُ نَسَبَهُ وَصِدْقَهُ
وَأَمَانَتَهُ وَعَفَافَهُ ، فَدَعَانَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَعَالَى لِنُوحِدَهُ وَنَعْبُدَهُ ، وَنَخْلَعَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْبُدُ
نَحْنُ وَأَبَاؤُنَا مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنَ الْجِبَارَةِ وَالْأَوْثَانِ ، وَأَمَرَنَا بِصِدْقِ الْحَدِيثِ ، وَأَدَاءِ
الْأَمَانَةِ ، وَصِلَةِ الرَّحِمِ ، وَحُسْنِ الْجَوَارِ ، وَالْكَفِّ عَنِ الْمَحَارِمِ وَالِدِمَائِ ،
وَنَهَانَا عَنِ الْفُحْشِ ، وَقَوْلِ الزُّوْرِ ، وَأَكْلِ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ ، وَقَذْفِ الْمُحْصَنَةِ ،
وَأَمَرَنَا أَنْ نَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَحْدَهُ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا ، وَأَمَرَنَا بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَالصِّيَامِ

O King, we were people in a state of ignorance, worshipping idols, eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abominations and shameful deeds, breaking the ties of kinship, treating neighbours badly and the strong among us exploited the weak. We remained in this state until Allāh ﷻ sent us a Prophet from amongst us, whose lineage, truthfulness, trustworthiness and integrity were well-known to us. He invited us towards Allāh ﷻ so that we may proclaim His Oneness and worship Him. And to renounce the stones and the idols which we and our ancestors used to worship besides Him. He commanded us to speak the truth, to fulfil our promises, to maintain ties of kinship, to be helpful to our neighbours, to abstain from unlawful things and bloodshed, to avoid obscenities and false witness, not to usurp an orphan's property and not to slander chaste women. He ordered us to worship Allāh alone and not to associate anything with

him, to uphold ṣalāh, to give zakāh and to fast in the month of Ramaḍān.⁶⁷

Moreover, the source of all the progress that we see today are the sciences developed by people from the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

His excellences were such that even non-Muslims have praised him. When Heraclius, the Emperor of the Byzantines, received a letter from Nabī ﷺ inviting him to Islām, he summoned Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ؓ, then an ardent enemy of Islām, and asked him about the man Muḥammad ﷺ. Despite his enmity for Nabī ﷺ, Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ؓ could find only praiseworthy words to say about him. The staunchest enemy of Nabī ﷺ declared that Muḥammad ﷺ belonged to the noblest family amongst the Arabs and he also admitted that Nabī ﷺ was never accused of telling lies and had never broken his promises.

Upon hearing this Heraclius remarked, 'If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this place underneath my feet. I knew (from the scriptures) that he was going to appear but I did not know that he would be from you. If I was sure that I would reach him, I would have undertaken difficulties to meet him and if I were by him, I would certainly have washed his feet (an indication that he would have presented himself in the court of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as a khādim).'⁶⁸

R. Bosworth-Smith remarked:

By a fortune absolutely unique in history, Muḥammad is a threefold founder of a nation, of an empire, and of a religion.⁶⁹

After studying the Sīrah and life of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, George Bernard Shaw wrote:

67 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند أهل البيت رضي الله عنهم Ḥadīth: 1740

68 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: كيف كان بدء الوحي إلى رسول الله ﷺ chapter: بدء الوحي Ḥadīth: 7

69 Mohammed and Mohammedanism, p.237

I have studied him – the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of humanity.⁷⁰

Pandit Gyanandra Dev Sharma Shastri, at a meeting in Gurakhpūr, India (1928) said:

They (the critics of Muḥammad ﷺ) see fire instead of light, ugliness instead of good. They distort and present every good quality as a great vice. It reflects their own depravity... The critics are blind. They cannot see that the only ‘sword’ Muḥammad wielded was the sword of mercy, compassion, friendship, and forgiveness – the sword that conquers enemies and purifies their hearts. His sword was sharper than the sword of steel.⁷¹

Alphonse de Lamartine said:

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of a rational dogma for a cult without imagery, founder of twenty earthly empires and of one spiritual empire, this is Muḥammad.

Of all the scales by which one measures human grandeur, which man has been greater...⁷²

Indeed Allāh ﷻ has not created anyone greater than him. Sayyidunā Jibra’īl عليه السلام once said:

قَلْبْتُ مَشَارِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغَارِبَهَا، فَلَمْ أَجِدْ رَجُلًا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

I have turned upside down the easts and the wests of the world (i.e. the whole world) and I have not seen anyone greater than Muḥammad ﷺ.⁷³

70 The Genuine Islām, vol. 1, no. 8

71 Muḥammad ﷺ: 1001 Universal Appreciations and Interfaith Understanding and Peace, pp.114-15

72 Histoire de la Turquie, vol. 2

73 Al-Mu‘jamul-Awsaṭ, Ḥadīth: 6285

If this is the case, then why should such a personality, who possessed all the three elements for loving someone, to their highest degree, not be the most beloved to his admirers? Finding out about the sublime characteristics of the Beloved Nabī of Allāh ﷺ and understanding the love and admiration they inspire in his followers is sufficient to realise why Muslims the world over have been so enraged by recent events.⁷⁴



Allāh is the greatest.

74 This article was written following the incident of cartoons depicting Rasūlullāh ﷺ being published in Denmark.



14. Ḥajj – a Lesson in Submission

On 6th Dhul Ḥijjah 1426 after the jumu‘ah ṣalāh, we arrived at Dhul-Ḥulayfah, outside Madīnah, and made preparations to enter into iḥrām. Dhul-Ḥulayfah was chosen because it is where Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his Companions ﷺ had entered the state of iḥrām.⁷⁵ It was our desire to begin the ḥajj by observing this sunnah of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. The thought persisted in my mind that the Beloved of Allāh ﷺ performed only one ḥajj during his lifetime,⁷⁶ and Allāh ﷻ had chosen this place for him to enter into iḥrām. Thus, there could not have been a better place for this act.

After making all the preparations, attired in only two sheets, we performed two raka‘āt, made the intention for ḥajj and recited the talbiyah:

لَبَّيْكَ اللَّهُمَّ لَبَّيْكَ، لَبَّيْكَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ لَبَّيْكَ، إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ وَالنَّعْمَةَ لَكَ وَ
الْمُلْكُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَكَ

Here I am (at Your service), O Allāh, here I am. Here I am, no partner do You have, here I am. Truly, the Praise and the Favour is Yours, and the Sovereignty. No partner do You have.⁷⁷

It is impossible to express how I felt at that moment. Tears trickled down my cheeks wetting my beard. In my mind echoed the thought: ‘You are so careless regarding the Dīn of Allāh ﷻ. You are not worthy of being invited by Allāh ﷻ to His Blessed House.

75 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-ḥajj chapter: الإِهْلَالُ عِنْدَ مَسْجِدِ ذِي الْحَلِيفَةِ Ḥadīth: 1555

76 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-‘umrah chapter: كَمْ اعْتَمَرَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Ḥadīth: 1788

77 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-ḥajj chapter: التَّلْبِيَةِ Ḥadīth: 1562; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: al-ḥajj chapter: التَّلْبِيَةِ وَصَفَتْهَا وَوَقَّتَهَا Ḥadīth: 1207

How Merciful and Kind is your Creator that despite all your negligence and shortcomings, He has listed you amongst the ḥujjāj of 1426.’

We were now in the state of iḥrām and many things had now become prohibited, including the use of ‘itr (perfume) and covering the head, both of which are sunnah at other times.⁷⁸

On 8th Dhul Ḥijjah, we arrived in Minā. According to the sunnah practice, we were to spend the whole day and perform all our ṣalāh there.⁷⁹ On this day, being present in the Ḥaram for us pilgrims was less rewarding than remaining in Minā.⁸⁰

On the next day, 9th Dhul Ḥijjah, we moved to ‘Arafah.⁸¹ Those who performed the Ṣuḥr ṣalāh in Maṣjid Namirah behind the Imām of ḥajj combined the ‘Aṣr ṣalāh with it before its prescribed time.⁸² We remained in ‘Arafah until sunset,⁸³ after which we left, delaying the Maḡrib ṣalāh until we combined it with the ‘Ishā ṣalāh in Muḏalifah, as this is the sunnah of Nabī ﷺ.⁸⁴

I came across hundreds of ḥujjāj from all walks of life, young and old, men and women, and māshā’allāh, not a single person questioned any of the above. Each individual carried out what had been commanded without raising any objection whatsoever. No one was concerned that covering the head and applying perfume, both prophetic practices, were forbidden. No remarks were to be heard regarding the reward of ṣalāh in the Ḥaram during the stay in Minā. The performance of ‘Aṣr ṣalāh in ‘Arafah before its appointed time did not raise any questions, nor did delaying the Maḡrib ṣalāh. Every single ḥājī was an embodiment of Islām,

78 Badāi‘uṣ-Ṣanāi’, part 3, p.204

79 Ibid., p.129

80 Ghunyatun-Nāsik, p.146

81 Badāi‘uṣ-Ṣanāi’, part 3, p.129

82 Ibid., pp.131-33

83 Ibid., p.137

84 Ibid., pp.138-39

submitting his/her will to the Will of the Creator, unquestioningly carrying out all the Commands of Allāh ﷻ.

Alḥamdulillāh, throughout my journey, amidst the thousands of ḥujjāj who had come from all corners of the world, I witnessed nothing but Islām i.e. submission to the Will and Command of Allāh ﷻ. This made me think that the greatest lesson of ḥajj is that Allāh ﷻ is telling His bondsmen: ‘If you are able to submit totally to my commands without any hesitation during these five days, surely you have the ability to do the same after ḥajj. Islām is not difficult, as long as you resolve to follow it.’

Once this lesson has been learnt, the ḥājī resolves to submit himself to his Creator. By pelting the Jamarāt and sacrificing an animal he practically begins his battle against those two things that prevent a person from fully submitting to Allāh ﷻ: Shayṭān and the nafs. The act of pelting is an open declaration of enmity towards Shayṭān, whilst sacrificing an animal is a vow to sacrifice the desires of the nafs. Once these two, Shayṭān and the nafs, are under control, submission is no longer difficult. Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ have warned us against both these obstacles:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

O believers, enter into Islām completely and do not follow the footsteps of Shayṭān; surely, he is your open enemy. (2:208)

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ (۝٧٩) فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ
هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٨٠﴾

As for the one who feared to stand before his Rabb and restrained his nafs from (evil) desire, Jannah will be his abode. (79:40-41)

الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

The clever one is he who subjugates his nafs and works for what is to come after death...⁸⁵

If the ḥājī returns with a resolution to submit wholeheartedly to his Creator, then definitely his life will change. And this change is a sign that he has performed al-ḥajjul-mabrūr (accepted ḥajj) and the reward for al-ḥajjul-mabrūr is nothing other than Jannah.⁸⁶

أَسْتَغْفِرُكَ يَا رَبِّ

I ask forgiveness from Allāh.

85 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صفة القيامة والبركات والورع عن رسول الله ﷺ Ḥadīth: 2628

86 Al-Muwatṭā, kitāb: الحج chapter: العبرة Ḥadīth: 1257



15. Patience or Pleasure?

Recently, whilst sitting with the students of the Islāmic Da‘wah Academy, I posed the following question to them, ‘Imagine two types of fruit: one very attractive and extremely sweet, though with the unfortunate characteristic that its sweetness lasts for only a few seconds and thereafter turns to bitterness which lasts for hours; and another which is not attractive at all and tastes very bitter, but after a few moments, the bitterness very rapidly turns into such sweetness that its enjoyment remains in the mouth for hours. If you were given a choice between these two fruits, which one would you prefer?’

They all replied, ‘The second one.’

I said, ‘Now, based on this example, try to understand two very important aspects of Dīn; ṣabr (patience) and shahwah (fulfilment of base desires).’

Elaborating on the first aspect I said: ‘Ṣabr is to exercise patience during times of distress, to remain steadfast in fulfilling the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and to restrain oneself from disobedience to Him. This quality, like the second fruit, is not attractive at all and initially extremely bitter in taste. However, this bitterness does not last long and soon it is replaced by a long-lasting sweetness.’

A very attractive person, either in real life or in a photo in a newspaper, poster or magazine, attracts people’s attention. Initially, it feels very ‘bitter’ not to look at the enticing sight, but after chewing on this fruit of ṣabr for a while, the sweetness of Īmān is felt passing through the entire body. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

النَّظْرَةُ سَهْمٌ مِنْ سِهَامِ إِبْلِيسَ مَسْمُومَةٌ فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا مِنْ خَوْفِ اللَّهِ أَثَابَهُ جَلًّا
وَعَزَّ إِيْمَانًا يَجِدُ حَلَاوَتَهُ فِي قَلْبِهِ

The (evil) glance is an arrow from the poisonous arrows of Iblīs. He who forsakes it out of fear of Allāh will receive from Him – how Great is He – such Īmān, the sweetness of which he will experience in his heart.⁸⁷

The other aspect is shahwah. In the initial stages it is very attractive and full of enjoyment, but its after-effects are very bitter indeed. When first getting involved in unlawful activities such as drugs, alcohol or adultery and fornication, no bitterness or loss is felt whatsoever; in fact there is nothing but sweetness. However, as the initial effects wear off, all that remains is regret and bitterness. Worse still, that bitterness will remain forever in this world and the Hereafter. Allāh ﷻ says in the Glorious Qur’ān:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

As for the one who turns away from My Reminder, verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Resurrection. (20:124)

Finally, I asked them, ‘So now, my dear students, which of these two should we give preference to; ṣabr, which will result in acquiring the sweetness of Īmān in this world and the everlasting sweetness of Jannah in the Hereafter, or shahwah, which will result in bitterness in this world and the everlasting bitterness of Jahannam? The choice is yours.’

Their answers all echoed the same thought, ‘We should always give preference to ṣabr which, although preceded by an insignificant amount of bitterness, guarantees everlasting sweetness.’

I said, ‘Alḥamdulillāh! May Allāh ﷻ grant you all barakah in your understanding.’



87 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: الرِّقَاق chapter: الأدب Ḥadīth: 8088

Let us therefore exercise ṣabr and fulfil all the Commands of Allāh ﷻ, no matter how bitter the prospects of doing so may appear, for this bitterness is the doorway to everlasting sweetness.



لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

As Allāh wills! There is no ability (to avoid bad deeds) except with (the Help of) Allāh.





16. Fleeting Splendour

During my recent visit to Turkey,⁸⁸ I visited the Sarayı Topkapı, also known as the Topkapı Palace. In Turkish ‘Sarayı’ means Palace, ‘Top’ means cannon and ‘Kapi’ means gate. The name Topkapı came about because there was a gate to Constantinople in this location during the Byzantine period, in front of which Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ installed a heavy cannon in order to break into Constantinople.⁸⁹ Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ entered Constantinople through this very gate after its conquest. Following the conquest, a simple palace was built for the sultan which served as a place of residence for all the Ottoman Sultans; from Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ to Sultan ‘Abdul-Majīd.⁹⁰

Today, this building, besides being a historical monument, is used as a museum. It is regarded as one of the world’s most precious and valuable museums due to the priceless items contained within it.

One of the chambers of this palace houses relics dating back to the time of Nabī ﷺ. As I entered and walked through the chamber, I had the honour of viewing the swords that belonged to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, Sayyidunā ‘Umar, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān, Sayyidunā ‘Alī, Sayyidunā Ja‘far, Sayyidunā Khālīd ibn Walīd, Sayyidunā ‘Ammār ibn Yāsir and Sayyidunā Abū Ḥasan ؑ, the seal used by Nabī ﷺ and a letter from Nabī ﷺ written to Muqawqis, the Emperor of Egypt. The chamber also houses the sword, bow, mantle and

88 This article was written after my trip to Turkey in April 2005.

89 Fātiḥul-Qusṭanṭīniyyah As-Sulṭān Muḥammad Al-Fātiḥ, p.92

90 Pavilion of the Sacred Relics: The Sacred Trusts, p.17

blessed hair of Nabī ﷺ, all of which are enclosed in cases and are opened for viewing only once a year on the 15th of Ramaḍān. It was such an honour and valuable gift from Allāh ﷻ for this unworthy one, to have even viewed the cases containing these blessed items.

From this chamber, I passed through other chambers of the palace and was able to view priceless pearls, emeralds, rubies, diamonds and many other precious items. I also came across a set of two candle holders made of pure gold, each weighing 48 kilos, an eye-catching throne decorated with pearls and diamonds, and the dagger used by Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ which is said to be one of the most valuable daggers in the world.

Looking at all of this, I pictured the magnificent bygone era of the Ottoman Empire and questions began to arise in my mind: How great must Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ have been to conquer the invincible Constantinople? What glory the Ottomans enjoyed when their flag was raised over three continents! They ruled for a span of almost six hundred years with so much wealth and glory,⁹¹ but where are they now? Where is the grandeur of the Topkapi Palace? Have any of the Sultans lived on to enjoy this great wealth? Has any one of them taken anything with them? Whilst these questions were occupying my mind, we came across tomb after tomb of the Sultans: Sultan Muḥammad Fātiḥ, Sultan Murād, Sultan Sulaymān ‘the Magnificent’, Sultan Aḥmad, Sultan Bāyazid: all dead and buried. The Urdu couplets of Khwājā Majzūb ؒ echoed in my ears.

ملے خاک میں اہلِ شاں کیسے کیسے

How the great men of dignity have mingled with the earth,

مکین ہو گئے لا مکاں کیسے کیسے

How the owners of houses have become homeless,

91 Mūjazut-Tārikhil-Islāmī, part 1, p.456

ہوئے نامور بے نشان کیسے کیسے

How the famous have become effaced without any trace.

زمین کھا گئی آسمان کیسے کیسے

How the earth has devoured the magnificent ones.

Whilst pondering over these couplets, suddenly the Words of Allāh ﷻ also began echoing:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ

Everyone that is on it (the earth) will perish. (55:26)

كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ

Everything will perish save His Countenance. (28:88)

Once again, more couplets by Khwājā ṣāhib ﷺ came to mind.

یہی تجھ کو ذہن ہے رہوں سب سے بالا

Your only concern is to excel above all,

ہو زینت نرالی ہو فیشن نرالا

Unique in your adornment and your style,

جیا کرتا ہے کیا یونہی مرنے والا؟

Does a person destined to die live in this manner?

تجھے حسن ظاہر نے دھوکے میں ڈالا

The artificial glitter (of this world) has surely left you deceived!

As I continued to ponder, I thought how true it is that the apparent glitter of the world has fooled so many of us. The truth is that no one has and no one will live forever. Nothing has and nothing will accompany a person except his deeds.

مَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

So, whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it. (99:7-8)



17. Perfect Submission

When a person recognises the Creator and proclaims this through the kalimah; لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (*There is none worthy of worship besides Allāh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh*), a person submits to the total Authority of Allāh ﷻ and His Nabī ﷺ. By this, one declares that whatever comes from Allāh ﷻ and His Nabī ﷺ, will be wholeheartedly accepted, without a shadow of a doubt, whether comprehensible by the faculty of intellect or not.

A close study of the lives of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ and our pious predecessors ﷺ will bring us to this very conclusion. Whatever the situation, there was never a need to convince one another through philosophical arguments or logical reasoning; the mere fact that it was the Word of Allāh ﷻ and His Nabī ﷺ was sufficient. Even when arguments or disputes arose, the solution was the Word of Allāh ﷻ and His Nabī ﷺ.

To illustrate this point let us look at three incidents from the lives of the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ and our pious predecessors ﷺ.

1. Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās ﷺ relates an incident regarding Sayyidunā Ḥurr ibn Qays ﷺ, a member of the assembly and council of Sayyidunā ‘Umar ﷺ, an elite group which consisted of an array of masters in different disciplines, who were consulted in regards to religious and day-to-day affairs. Once his uncle Sayyidunā ‘Uyaynah ﷺ, who was his guest, requested his nephew to seek permission on his behalf to meet Sayyidunā ‘Umar ﷺ the Amīrul-Mu’minīn. Sayyidunā Ḥurr ibn Qays ﷺ duly obliged and Sayyidunā ‘Umar ﷺ granted permission. Upon entry he said, ‘O Ibnul-Khaṭṭāb! By Allāh, you do not give us enough nor

do you judge between us fairly.’ Fury was instantly visible on the face of Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, who was obviously angered by the comments of Sayyidunā ‘Uyaynah رضي الله عنه. Sayyidunā Ḥurr ibn Qays رضي الله عنه, knowing the nature of Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, remarked, ‘O Amīrul-Mu’mīnīn, Allāh has said to His Nabī:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾

Adopt forgiveness, enjoin what is good and turn away from the ignorant. (7:199)

And he (my uncle) is from the ignorant.’ Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه noted, ‘By Allāh, Sayyidunā ‘Umar did not surpass the Command of Allāh contained in this verse when it was recited before him. For it was his habit that whenever the words of the Qur’ān were recited before him he fully submitted to the Command of Allāh.’⁹²

2. ‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه, a very pious servant of Allāh ﷻ, once instructed his maid to bring some water for him so that he may perform ablution. In a moment of neglect the water container slipped from the maid’s hands and fell on his face and wounded him. The maid looked up only to be greeted by an angry face, whereupon she recited a portion of the Qur’ān:

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ

(Jannah is prepared for) Those who swallow their anger...
(3:134)

‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn رضي الله عنه instantly replied, ‘I have swallowed my anger.’ The maid continued with the verse,

وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ط

...and forgive people..., (3:134)

92 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: تفسير القرآن chapter: أخذ العفو وأمر بالعرف وأعرض عن الجاهلین: Ḥadīth: 4621

‘Alī ibn Ḥusayn عليه السلام again acted in accordance with the command and said, ‘I have forgiven you.’ The maid seeing her master’s strict adherence to the Word of Allāh ﷻ recited the last portion of the verse,

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

...and Allāh loves those who do good. (3:134)

‘I have granted you freedom for the Pleasure of Allāh,’ was the reply.⁹³

3. Sayyidunā Anas عليه السلام narrates an incident regarding the prohibition of alcohol. As the young boy in the house, he would frequently serve Sayyidunā Abū Ṭalḥah عليه السلام (his stepfather) along with his guests. Once whilst busy entertaining, a cry was heard:

أَلَا إِنَّ الْخَمْرَ قَدْ حُرِّمَتْ

Listen carefully, alcohol has been deemed impermissible.

Sayyidunā Anas عليه السلام states that Sayyidunā Abū Ṭalḥah عليه السلام immediately instructed him to drain away the stocks of alcohol.⁹⁴ All those present dropped their goblets, breaking their utensils before anybody could enter or exit the house.⁹⁵ He further narrates that none thought it necessary to make inquiries as to whether this prohibition had been announced by Nabī ﷺ himself, or was it just a rumour.⁹⁶ This scene was mirrored throughout the city of Madīnah until floods of alcohol were flowing through the city.⁹⁷ Such a vast amount of alcohol was drained that for a considerable amount of time, the stench of alcohol was present in the soil of Madīnah.⁹⁸

93 Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah, part 9, p.107

94 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: صَبَّ الْخَمْرُ فِي الطَّرِيقِ chapter: 2477

95 Ad-Durrul-Manthūr fit-Tafsīr bil-Ma’tḥūr, part 3, p.172

96 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: التفسير chapter: سورة المائدة Ḥadīth: 4596

97 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الأشرية chapter: تحريم الخمر وبيان أنها تكون من عصير العنب... Ḥadīth: 1980

98 Rūḥul-Ma’ānī, part 4, p.17

There are innumerable incidents like these in the lives of the Companions ﷺ and our pious predecessors. The lesson to be learnt from these incidents is that whenever the Command of Allāh ﷻ or His Beloved Rasūl ﷺ is put to us, we must adhere to it at once. Anything that Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ have made permissible we may pursue and anything they have forbidden we must abstain from. Anything they like we like, anything they dislike we dislike.

سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾

We have heard and obeyed. Pardon us our Rabb. And to You is the return. (2:285)

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to completely obey Him and His Rasūl ﷺ. Āmīn.



The Preserver



18. Robbers of Time

The gift of time is a very precious favour of Allāh ﷻ. It is a favour we can neither store nor stop from passing. This is why we say, ‘Time waits for no one.’ A similitude for time and life is a block of ice melting away, slowly, minute by minute, second by second, breath by breath. Yet one stark difference between the two is that it is possible to put ice back in the freezer, but nothing can freeze our lives. Thus, life is an asset that needs to be utilised now.

Upon close observation of our own lives, we will find that there are many activities which rob us of our time. Let us take football as an example; just ponder for a minute, how many people in the world today spend hour after hour of their precious time watching football games? What tangible benefit do we get from just watching football? Seldom do we have a conversation that is void of this topic. Just imagine, during only one season or during a single World Cup campaign, how much of our lives are wasted behind football? How much time do we waste in talking about football, watching football, listening to football commentaries and thinking about football? How much time do we devote to these activities and how much time do we devote to Allāh ﷻ? How much time do we spend pursuing religious or secular knowledge that will benefit us, in helping those who are less fortunate and less privileged than us, in helping the needy and the disabled, or in other ways of making a positive contribution to the communities in which we live?

Football is just one example; there are many other robbers of time: engaging in futile conversations and gossip, spending hours on shisha, discussing politics without any practical outcome, etc.

Let us all value time and utilise it in something fruitful, for a day is coming when we will be made to stand in the Court of Allāh ﷻ and be questioned about how we spent each and every moment of our lives.



O Allāh, send Your Special Mercy upon
Muḥammad ﷺ and upon the family and
followers of Muḥammad ﷺ.



19. Simple Weddings

Weddings are occasions of much happiness and joy, not just for the bride and groom, but for their family members, friends and even the general public. It is therefore regretful that when Allāh ﷻ, the most Compassionate, gifts us with such moments to remember and treasure for the rest of our lives, we use those very moments to displease Him and invite His Displeasure.

In order to understand how weddings should be celebrated, we need to learn from the era of Nabī ﷺ and make our weddings more like them.

The basic rule, from the wedding ceremony through to the walimah (wedding banquet), was simplicity.

Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah ؓ reports that Nabī ﷺ said,

إِنَّ أَعْظَمَ النِّكَاحِ بَرَكَةً أَيْسَرُهُ مُؤُونَةً

The wedding that has the greatest blessings is that which is lightest in burden (most simple).⁹⁹

Sayyidunā Anas ؓ describes the walimah of Nabī ﷺ when he married Sayyidah Ṣafīyyah bint Ḥuyayy ؓ. The marriage was consummated between Khaybar and Madīnah and Sayyidunā Anas ؓ was instructed to invite the Muslims to a walimah in which neither meat nor bread was served; Nabī ﷺ ordered for leather dining-sheets to be spread and dates, cottage cheese and clarified butter were laid on it. That was the walimah of Nabī ﷺ.¹⁰⁰

99 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: أكل المال الباطل وتحريم أكل التّفقة والاقتصاد في التّفقة Ḥadīth: 6566; Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند الصّدّيقة عائشة بنت الصّدّيق رضي الله عنها Ḥadīth: 24529

100 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: اتّخاذ السّراري، ومن أعتق جاريته ثم تزوّجها chapter: النّكاح Ḥadīth: 5075

It is also reported that Nabī ﷺ did not give a more splendid walimah on the occasion of marrying any of his wives than the one he gave on marrying Sayyidah Zaynab bint Jahsh ؓ, in which the walimah was offered with one goat.¹⁰¹

Such simplicity and minimal fuss adopted by Nabī ﷺ served as an example for his Companions ؓ, who duly followed in his footsteps. These examples are a far cry from what we experience in our weddings today. Sayyidunā ‘Abdur-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf ؓ, after migrating from Makkah Mukarramah to Madīnah Munawwarah, gradually earned enough wealth to be able to afford marriage. He married with such simplicity that Nabī ﷺ only became aware that he had married after noticing yellow perfume stains on his clothes.¹⁰²

Marriages took place in a simple manner and were carried out with the Hereafter in mind. Although natural desires were present, they were subordinate to the long-term benefits of marriage. Upon learning that Sayyidunā Jābir ؓ had married, Nabī ﷺ inquired from him whether he had married a maiden or a previously married woman. Sayyidunā Jābir ؓ informed Rasūlullāh ﷺ that he had opted to marry a previously married woman, as she would be able to help him look after his nine younger sisters who were in his custody after the death of his father. He wisely concluded that a more mature and experienced wife would be able to aid him in educating and providing a good religious upbringing for his sisters.¹⁰³ Such was the unselfishness and simplicity of Nabī ﷺ and his Companions ؓ.

These examples serve to remind us what Islamic weddings should be like. The general trend nowadays is to over indulge in

101 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: النكاح chapter: الوليمة ولو بشاة Ḥadīth: 5159

102 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: البيوع chapter: ما جاء في قول الله تعالى فإذا قضيت الصلوة... Ḥadīth: 2057

103 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: البيوع chapter: شراء الدواب والحمير... Ḥadīth: 2105

every aspect of weddings, starting with the engagement. Countless customs and practices are adopted that have no basis in Dīn and are nothing but excuses to spend lavishly and fulfil one's unlawful desires under the pretext of a celebration. Islām does not discourage enjoyment on happy occasions but, as with all things, there are boundaries. As long as the boundaries are not crossed, then the happy occasion of a wedding will not attract the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ. In fact, it will attract His Blessings and Mercy, which in turn will ensure that the marriage has a blessed and secure foundation on which the couple can base the rest of their lives.



The All-Mighty



20. The Month of Mercy

Allāh ﷻ is All Merciful. His Mercy has no boundaries or limits. From His most Beautiful Attributes are Ar-Raḥmān (The Most-Beneficent), Ar-Raḥīm (The Most-Merciful), Al-Ghaffār (The Most-Forgiving), Al-Laṭīf (The Most-Gentle), Al-Ḥalīm (The Most-Forbearing), Al-Ghafūr (The Ever-Forgiving), Al-Wadūd (The Most-Loving) and Ar-Ra’ūf (The Most-Kind).

Our Beloved Nabī ﷺ, whilst explaining the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ, informs us that on the ‘Arsh (Throne) of Allāh ﷻ are inscribed the words:

إِنَّ رَحْمَتِي تَغْلِبُ غَضَبِي

Indeed, My Mercy surpasses My Displeasure.¹⁰⁴

In another Ḥadīth, Nabī ﷺ explains:

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الرَّحْمَةَ مِائَةً جُزْءٍ فَأَمْسَكَ عِنْدَهُ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ جُزْءًا وَأَنْزَلَ فِي الْأَرْضِ جُزْءًا وَاحِدًا فَمِنْ ذَلِكَ الْجُزْءِ يَتَرَأَى خَلْقٌ حَتَّى تَرْفَعَ الْفَرَسُ حَافِرَهَا عَنْ وَلَدِهَا خَشْيَةً أَنْ تُصِيبَهُ

Allāh divided mercy into a hundred parts and kept ninety-nine parts with Himself and sent only one part into the world. Due to that single part the creation are merciful to each other, so that even the mare lifts her hoof away from her foal, for fear that she may trample upon it.¹⁰⁵

104 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-tawḥīd chapter: قوله الله تعالى ويحذركم الله نفسه: Ḥadīth: 7399

105 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-ādab chapter: جعل الله الرحمة مائة جزء: Ḥadīth: 6004

Giving further hope, Nabī ﷺ says:

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ، مَا طَمَعَ بِجَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ، وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ
مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ، مَا قَنَطَ مِنْ جَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ

If the believer was to know of that punishment which is with Allāh, no one would hope for Jannah; and if the non-believer was to know of that Mercy which is with Allāh, no one would lose hope of entering Jannah.¹⁰⁶

There is no doubt that the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ is raining down upon us continually and manifests itself in various forms. Blessed places and blessed moments wherein rewards are increased, forgiveness is promised and du‘ās are accepted are also manifestations of this mercy.

During blessed times such as Fridays, the first ten days of Dhul-Ḥijjah, the night of 15th Sha‘bān, the nights preceding the two ‘Īds, the Night of Qadr, etc., Allāh ﷻ showers His Blessings upon His servants in abundance, making entry into Jannah easy for them. Probably the most significant of such occasions is the month of Ramaḍān.

As soon as Ramaḍān begins, entry into Jannah becomes very easy, as Allāh ﷻ orders the doors of Jannah to be opened wide. Whilst it becomes less likely for one to enter Jahannam as He orders its doors to be closed and the shayāṭīn to be imprisoned.¹⁰⁷

During this blessed month, every nafl worship is equal in reward to a farḍ during normal days, and likewise every farḍ act is equal to seventy farā’iḍ outside the month of Ramaḍān.¹⁰⁸ In this month, there comes a night (Laylatul-Qadr) which is more virtuous than a thousand months.¹⁰⁹

106 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: التَّوْبَةِ chapter: وَأَنَّهَا سَبَقَتْ غَضَبَهُ Ḥadīth: 2856

107 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الصَّيَامِ chapter: فَضْلُ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ Ḥadīth: 1091

108 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَامِ chapter: فَضَائِلُ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ إِنْ صَحَّ الْخَبَرُ Ḥadīth: 1976

109 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: الصَّيَامِ chapter: فَضَائِلُ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ Ḥadīth: 3608

It is a month in which fasting has been ordained in order to act as a shield for the believer enabling him to refrain from sins. It is also an act which greatly pleases the Creator, so much so that the smell from the mouth of a fasting person is sweeter to Him than the fragrance of musk.¹¹⁰ Whilst a person is fasting, Allāh ﷻ arranges for the angels to ask for his forgiveness.¹¹¹

The first ten days of this blessed month are for the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ, the middle ten are for His Forgiveness and the last ten are for emancipation from the Fire of Jahannam.¹¹² Throughout the month of Ramaḍān, the Mercies and Forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ descend in such abundance that every day at the time of ifṭār (breaking fast), Allāh ﷻ frees one million souls upon whom Jahannam had become wājib, and on the final night Allāh ﷻ frees that number equivalent to all those which had been freed throughout the entire month.¹¹³ Nabī ﷺ said to the Ṣaḥābah ﷺ, ‘On the last night of Ramaḍān they are forgiven.’¹¹⁴ The Ṣaḥābah ﷺ thereupon enquired, ‘O Rasūlullāh! Is that last night Laylatul-Qadr?’ Rasūlullāh ﷺ replied, ‘No. But it is only right that a servant should be given his reward on having completed his service.’¹¹⁵

During this month every person adopts patience, the reward for which is nothing less than Jannah. Also, every day of this month Allāh ﷻ prepares and decorates a special garden in Jannah, and then says to it that the time is near when faithful servants shall put aside the great trials of the world and come to you.¹¹⁶

Indeed Ramaḍān is a great opportunity for every servant to

110 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: ḥaḍīth: 1905

111 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: 7917

112 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: ḥaḍīth: 1976; Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: ḥaḍīth: 3608

113 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: ḥaḍīth: 3695

114 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: ḥaḍīth: 3608

115 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: 7917

116 Ibid.

make amends for the misdeeds of the past and establish a bond with his Most Affectionate Creator. There can be no one more unfortunate than the person who gains the month of Ramaḍān yet fails to draw near to Allāh ﷻ and secure a place in Jannah.



Pure is Allāh (from all imperfections) and for
Him is All Praise.



21. Making the Most of Your Opportunities

The opportunity to do any good deed is a result of the Grace and Favour of Allāh ﷻ; nobody has the power or ability to do a single good deed without the Faḍl of Allāh ﷻ. Being showered with special occasions and opportunities such as ḥajj, ‘umrah, auspicious days and nights, i’tikāf, da‘wah, spiritual reformation and the pursuit of knowledge are great bounties which must be valued.

During a recent visit to the Ḥaramayn, I was asked frequently by my friends, well-wishers and other Muslim brothers for some advice that would help them to make the most of the blessed journey and to avoid spending their time in a profitless way.

Through the sheer Mercy, Grace and Help of Allāh ﷻ, I was able to share three points with them that, if adopted, would benefit them greatly. Moreover, if they are adopted by those granted the opportunity to be in blessed places, i’tikāf, da‘wah activities or in the quest of religious knowledge or spiritual reformation, they would also greatly benefit from them.

1. Do Not Disobey Allāh ﷻ

Your goal should be to abstain from not only all major sins, but also every minor sin. Remember, the filth of sins, be they major or minor, erodes and destroys all the spirituality the heart acquires through blessed devotions in blessed places during blessed moments. Be attentive especially towards the use of your eyes, ensuring complete abstinence from casting lustful glances. In order to preserve the spirituality and blessings acquired through devotions to Allāh ﷻ, you must refrain from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ,

no matter how hard it may seem.

2. Do Not Waste a Single Second

These opportunities do not knock at everybody's door. Value this favour of Allāh ﷻ and make sure every second is spent in the correct manner, doing only those things that bring His Pleasure and enlighten the heart. If you have a choice between two good actions, then choose the one that will be most fruitful. Stay distant from all those things that lead to wasting time. Ensure time is not spent in futile and wasteful talk or just wandering around here and there. I advise you to prepare a timetable, according to your personal circumstances, and strictly adhere to it so that you are able to manage your time in the best manner. Remember, make full use of this opportunity as you may not have it again.

3. Reflect and Prepare

Take out some moments daily to reflect upon the past. Reflect upon your past life and plan for the future. Ask yourself these questions:

- Why did Allāh ﷻ create me?
- What is my objective in life?
- How far have I come in securing this objective?
- How much of my life has already passed and how much more remains?
- What is the percentage of disobedience in my life and the percentage of good?
- How can I change and turn over a new leaf in my life?
- What do I need to do and what do I intend to do from now on to make amends for the past?

Meditate over these questions daily and resolve to live your life according to the Wishes of that Merciful Creator Whose extreme Love for you has given you this blessed opportunity, despite your

being undeserving. Prostrate to Him, shed tears and repent sincerely. Ask Him to help you mend your ways and live a life of a muttaqī, fulfilling the rights of the Creator and His creation.

May Allāh ﷻ bless us all with the ability to value the opportunities to do good, and may He safeguard us from being ungrateful for His Favours. Āmīn.



Pure is Allāh (from all imperfections),
the Magnificent.



22. The Legacy of the Madrasah

Our children attend madrasahs every evening, yet we as parents do not attach much significance to them, regarding them merely as places that look after the Ummah's children. We hold them on par with nurseries and schools, as places of elementary learning. We should realise though, that as long as we fail to attach importance to them, we will remain ignorant of our children's development and progress.

The Madrasah's Legacy

The madrasah is not an insignificant institute. The flame of Īmān (faith) is first kindled in the madrasah. The light of Īmān first permeates the heart of a Muslim child in this environment. It teaches our young children moral values.

It was in the madrasah where we learnt that to lie is a very great sin and that we should always speak the truth. It warned us against the use of bad language and that stealing, cheating and oppressing people are wrong. The madrasah taught us not to be a thorn in the side of our parents and to care for the elderly, orphans and widows. It was in the madrasah that we learnt that we should be kind to our neighbours, be they Muslim or non-Muslim.

The madrasah even taught us things that we do as adults without paying attention to them, like the simple yet rewarding act of removing an obstacle from a path. The good morals and character we take credit for as adults were acquired through the madrasah. All the teachings we are familiar with and practise in our lives today spring from there. By taking stock of every good deed we are per-

forming and every sin that we detest and avoid, we will be witnessing the legacy of the period of our lives between the age of four or five up to thirteen or fourteen; the years spent in the madrasah.

Madrasahs Benefit the Nation

The madrasah not only benefits our children in relation to the Hereafter, it also provides them goodness in this world. Parents too receive worldly gain; a child that spent his/her time well at madrasah will become a means of comfort and joy for his/her parents. The madrasah is a boon for the country as well because it produces good citizens, regardless of whether it operates in an Islamic country or a secular state. At madrasah, children are taught to respect the rights of all people and are warned against injustice, oppression, involvement in drugs, alcohol, theft, vandalism and all types of antisocial behaviour. It contributes towards a socially cohesive society and is a great blessing for humanity as a whole.

Nabī ﷺ came into this world as a mercy and all of his teachings are full of mercy. What is taught in the madrasah is what Nabī ﷺ taught. His life, his character, and dealings all form the basis of what our children learn. Every child who attends a madrasah becomes familiar with these prophetic teachings and is equipped to go on to embody them and serve humanity and work for its betterment.

Parents' Responsibilities Towards Their Children

In order for a child to get the most out of his/her madrasah education, parents need to work in partnership with the madrasah. Parents should not hand over their children to the madrasah and feel that they have fulfilled their share of educational responsibility. Some parents are content with just enrolling their children in any madrasah, but even those that take the time to find one that offers the best ta'lim (education) and tarbiyah (upbringing) should not

feel that their duty has ended after enrolling their child.

It is the parents who will be questioned by Allāh ﷻ about their children's education. If the teachers, principal or the management committee failed in fulfilling their responsibilities, they will also be held accountable for their actions, but the parents will be questioned and primarily responsible for any negligence regarding their children.

Allāh ﷻ will demand answers to two questions from every parent concerning their child: what 'ilm (sacred knowledge) did they give him and what ādāb (etiquettes) did they teach him? Every mother and father will have to answer for their children. And at that moment, no parent will be able to blame the child's teacher or the madrasah's management.

It is the parents' duty to give the correct ta'lim and tarbiyah to their children. They cannot exonerate themselves from it. In light of this, the parents have to keep a close watch on the performance of their children. In the case of a madrasah not fulfilling its responsibility of educating and nurturing their children, parents should voice their concerns. And if the parents' concerns are not addressed adequately then they should remove their child and enrol him or her in another madrasah. It is just like when a child becomes sick and we take him/her to a doctor; we check the progress of the child and if we feel he/she is not receiving adequate treatment, we talk to the doctor. If, after a couple of discussions, the condition persists and it seems pointless talking to the doctor any further, we look for a better doctor. Just as the parents are responsible for their children's physical well-being, they must also shoulder the responsibility for their religious upbringing and education.

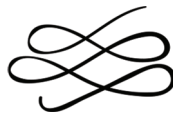
Partnership between Parents and the Madrasah

Parents should also cooperate with the madrasah and try to understand its aims and objectives. If a madrasah emphasises punctuality

and regular attendance, with few breaks in between, parents should cooperate. For instance, if the board of ‘Ulamā or committee of a particular madrasah consider it necessary to decrease holidays to allow enough hours to complete the curriculum, parents should ensure the attendance of their child. The people responsible are aware that if they allow longer holidays, the end result will be academic, religious and social underachievement. Therefore, parents should cooperate with the madrasah, as a vast amount of time and effort is spent in deciding what is best for our children.

Being involved with both the madrasah and dārul-‘ulūm educational systems, I am of the opinion that it is the madrasah, more than the dārul-‘ulūm, that is of crucial importance to the Muslim community, since ninety percent of Muslim children will pass through it. Not every Muslim child will participate in tablīgh jamā‘ah, associate himself to a Shaykh for spiritual guidance, sit in the company of the ‘Ulamā or pursue studies at a dārul-‘ulūm. However, nearly every child will study at a madrasah. This fact is enough for us to understand the primary importance of the madrasah system in educating our children to become good Muslims who will serve as role models for our society.

Therefore, we all must work together: the principal, the teachers and the parents. Cooperation will enable us to build a secure future for our coming generations, in which the masājīd will continue to be attended, the Dīnī environment we take for granted now will be maintained and society at large will continue to benefit from good citizens. May Allāh ﷻ assist, bless and guide us in this noble task. Āmīn.





23. Need to Modernise Islām?

There is an opinion we come across quite often in the media, to which Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to varying degrees, add their voice: ‘We need to modernise Islām.’

Many non-Muslims are ill-informed about Islām and their desire to see a ‘modern’ Islām stems from this lack of knowledge. They assume that continuous change and reform have to take place in order to secure progress. They are also unaware, along with many Muslims, that historically Islamic civilization and worldly progress have gone hand in hand. Ignorance of the past and the current state of the Ummah leave many wary of accepting that Islām is capable of promoting progress.

The case for evaluation and reform is relevant when it comes to ideas and laws devised by man, because man’s knowledge and resources are limited. Islām, on the other hand, is a system designed by Allāh ﷻ, the All-Knowing. Divine knowledge not only encompasses everything that has or will ever happen, it also encompasses the needs of every individual and society. When Allāh ﷻ revealed in the Qur’ān: ‘Today I have perfected for you your religion and completed My gift to you, and chosen for you Islām as a religion,’¹¹⁷ it became clear that unlike with previous Prophets ﷺ, whose teachings had a limited lifespan, the Islām of Muḥammad ﷺ is to prevail, unchanged, until the Last Day.

Our challenge lies not in attempting to update Islām with every new generation, but in ensuring that we and our society do not

117 Sūratul-An‘ām, verse 3

lose touch with it and by doing so, slide into a backward way of life. The age of jāhiliyyah (ignorance) prior to Muḥammad ﷺ was a time of depravity and suffering, and Islām was a lifeline. By taking hold of it, a despised nation transformed into an advanced and compassionate civilization. Sayyidunā Ja‘far, ؑ, the cousin of Nabī ﷺ, looking back at the pre-Islamic age, said:

كُنَّا قَوْمًا أَهْلَ جَاهِلِيَّةٍ نَعْبُدُ الْأَصْنَامَ وَنَأْكُلُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَنَأْتِي الْفَوَاحِشَ وَنَقْطَعُ
الْأَرْحَامَ، وَنُسِيءُ الْجَوَارِ يَأْكُلُ الْقَوِيُّ مِنَّا الضَّعِيفَ

...we were people in a state of ignorance, worshipping idols, eating the flesh of dead animals, committing all sorts of abominations and shameful deeds, breaking the ties of kinship, treating neighbours badly and the strong among us exploited the weak...¹¹⁸

By loosening our hold on the lifeline of Islām, we find ourselves once again involved in many of the social and moral ills prevalent during the era of jāhiliyyah. If the eradication of such sins is the aim of modernisation, then the same Islām that successfully accomplished this 1400 years ago is still here for us today.

Instead of asking, ‘Do we need to bring Islām up to date?’ what we need to ask is, ‘Do Muslims, by the way they live, faithfully reflect the religion of Islām?’

What we have is a community of Muslims living their lives with little reference to the teachings of Islām. Of the five branches of faith, the strongest adherence we have to any of them is Īmān and ‘ibādāt: belief and worships. Our adherence to the other three i.e. mu‘āmalāt (transactions), mu‘āsharah (social conduct) and ḥusnul-akhlāq (good character) is feeble to say the least. With such a record, how can we put the charge of rigidity and backwardness at the door of Islām? Surely we are being rigid and ob-

118 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند أهل البيت رضي الله عنهم Ḥadīth: 1740

stinate in not bringing Islām 100% into our lives. Surely it is we who need to get up to date with the timeless teachings of Islām. A further unfortunate result of our behaviour is that we have virtually nothing to show non-Muslim onlookers that would endear them to Islām; belief and worship are private affairs, and it is the other three branches in which we score the lowest, through which we display ourselves to the world; and it is through them that opinions of modernity or backwardness are formed.

It is a case of, ‘if the hat does not fit the head, don’t attempt to change the head, change the hat.’ Islām is a complete religion. Just like the Qur’ān, it is fresh and alive in every era and there is no need to resize or reshape it. We need to look at ourselves and make the necessary alterations, so that like the new hat, we fit properly. That way we will be a suitable adornment to Islām and attract people towards it.



The Mender



24. Good and Bad Company

We are all familiar with the Ḥadīth of our Beloved Rasūl ﷺ in which he compares the effects of adopting good company with the benefits that can be gained by visiting a perfume seller. If your relationship with a perfume seller is good, he will gift you some perfume¹¹⁹ and if not, the fragrance experienced in his company will still be a gain.¹²⁰ Visiting a pious person is identical; you will definitely gain spiritually to some degree and you will not come away empty handed.

The Ḥadīth goes on to warn of the detrimental effects of bad company through the example of visiting a blacksmith. Even if you take great care and protect your clothes from being singed by the furnace, you will not be able to escape inhaling some smoke.¹²¹ Spending time in bad company has the same effect; it will definitely cause you some degree of harm.

Both parts of this Ḥadīth need to be followed in order to achieve success; good company should be adopted and at the same time bad company should be shunned. If the first advice alone is followed and not the second, the result will be like trying to use a pump to inflate a tyre that has already been punctured. Or like expecting a heater (good company) to heat a room whilst throwing open its doors and windows (keeping bad company), resulting in the ‘heat’ of good company failing to have the desired effect.

119 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الذبائح والصيد chapter: المسك Ḥadīth: 5530

120 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الأدب chapter: من يؤمر أن يجالس Ḥadīth: 4748

121 Ibid.

In order to learn what constitutes good company, there are three signs to look for:

1. You remember Allāh ﷻ when you are in their company, even if no conversation takes place;
2. Being in their company adds to your knowledge and understanding of Dīn; and
3. Being with them has the effect of increasing your concern for the Hereafter.¹²²

From the people you come across, you can be assured that those who fit the above description will provide you with good company. At the opposite end of the scale are those people who you are certain have bad habits, be they intoxication, fornication or other sins. They should be avoided for they are bad company. It is important however that you do not despise them; the sin they are involved in should be despised, not the sinner. The reason you should stay away from them is to avoid ‘catching’ the illness they are plagued with, otherwise you should feel sorry for them just as you would if their illness were a physical one, and you should make du‘ā for them.

Apart from good company and bad company, a third category of people are those about whom you have insufficient knowledge or experience; you do not know if they will prove to be good or bad company. You should think well of them but because you do not know enough about them, it is best to be cautious and abstain from their company.

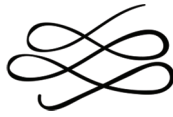
Having discussed some aspects of good and bad company, it is important to add that it is not necessary to be physically in the presence of someone to experience the effects of good or bad company. Most people only view bad company as spending time

122 Shu‘abul-Īmān, chapter: مَبَاعِدَةُ الْكُفَّارِ وَالْمُفْسِدِينَ وَالْغُلَظَّةِ عَلَيْهِمُ Ḥadīth: 9445

with people who disobey Allāh ﷻ, not realising that certain activities and pastimes also constitute bad company and can be just as harmful. For example, the time spent viewing and reading sinful material is comparable to spending time in the physical proximity of people engaged in the sinful acts being depicted. Therefore, many people, even those deemed to be religious, engage in activities thinking that they are innocent pastimes and thus remain oblivious to their harmful effects.

Another form of adopting bad company is spending time without necessity in places where disobedience to Allāh ﷻ occurs, even if you do not personally take part. All those activities and places that incorporate disobedience to Allāh ﷻ should be treated as bad company.

To conclude, we need to recognise what constitutes good and bad company and then try our best to adopt as much of the good as possible whilst staying away from all the bad. May Allāh ﷻ help us in our desire to find and remain in good company; may He grant us all the benefits that come from being with the pious and may He resurrect us with them in the Hereafter. Āmīn.





25. The Status of Women in Light of the Sīrah

The life of Nabī ﷺ is an open book inviting every human being to study and benefit from it. His every word calls towards guidance, moderation and justice; his behaviour and the way he interacted with people provides an easy to imitate blueprint for a wholesome and happy social life. No segment of society has been ignored and the rights and duties of each have been demonstrated. The status and honour Allāh ﷻ has given to women, an often misunderstood subject, is one such area that is immediately clarified when the life of Nabī ﷺ is studied.

Throughout her life, a woman has a number of roles, one of which is within the family circle. By taking the examples of daughter, sister, wife and mother, we can learn from the practice and teachings of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ, how the female servants of Allāh ﷻ should conduct themselves.

The Daughter

First and foremost, a woman is a daughter. Nabī ﷺ treated his daughters with respect and love. The books of Sīrah note how, when returning from journeys, Nabī ﷺ would first stop at the masjid and then, before going to his abode, he would visit his daughter Sayyidah Fāṭimah ؓ.¹²³ Before the Battle of Badr, his daughter Sayyidah Ruqayyah ؓ was very ill. His concern for her prompted him to order his son-in-law, Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān ؓ,¹²⁴

123 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: مَعْرِفَةُ الصَّحَابَةِ رضي الله عنهم chapter: ذكر مناقب فاطمة رضي الله عنها Ḥadīth: 4798

124 ‘Umdatul-Qārī, part 15, p.54

to stay behind in Madīnah and care for her.¹²⁵ Nabī ﷺ gave glad tidings of his companionship and proximity in Paradise to the one who nurtured two daughters to maturity.¹²⁶ The teachings of Nabī ﷺ led to an environment being created wherein people longed to have daughters they could love and cherish, banishing the old custom of burying new-born girls alive out of shame.

The Sister

Nabī ﷺ did not have a biological sister. However, once when a group from the Banū Sa‘d came to Nabī ﷺ, a woman came forward and declared that she was the sister of Nabī ﷺ. It was Sayyidah Shaymā ؓ, the daughter of the wet-nurse of Nabī ﷺ, Sayyidah Ḥalimah ؓ, and his childhood companion.¹²⁷ Nabī ﷺ received his foster sister with the utmost honour; he removed his cloak and spread it on the floor for her to sit on whilst tears rolled down his cheeks and he humbly suggested to her that if she wished to remain with him, she would be treated with honour and love. And if she desired to return to her people he would still look after her. She chose to return but accepted Islām. When she returned, Nabī ﷺ gifted her three servants, a maid, some cattle and some goats.¹²⁸

The Wife

As a wife, a woman’s esteem increases even further. She now has the status of friend, associate, comforter and adviser to her husband. The occasion of receiving the first revelation through the angel Sayyidunā Jibra’īl ؑ was a very testing time for Nabī ﷺ. Despite having the option of going to his lifelong friend Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ؓ, his uncle (Abū Ṭālib) or other elders of the tribe, Nabī ﷺ sought the company of his wife Sayyidah Khadijah ؓ. She in turn

125 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: فرض الخمس chapter: له أو أمره بالمقام هل يسهم له: إذا بعث الإمام رسولا في حاجة، أو أمره بالمقام هل يسهم له: Hadīth: 3410

126 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة والأداب chapter: فضل الإحسان إلى البنات: Hadīth: 2719

127 Usdul-Ghābah, part 7, p.166

128 Al-Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifatil-Aṣḥāb, part 4, pp.1870-71

did not fail him and proved to be a source of immense support and comfort.¹²⁹ Similarly, after the Truce of Ḥudaybiyyah was struck and the Muslims had to return to Madīnah Munawwarah without performing ‘umrah, it was the wife of Nabī ﷺ, Sayyidah Ummu Salamah ؓ, whose advice and counsel helped to diffuse a difficult situation.¹³⁰ Nabī ﷺ would spend quality time with his wives, talk with them and narrate stories. He taught the believers:

خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ

The best of you are the ones who are best to their wives.¹³¹

The Mother

Motherhood brings with it even more respect and honour. Although Nabī ﷺ was an orphan, his teachings regarding the status and rights of the mother are explicit. Paradise lies under the feet of mothers.¹³² One’s success in the Hereafter is conditional upon honouring and fulfilling the rights of one’s mother. A person once asked Nabī ﷺ,

مَنْ أَحَقُّ النَّاسِ بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي قَالَ: أُمُّكَ

‘Who out of all the people is most deserving of my kindness and companionship?’ He (ﷺ) replied, ‘Your mother.’

قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ

‘Then who?’ asked the man. ‘Your mother,’ he (ﷺ) replied.

قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ: ثُمَّ أُمُّكَ

‘Then who?’ asked the man. ‘Your mother,’ he (ﷺ) replied.

129 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: كيف كان بدء الوحي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم chapter: بدء الوحي Hadīth: 3

130 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الشُّرُوط chapter: كتابه الشُّرُوط Hadīth: 2748

131 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الرِّضَاع عن رسول الله ﷺ chapter: ما جاء في حق المرأة على زوجها Hadīth: 1194

132 Musnadush-Shihāb, Ḥadīth: 119

قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ: ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ

‘Then who?’ asked the man. ‘Your father,’ he (ﷺ) replied.¹³³

These examples go some way to demonstrate the respect which Islām grants to women and also serve to expose the falsehood of allegations that Islām despises women or treats them as inferior. Men and women are equal before Allāh ﷻ; both have rights and responsibilities and both must be treated with honour and respect.



لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

There is no deity but Allāh.

133 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الأدب chapter: من أحقّ النَّاسِ بحسَنِ الصَّحْبَةِ: Ḥadīth: 5975



26. Racial Equality in Islām

During a recent visit to Madīnah Munawwarah, I happened to be sitting in Masjid Nabawī ﷺ after Maghrib ṣalāh, in the fourth row, when I saw two Muslim brothers meet. One was black and the other white, and they greeted each other with great enthusiasm and embraced warmly. Such a sight of human brotherhood may not be too uncommon nowadays, as most people understand that discrimination along racial and ethnic lines is wrong. What struck me though, was that the Nabī of Islām ﷺ, that blessed Servant of Allāh ﷻ lying at rest in the blessed Rawḍah not more than a few metres away from me, established the principles of brotherhood and equality over fourteen centuries ago.

At a time when much of the world was still prey to bigoted notions concerning race, Muslims had abandoned the idea of judging the worth of a man by the colour of his skin or his ancestry, and acknowledged that Allāh ﷻ alone knows who is more worthy. This very Masjid Nabawī ﷺ in which I sat, had, from its earliest days, witnessed people of all races and backgrounds worshipping together and coexisting in perfect harmony.

Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ, an African, and Sayyidunā Salmān Fārsī ؓ, a Persian, are some of the ‘foreigners’ who lived side by side with their Arab brothers, as the emerging Muslim community grew and flourished. Nabī ﷺ, the perfect teacher and guide, would counsel his Companions ؓ regarding the importance of racial equality; he ﷺ said, ‘You are neither better than a red (white) person nor

a black person, unless you surpass him in piety'.¹³⁴ On another occasion he ﷺ said, 'Allāh ﷻ does not look at your faces nor your wealth, but looks at your hearts and your actions'.¹³⁵ He ﷺ also declared: 'O people, know that your Rabb is One and your father (Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ) is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a red (white) person has no superiority over a black person, nor does a black person have any superiority over a red person, except by virtue of taqwā.'¹³⁶

Once when the fair complexioned Sayyidunā Abū Dharr ؓ referred to the Abyssinian Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ as the son of a black woman, Nabī ﷺ became displeased and rebuked him. Sayyidunā Abū Dharr ؓ, seeing the error of his ways, was so remorseful of his error that he threw himself to the ground and swore that he would not rise until Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ had placed his foot on his head.¹³⁷ Thus, Nabī ﷺ nurtured his followers to forsake the dishonourable traits of the days of ignorance and aspire to the values of equality taught by Islām.

On the day of the Liberation of Makkah Mukarramah, when the time for ṣalāh drew near, Nabī ﷺ conferred Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ with the honour of being the first person to call the adhān in the sacred city. In accordance with the instructions of Nabī ﷺ, he climbed onto the roof of the Ka'bah and gave the call to prayer. A member of the Quraysh, who had not yet accepted Islām, remarked that it was a good thing his father was not alive to witness this wretched day; another said, 'Could Muḥammad not find anyone other than this black crow to call the adhān?' Sayyidunā Jibra'il ؑ informed Nabī ﷺ of their conversation and they were

134 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند الأنصار رضي الله عنهم Ḥadīth: 21407

135 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة والأداب chapter: ... تحريم ظلم المسلم وخذله... Ḥadīth: 2646

136 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: أحاديث رجال من أصحاب النبي Ḥadīth: 23489

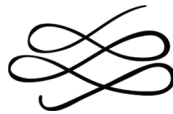
137 Al-Majālisul-Wa'ziyyah fī Sharḥi Aḥādīthi Khayril-Bariyyah min Ṣaḥīḥil-Bukhārī, part 2, p.42

summoned and questioned. They admitted to what they had said, after which Allāh ﷻ revealed the verse:¹³⁸

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾

O people! We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another (nor that you may despise each other); truly, the most noble among you before Allāh are those with the most taqwā; indeed, Allāh is All Knowing, All Aware. (49:13)

We are all children of the same parents, Sayyidunā Ādam ﷺ and Sayyidah Ḥawwā ﷺ and thus are all of the same race: the human race. The differences of colour, physical features and language are signs of the creative Greatness of Allāh ﷻ and serve to help us identify and recognise each other. A person's lineage and geographic origins are solely to identify the individual and have no part to play in his worth as a human being. We learn from the Qur'ān and Sunnah that there is only one measure of a person's worth and that is his level of taqwā or piety. Who has more taqwā and who has less? Allāh ﷻ has placed taqwā where no one can see it, a reality which our Beloved Nabī ﷺ alluded to when, gesturing towards his heart, he said, 'Taqwā is here, taqwā is here, taqwā is here.'¹³⁹



138 Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, part 16, p.341

139 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: تحریم ظلم المسلم وخذله... chapter: البر والصلة والآداب Ḥadīth: 2646



27. Modesty and Believing Men and Women

Entertainment, information and advertising media influence all areas of modern life today. TV, newspapers, magazines, billboards and the internet all encroach on the social and domestic spheres of life to varying extents. One peculiarity shared by all these media is their objectification of women and their proliferation of a manufactured image of the acceptable female form. This phenomenon of the modern age leads to women and men both suffering spiritual and psychological harm.

The modern insistence on a particular appearance for women means that every woman, Muslim and non-Muslim, is under considerable strain to fit the mould. She cannot eat what she wants, often suffering from eating disorders, or relax how she wants, as the perfect figure requires regular work-outs. She always has in the back of her mind the need to look appealing to any man that sees her, and even after marriage she cannot relax in case her husband notices that she no longer tallies with the media version of the beautiful woman. The inevitable result is that whilst men generally eat, drink and enjoy themselves, women find themselves shackled by the demands of conformity.

There are believing women however, who, encouraged by the teachings of Islām, opt for a less stressful existence. Using their intelligence and wisdom, they decide not to be dictated to in the way they should appear and use the key of modesty to unlock the shackles that bind them.

For men, this state of affairs is problematic in a different way.

Where once the public space was more or less desexualised, it now surrounds them with images of ‘beautiful women’ and real life women trying hard to live up to the images. Even at home, the TV and internet ensure a man can no longer have eyes for his wife alone. The inevitable replay of images of beautiful women that goes on in a man’s head leads to dissatisfaction and restlessness, and more seriously, can intensify into family disputes.

There are believing men though, who, by implementing the teachings of Islām, weather the storms of the overtly sexualised society we live in. The most important principle they apply is the lowering of the gaze. The Qur’ān has commanded it and the harms of casting lustful gazes at non-maḥram women have been spelled out in the Aḥādīth of Nabī ﷺ; ‘the zinā of the eyes is the gaze.’¹⁴⁰

They are aware that casting lustful glances is the precursor to an immense loss of spirituality and peace of mind. They realise that no disobedience to Allāh ﷻ should be considered minor; they understand when the ‘Ulamā explain that if an individual considers a minor sin as not serious, it immediately becomes a major sin for him.¹⁴¹ They fear the effects of both major and minor sins just as they would fear being stung by a large scorpion or a small one; the outcome of both would be the same, though one’s effects may be more rapid than the other. They regard casting lustful glances as a spiritual disease that needs curing. The most perilous physical illness is one that the sufferer does not regard as serious, and so does not worry about treating until it becomes severe. Similarly the malady of lustful glances, if left unchecked, will lead to great spiritual harm.

Surrounded by temptation in the work place or on the streets, these believing men know that although it may not seem it, con-

140 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإستئذان chapter: زنا الجوارح دون الفرج Ḥadīth: 6249

141 Sharḥul-‘Aqā’id An-Nasafiyyah, p.263

trolling the gaze is possible. When a doctor tells a recovering patient that he will be able to walk if he tries, his efforts, though appearing hopeless at first, will eventually see him back on his feet. If he gives up or is too daunted even to try to walk, obviously he will never be able to. Similarly, when Allāh ﷻ commands the lowering of the gaze, it means every man has the power to do so.

These believing men show true love and fidelity to their wives, for they realise that the eye is a camera to the heart and looking at non-maḥram women imprints their features on the heart. They know that once imprinted, these images haunt men, even at times of intimacy with their wives. How low is that man who deceives his own wife by entertaining thoughts of other women whilst with her!

They have also taken heed of the warnings of the ‘Ulamā that if a man’s heart contains a spool of images of non-maḥram women, it will be replayed at the time of death and haunt him in his final moments.¹⁴²

Finally, it should be noted that the believing men and women who control their gazes also lead happy and content lives. Perhaps their greatest joy lies in the Promise of Allāh ﷻ that those who control their gazes out of fear of Allāh ﷻ will taste the sweetness of Īmān.¹⁴³ They see the challenging environment they live in as a blessing, for the more opportunities that exist to cast lustful glances, the more opportunities there are to lower the gaze and taste the sweetness of Īmān.



142 Bad Naẓrī awr ‘Ishqe Majāzī kī Tabāh Kāriyan awr uskā ‘Ilāj, p.11

143 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: الرقاق chapter: الأدب Ḥadīth: 8088



28. Lessons Learned from Happy Occasions

Weddings are one of those occasions in life when we naturally feel happiness. The family and friends of the bride and groom obviously feel elated, yet even perfect strangers share these feelings when they hear the announcement of a nikāḥ. Young children who have no understanding of the concept of marriage also join in the happiness. Nobody controls people's feelings on a wedding day; the abundance of happiness comes directly from Allāh ﷻ.

We cannot buy happiness or distribute it according to our own desires, it is a gift and blessing of Allāh ﷻ and like all blessings of Allāh ﷻ should be treated correctly. Weddings and other occasions of happiness should not just be looked at superficially; the wise person takes lessons from every occasion in life.

The following are a few points we should think about on the occasion of a wedding:

1. We sin a lot, yet Allāh ﷻ still lets us be part of the happy occasion of a wedding and other times of happiness too, e.g. the two 'Īds, the birth of a child, reunions with family and friends, etc. In fact, we are often disobedient to Allāh ﷻ but He ﷻ still provides for us every day and ensures we are safe and secure. We do not perform Fajr, but he still gives us breakfast; we miss Zuhr, but He ﷻ still ensures we have lunch; we ignore 'Aṣr, yet our tea is there for us; Maghrib is overlooked, but we have a good supper; and although we do not offer 'Ishā, we still have a pleasant night's sleep.

Has not the time come for us to stop our ingratitude? How can

we constantly enjoy the Blessings of Allāh ﷻ and not even acknowledge the Giver? How can we not show our gratitude to Allāh ﷻ by obeying Him?

2. The happiness felt at weddings, like all worldly happiness, is not permanent and does not remain at the same intensity throughout married life. Experience shows that even in an ideal marriage, which suffers no problems, the amount and intensity of joy felt at the outset is never again replicated. The happiness of the first day is not matched on the second day; the happiness of that first month cannot be recaptured in the second month. In contrast, the happiness of the Hereafter is quite different. Not only is it indefinite and permanent, but every day is more pleasurable than the preceding one.
3. These days of happiness are provided to us by Allāh ﷻ as samples; by giving us a taste of the limited happiness of the world, we are invited to work towards gaining the vast and unimaginable joys of the Hereafter.
4. It is essential that we do not involve ourselves in disobedience to Allāh ﷻ on occasions of happiness and thereby put our eternal happiness of the Hereafter in jeopardy.

Weddings are therefore times to contemplate and not just times for enjoyment. We need to:

1. Resolve to live our lives in such a way that we acquire the everlasting happiness of the Hereafter. That person is very fortunate who, after experiencing happiness in the world, is encouraged to acquire the happiness of Jannah.
2. After forming this resolve, we need to do muḥāsabah of our lives, i.e. a self-assessment of our lives in light of the Dīn. Shayṭān prevents us from thinking seriously about our lives and taking stock of our actions because he knows that recognis-

ing one's faults is the first step to rectifying them. Only when a person realises that he is sinning and that the sin is harmful to him, will he look for a solution.

3. Finally, we need to make sincere tawbah for the faults we find in ourselves, resolving never to return to them again.

The next time we hear about a wedding or take part in one, may Allāh ﷻ give us the ability to bear these points in mind, so that a single day of happiness can become a springboard towards happiness that will never end. Āmīn.



The Greatest



29. Nurturing With Love

Children need love, respect and recognition. The first place children turn to for this is at home. However, if the home environment fails to deliver, then the almost inevitable outcome is that children will turn to others beyond the four walls of the home and thereby expose themselves to negative influences. Ensuring that children receive attention and encouragement in the home provides them the best start in life and protects them from many social ills.

A common problem today is that we have no time for our children. We are not prepared to give them quality time and are content if they behave well enough not to give us any hassle. If and when the family do get together, they are often separated by distractions such as the television or mobile phone. Any achievements or good conduct by our children goes unacknowledged.

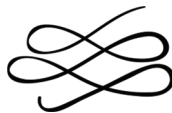
Take the example of habituating our children to wake up for Fajr ṣalāh. We may cajole our children, even those not yet bāligh, to wake up for Fajr, possibly at weekends to start with so that they have the opportunity to go back to sleep again afterwards. However, the question we need to ask ourselves is that when our children do wake up for Fajr, do we give them any recognition or praise for their efforts, or do we leave their achievement unrecognised?

Having interest in our children's progress and offering them encouragement is essential in today's age. Whilst we can make our children behave in their childhood by laying down the law, it is important to remember that this method will not work forever. A dictatorial and imposing attitude is adopted by us due to our

superficial understanding of Dīn. As soon as children reach their teenage years and develop the necessary strength and capacity to answer back, they will oppose us and not listen to a word we say. The reason for this is that Dīn was not inculcated into their hearts and minds, as our parenting style was nothing but a dictatorship. It is therefore essential that love dominates our parenting technique, for it is this love that will bring our children closer to the love of Allāh ﷻ.

This, however, does not mean that discipline is not required. Discipline needs to be adopted when the situation demands, but the emphasis should be on nurturing a loving relationship. When our children are made to feel part of the family and when they feel that they are a valued member of the household, then it is unlikely that they will do anything to harm the reputation of the family; this is human nature.

One of my students did not want to become an ‘Ālim but enrolled only because he did not want to break his parents’ hearts, for according to him he had experienced nothing but love from them, right from childhood. Despite not wanting to study in the initial years, he would still work hard and come first in his examinations, saying that by coming first it would please his parents. As he progressed further through the course, he began to understand the reality of ‘ilm and its benefits. Thus, a time came when he began studying of his own initiative, not just to please his parents but more to please the Creator by serving His creation. He will soon be graduating, inshā’allāh. It was the loving approach of his parents that caused him to get to this stage, alḥamdulillāh.





30. Attitudes to Zakāh

There are four categories of Muslims with regards to their zakāh dealings:

- 1 Those who do not pay zakāh at all. Their situation is indeed grave. Allāh ﷻ says regarding them:

وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ
بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يُخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ
وَوُظُفُهُمْ ۖ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِزُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

...And those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the Way of Allāh, announce unto them a painful punishment. On the Day when it will be heated in the Fire of Jahannam and with it will be branded their foreheads, their sides and their backs. (It will be said to them): ‘This is what you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard. (9:34-35)

And Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا، فَلَمْ يُؤَدِّ زَكَاتَهُ مُثِّلَ لَهُ مَالُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ شُجَاعًا أَقْرَعَ لَهُ
زَيْبَتَانِ يُطَوَّقُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، ثُمَّ يَأْخُذُ بِلَهْزِمَتَيْهِ - يَعْنِي بِشِدْقَيْهِ - ثُمَّ يَقُولُ أَنَا
مَالُكَ أَنَا كَنْزُكَ

He who, despite being given wealth by Allāh, does not discharge his zakāh, his wealth will be made into a poisonous, bald-headed snake with two black spots (over the eyes), which will coil itself around his neck on the Day of Qiyāmah and then bite the corners of his mouth and say, ‘I am your wealth, I am your treasure!’¹⁴⁴

144 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الزَّكَاةُ chapter: إِمَامُ مَانِعِ الزَّكَاةِ Ḥadīth: 1414

2. Those who do pay, but without making a proper calculation. They pay a little here and a little there until they feel satisfied in their hearts that they have fulfilled their duty of paying zakāh. This attitude is highly disrespectful. When carrying out day-to-day transactions, payments and receipts are calculated to the penny; how then can a Muslim be so unconcerned in his matter with Allāh ﷻ? Is it not befitting a believer that he ensures he has fully paid his dues as commanded by Allāh ﷻ?

Once a businessman came to see me about some financial masā'il. I asked him whether he paid zakāh or not, and he replied in the affirmative. When I asked him how he went about it and whether he made any calculations, he replied saying that he gave so much zakāh in Ramaḍān that there was no need to calculate, as he was convinced that he had given more than what was incumbent on him. I asked him to calculate how much zakāh he had been liable for and compare it with the cheques his accountant had made out for zakāh payments in the same month. It transpired that he had paid only 20% of the actual zakāh required by Dīn!

- 3 Those who have repented from their past neglect of zakāh, performed tawbah and started paying in the proper manner, but without making any efforts to pay off their past deficit. Remember, a man's entire life will be reckoned in the Court of Allāh ﷻ. There is no need to fear; it is the promise of Allāh ﷻ that whoever spends in His Path, even if it entails emptying his entire bank balance, Allāh ﷻ will increase him in wealth.

وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُّكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَسِنَةً وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

...And Allāh ﷻ promises you forgiveness from Himself and tremendous bounty; and Allāh ﷻ is All-Embracing, All-Knowing. (2:268)

If someone does have a backlog of unpaid zakāh, he should im-

mediately consult the ‘Ulamā so that he can have a truly clean record with Allāh ﷻ.

- 4 Those whose accounts are totally up to date. From the time they reached puberty, they calculated and paid every penny they owed in zakāh. There is, however, a general misunderstanding among many from this category: having paid zakāh, which is farḍ, lillāh (voluntary charity) is often overlooked. The assumption is that by discharging one’s zakāh, one attains the peak of generosity and charitableness as recommended in Islām. The Qur’ān however draws a distinction between zakāh and voluntary charity, and whereas the former is compulsory, the latter is a highly recommended accompaniment to it.

وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَ
النَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ
السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ

...but (a person of) righteousness is that person who believes in Allāh ﷻ and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the Prophets; and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and establishes ṣalāh and gives zakāh (2:177)

Zakāh is mentioned as a separate deed after already having mentioned spending in charity. Thus, it is clear that zakāh and voluntary spending are two separate deeds, and a believer cannot attain the highest degree of piety and righteousness until he spends voluntarily (lillāh) from his wealth, in addition to discharging zakāh.

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ

You shall never attain a high level of righteousness unless you spend from what you love. (3:92)



31. Make the Most of This Ramaḍān

Once again, the best of all months, Ramaḍān, is on the horizon. It is a month in which at least one du‘ā is accepted daily from every Muslim;¹⁴⁵ one optional deed is equivalent to the reward of one farḍ act; and one farḍ act is rewarded seventy times over.¹⁴⁶ From morning to evening and evening to morning, each and every second, Allāh ﷻ showers His choicest Blessings and Barakah upon His servants.

It is the month in which lies a night (i.e. Laylatul-Qadr) greater in virtue than a thousand months.¹⁴⁷ It is the month in which the provision of the believer is increased.¹⁴⁸ It is the month in which the angels seek forgiveness for the fasting servant,¹⁴⁹ and Allāh ﷻ and His angels send mercy upon those who partake of suḥūr.¹⁵⁰ Mercy is showered during the first part of this month, forgiveness is granted in the second part and the last part brings emancipation from the Hellfire.¹⁵¹ As for the one who kept the fasts of this blessed month with Īmān and in search of recompense from Allāh ﷻ, all his previous sins are forgiven.¹⁵²

It is during this month that the gates of heaven are flung open, all the gates of Hell are closed and the shayāṭīn are shackled.¹⁵³

145 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه Ḥadīth: 7450

146 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: إن صحَّ الخير Ḥadīth: 1976

147 Shu‘abul-Īmān, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: فضائل شهر رمضان Ḥadīth: 3608

148 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: إن صحَّ الخير Ḥadīth: 1976

149 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه Ḥadīth: 7917

150 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه Ḥadīth: 11086

151 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: إن صحَّ الخير Ḥadīth: 1976

152 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: صوم رمضان احتساباً من الإيمان Ḥadīth: 38

153 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: فضل شهر رمضان Ḥadīth: 1091

Allāh ﷻ makes it easy for His servants to acquire Jannah, and makes it difficult for His servants to tread paths that lead to Jahannam.

During this auspicious month we are expected to fast and keep control of our base desires so that we may acquire taqwā: a blessing that leads to success in both worlds.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those that came before you, so that you can become muttaqīn. (2:183)

Through mujāhadah, fasting, tarāwīḥ and devotion, we will develop the quality of taqwā and its nūr will enlighten our hearts. This in turn will make our hearts such that not only will we begin to shun the filth of sin, we will also begin to despise it.

Despite having witnessed the passing of this blessed month often, our lives have not yet changed and we continue to lead a life of sins because we have not valued this blessed month as we should have. Therefore, we need to strive to make this year's Ramaḍān a turning point in our lives, as there is no guarantee that we will live to see the next one. With this purpose in mind, let us ensure we follow these three points:

1. Abstain from sin. We must resolve to spend the entire month of Ramaḍān without committing even a single sin, and resolve to continue the same after Ramaḍān.
2. Do not waste a single second. We should make a timetable from now; set our times for our daily prescribed practices and slowly but surely increase them, e.g. our recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān, dhikr etc.
3. Make a firm resolution to change your life this Ramaḍān. Dai-

ly, we should sit and contemplate our past, for at least fifteen minutes. In particular, we should think about what we were supposed to have done but failed to do, and how many opportunities were given to us by Allāh ﷻ yet were wasted. As a result, we should make plans to improve our future lives.

In addition, Rasūlullāh ﷺ mentioned four things we must do abundantly in the month of Ramaḍān, two for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and two that we cannot do without.

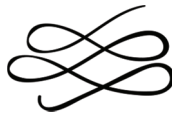
1. Recite in abundance the kalimah لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ.
2. Seek His Forgiveness through istighfār.
3. Ask for His Jannah.
4. Ask for His Refuge from the Fire of Jahannam.¹⁵⁴

My late father, Ḥāfiẓ Ibrāhīm Dhorāt رحمه الله، taught me a prayer during my childhood which encompasses the four things mentioned above. He taught me to recite abundantly during the month of Ramaḍān:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

There is none worthy of worship besides Allāh; I seek forgiveness from Allāh; I ask You (O Allāh) for Paradise, and I seek refuge in You (O Allāh) from the Hellfire.

May Allāh ﷻ enable us all to truly value Ramaḍān this time round, making it the beginning of a new chapter in our lives in which we gain His Pleasure and become as He wishes us to be. Āmīn.



154 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَّام chapter: صحَّ الخبر: فضائل شهر رمضان إن صحَّ الخبر: Ḥadīth: 1976



32. A Simple Step to Success

As believers, we all have a responsibility to live our lives according to the commands decreed by Allāh ﷻ. While some are more guilty than others, from time to time we all find ourselves in breach of His Laws.

Whilst advising friends who had joined me in i'tikāf during the last ten days of Ramaḍān this year,¹⁵⁵ a thought came to my mind which I felt strongly would be helpful for a believer to keep within the bounds set by Allāh ﷻ. I would like to share this with my dear readers too.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالُ بِالنَّوَائِظِ

Actions are judged on the final outcome (i.e. death).¹⁵⁶

In light of this Ḥadīth, every individual should imagine before carrying out any action, that this may be his/her final action. If we carry out this exercise with full conviction, it will prove sufficient to keep us steadfast in abstaining from sins and fulfilling the Commands of Allāh ﷻ. Furthermore, it will improve the quality of our good deeds and help us to refrain from sins. Let us take an example to understand this better:

If a person who stands for ṣalāh imagines that it could be his final action and that he may not get an opportunity to perform another ṣalāh, he will be able to concentrate to a greater degree

155 This article was written in November 2007

156 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: القدر chapter: العمل بالنواظير Ḥadīth: 6615

and develop greater sincerity. When another person, who intended to miss his ṣalāh out of laziness, imagines that these could be his final moments, it will encourage him to perform his ṣalāh.

Whenever an opportunity arises to sin, be it casting lustful glances, backbiting, adultery or taking intoxicants, it should be imagined that these are one's final moments. One should ask oneself: 'what if I were to die whilst in this state of sin? Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said that every person will be resurrected in the condition in which he/she died,¹⁵⁷ so how will I be able to face my Creator?'

Inshā'allāh, this exercise will prove helpful in keeping us on the path of the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and keeping us away from His Displeasure.



The Creator

157 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: chapter: الأمر بحسن الظنّ بالله تعالى عند الموت chapter: وصفة الجنة ووصف نعيمها وأهلها
Ḥadīth: 2984



33. Success in Submission

Memories of Ramaḍān barely fade before the thoughts of Muslims the world over are filled with the life of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, the great Prophet of Allāh ﷻ who earned the accolade of being ‘Khalīlullāh’, the close Friend of Allāh ﷻ. Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام was a prophet who possessed such special qualities that even Nabī ﷺ was commanded to follow his way in order to attain success both in this world and the Hereafter.

فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

...So follow the path of Ibrāhīm, the upright one... (3:95)

What enabled Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام to gain such closeness to Allāh ﷻ? What made him so close that Allāh ﷻ states:

وَمَنْ يَرْغُبْ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ ۚ وَلَقَدِ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَأَنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

And only he turns away from the creed of Ibrāhīm who makes a fool of himself. We undoubtedly selected him in this world and he will be amongst the righteous in the Hereafter. (2:130)

The answer, through which he secured enduring success, follows in the very next verse.

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

When his Rabb commanded him, ‘Submit,’ he said, ‘I submit to the Rabb of the worlds.’ (2:131)

His resolution and determination were of such a high calibre that when commanded to submit to the Will of Allāh ﷻ, he immediate-

ly did so without the slightest reluctance or uncertainty. It was this complete obedience to Allāh ﷻ that earned him a lasting legacy in the chronicles of Islām.

His submission was not merely through words: at critical stages in his life he proved his submission through his actions. In reality, this is the true meaning of being a complete Muslim, i.e. one who submits unconditionally to the Will of Allāh ﷻ.

His journey of sacrifice and submission began at a tender age. As a young man he was faced with a choice between his father and Allāh ﷻ; he sacrificed the support of his father and opted for Allāh ﷻ. When Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ himself reached old age and became in need of the support of his young son, he was again ready to duly obey Allāh ﷻ and sacrifice his son.

Submission is a recurring theme throughout the life of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ and throughout the rituals of ḥajj. If we consider the many injunctions stipulated by Allāh ﷻ over the days of ḥajj, it is hard to comprehend why Allāh ﷻ has commanded such actions. Why must one leave the blessed sanctuary of Makkah Mukarramah for the open plains of Minā? Why must one delay the Maghrib ṣalāh and perform it with the ‘Ishā ṣalāh in Muzdalifah? Why is one not able to use ‘itr (perfume), a sunnah of Nabī ﷺ, whilst in iḥrām? These and many other questions may come to mind, but nobody questions them or is concerned with what others may say. This same spirit of obedience to Allāh ﷻ should also apply in every facet of our lives.

The months of ḥajj repeatedly remind us of our true purpose in life; they remind us that our beautiful religion expects us to unconditionally submit to the Will of Allāh ﷻ and not to pick and choose what to do. No matter what challenges we face, our objective should be to please our Creator, with full confidence that there is only goodness in whatever Allāh ﷻ has commanded. Such sub-

mission and the subduing of desires is an easy and simple method to acquire everlasting success.

A pious saint, used to say that Paradise is a mere two steps away: with the first, crush your desires and with the second, enter Paradise.

May Allāh ﷻ enable us all to submit to His Wishes as He desires us to. Āmīn.



Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh.



34. Chasing a Shadow

We all have a choice during our brief stay in this world: we can either follow our desires and lose out in the Hereafter, or we can follow the Commands of our Creator ﷻ and go on to fulfil our desires in the Hereafter. Allāh ﷻ has promised those who bring faith and do good deeds that they will have whatever they desire in Jannah; they will be free to follow their desires there, after having spent their lives following the Wishes of Allāh ﷻ.

وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ

...and therein will be whatever the souls desire and the eyes delight in... (43:71)

وَنُكْمٌ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَنُكْمٌ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ

...Therein you will have whatever your souls desire and therein you will have whatever you call for. (41:31)

Jannah is the place where we will have all of our desires fulfilled without ever running out of things to wish for. The dweller of Jannah will desire something and be given it, then Allāh ﷻ will put the desire for a new blessing in his/her heart, which in turn will be fulfilled, and so on. New and more pleasurable things will be desired and enjoyed, and thus the dwellers of Jannah will be happily occupied for eternity.

In this world though, the pursuit of desires will always disappoint. Someone who decides to ignore Allāh ﷻ and go after his desires will make a twofold loss: not only will he be disobeying Allāh ﷻ, he will suffer the continuous frustration of never actually

feeling that his desires have been satiated.

It is a fact that no one can fulfil his/her desires in this world. In contrast to the dwellers of Jannah, the pleasure-seekers in this world will try to satiate a desire only to find that it remains unfulfilled. In some societies, men and women go from partner to partner looking for the fulfilment of their desires. Despite having the freedom to develop and end relationships as they please, if they were to be asked after forty years whether they had fulfilled their desires with the opposite sex, they would reply in the negative. There is no limit to desires: they will persist no matter how far one goes to fulfil them.

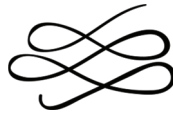
Even desires that are addressed lawfully still leave a longing in the heart. Take the example of a man who desires a wife: he gets married but soon finds that he has a desire to marry again, or he may wish another woman was his wife instead. Alternatively, take the example of a man who wants a particular model of car: once he gets it, he will long for a better model. Desires can never be fulfilled in this world; desires will only be fulfilled in one place, and that is the Hereafter.

Seeing as we know for sure that our desires are just not going to be fulfilled in this life, we should:

- a. Curb impermissible desires straight away and avoid disobedience to Allāh ﷻ and incurring His Displeasure. Someone who follows impermissible desires will one day, out of utter frustration, have to put his hands up and concede that he has been chasing a shadow. The wise person avoids disobedience and sin by controlling himself from the outset.
- b. Be patient and obedient to Allāh ﷻ in this life, with the firm conviction that the true place for enjoyment is the Hereafter. In our day-to-day lives we wait patiently for the accomplishment of our goals. A person desiring to purchase a house exercises

patience for a number of years while he earns, saves and plans. He knows that he cannot fulfil this one wish instantly and so waits for as long as it takes. Likewise, all worldly wants require patience before they are realised, if at all. If we can have the patience to wait for five to ten years in this world to have just one desire fulfilled and even that without any guarantee that it will bring happiness or be as we anticipated, then can we not have patience for say fifty years, so that we can see all our desires fulfilled in the most complete way in Jannah?

Our situation is like a child who asks his mother for food while she is preparing a great feast. When her child asks for food, she refuses, not out of unfairness or cruelty, but because she knows that if her child eats now, he/she will not be able to enjoy the delicious feast being prepared. If the child persists, she will give him/her a little something that will not spoil his/her appetite. Similarly, Allāh ﷻ has forbidden us from making our desires our objective in this world, so that we do not deprive ourselves of the delights of the Hereafter. He has, however, provided us with enough lawful pleasures like permissible food, drink and marriage to tide us over until we reach our graves. Only then will our real hunger be satisfied.





35. Ta‘ziyah

On 31st December 2007, two members of my family departed for the Hereafter within hours of each other. إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ. ‘Indeed, to Allāh we belong, and indeed, to Him we will return.’

May Allāh ﷻ forgive them, have mercy on them, grant them safety and make their abode in the Hereafter an honourable one. May He enlighten their graves and grant them a place amongst the Ambiyā ﷺ, the ṣiddīqīn, the shuhadā and the ṣālīhīn. Āmīn.

May He also grant comfort to their loved ones, whom they have left behind. And may He grant us all the tawfīq to prepare for that inevitable journey. Āmīn.

Islām is a way of life, which guides and assists mankind through every situation. Even for dealing with moments of grief, Allāh ﷻ has conveyed instructions through His Nabī ﷺ. There can be few instances that cause greater grief than the death of a loved one. Following the instructions of Rasūlullāh ﷺ will help lessen the grief and sorrow of the bereaved immensely, and make those who console them worthy of great reward. This is done through the sunnah of ta‘ziyah.

What is Ta‘ziyah?

Ta‘ziyah means to console, comfort and give solace to someone who is suffering grief due to a death. The Islamic concept of ta‘ziyah at the time of someone’s death is one of consoling the bereaved with such words or actions that will remove or lessen their grief. The aim of ta‘ziyah is to give strength to the broken-hearted and

give them hope at a time when their hope may be waning; it is to lighten the load of the bereaved. To say or do things that increase or revive their grief is not ta'ziyah, it is taklif (giving hardship to others).

Virtues of Ta'ziyah

There are great rewards for ta'ziyah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَنْ عَزَى أَخَاهُ الْمُؤْمِنَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ، كَسَاهُ اللَّهُ حُلَّالَ الْكَرَامَةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

A Muslim who consoles his brother will be clothed with garments of honour by Allāh on the Day of Qiyāmah.¹⁵⁸

مَنْ عَزَى ثَكْلَى كُوسِي بُرْدًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ

Whoever consoles a bereaved mother will be dressed with a (special) garment in Paradise.¹⁵⁹

مَنْ عَزَى مُصَابًا فَلَهُ مِثْلُ أَجْرِهِ

Whoever consoles an afflicted person will receive the same reward (as the sufferer will upon his patience).¹⁶⁰

When a Muslim is afflicted with a difficulty of any sort, be it the loss of a loved one or any other hardship, and he bears it patiently, then Allāh ﷻ rewards him for his patience. From this Ḥadīth we learn that one who consoles an afflicted person receives the same reward as the afflicted person receives for his patience. The patience exercised by a bereaved person, and consequently the reward, is obviously great; therefore, the reward of someone who consoles the bereaved through the sunnah of ta'ziyah is also great.

How to Carry Out Ta'ziyah

There are no set words for ta'ziyah. One should visit the bereaved and console them. Ta'ziyah can also be performed, out of necessi-

158 Ma'rifatus-Sunan wal-Āthār, kitāb: الجنائز chapter: التعزية وما يهتأ لأهل الميت Ḥadīth: 7758

159 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الجنائز chapter: فضل التعزية Ḥadīth: 1097

160 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الجنائز chapter: عزى مصابا ما جاء في أجر من عزى مصابا Ḥadīth: 1094

ty, over the phone or by letter. During ta'ziyah, keep the following points in mind:

- a. Encourage patience, reminding the bereaved of the virtues of patience.
- b. Make du'ā for the bereaved, asking Allāh ﷻ to grant them reward in return for their loss. A du'ā that can be read is:

أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ، وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ، وَغَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ

May Allāh ﷻ increase your reward, and grant you good consolation, and forgive your deceased.¹⁶¹

In cases where the deceased is a minor i.e. not yet bāligh, the last part of the du'ā (وَعَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ) is omitted, as the question of forgiveness for a minor does not arise. In such cases, the parents should also be reminded that Rasūlullāh ﷺ said that when a child passes away in infancy, he/she will intercede for his/her parents before Allāh ﷻ and take them into Jannah.¹⁶²

- c. Make du'ā for the deceased, as this will bring happiness to the hearts of the bereaved.
- d. Mention the positive aspects of the situation for both the bereaved and the deceased. Sayyidunā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ says that at the time of his father's death, a bedouin was able to console him as no one else had been able to. The bedouin recited a few couplets, the last of which was:

خَيْرٌ مِّنَ الْعَبَّاسِ أَجْرُكَ بَعْدَهُ
وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِّنَكَ لِلْعَبَّاسِ

*Better for you than 'Abbās is the reward you will receive
after him;
and Allāh is better for 'Abbās than you.*¹⁶³

161 Mirqātul-Mafātih, part 4, p.193

162 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة والأداب chapter: فضل من يموت له ولد فيحتسبه Ḥadīth: 2724

163 Iḥyā 'Ulūmid-Dīn, part 4, p.131

Through these words the grieving son was reminded that although he had suffered a loss, the gain brought by patience is superior to the loss. He was then reminded that his father may have lost the company of his son, but he had gone to meet his Creator. What is better for Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ؓ, being with his son or being with Allāh ﷻ?

- e. The meaning of the verse ‘Indeed, to Allāh ﷻ we belong, and indeed, to Him we will return’ should be explained. We all belong to Allāh ﷻ, so when He takes one of us away, we should not complain. And although we become separated from a loved one, it is only a temporary separation, for we will soon be reuniting with them. At the demise of his grandson, Rasūlullāh ﷺ consoled his daughter with the words:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ، وَلَهُ مَا أُعْطِيَ، وَكُلُّ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى، فَلْتَصْبِرْ، وَلْتَحْتَسِبْ

Indeed, whatever Allāh takes is His, and whatever He gives is His, and everything has an appointed time. So be patient and seek rewards.¹⁶⁴

For the deceased, it is simply a case of their appointed time having arrived; as for those left behind, it is a time to be patient and acquire great reward as a result.

- f. Inform the bereaved that you intend to do some optional good deeds and send the reward to the deceased. This will please and comfort the bereaved.
- g. When going for ta‘ziyah do not enquire into the details of the illness or circumstances that preceded the death.

The Time for Ta‘ziyah

According to the Dīn, there are only three days for ta‘ziyah, i.e. it should only be carried out within the first three days after the death has occurred. There is an exception for people who live far away or

164 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الجنائز chapter: يقول النبي يعذب الميت ببعض بكاء أهله عليه Ḥadīth: 1294

are out of the country or sick, and so are unable to attend within the first three days, they may come for ta'zīyah even after three days. The intent of the Dīn is to allow people to forget their grief, not have them sitting around nursing it indefinitely. For this reason, it is sunnah for an individual to go only once for ta'zīyah.¹⁶⁵

The Fuqahā have written that as soon as the burial has been completed, the bereaved should get back into the normal routine of their lives. One benefit of this is that it prevents the prolonged coming and going of visitors, which only serves to keep the grief alive when it should be forgotten.¹⁶⁶

It is sunnah for neighbours or friends to prepare food for the immediate family of the deceased during their moment of grief. This should be done for one day, though it is also permissible to do so for the full three days. The objective is to lighten the burden of the bereaved and ensure that food is available for them at a time when they may be too distraught to keep track of mealtimes.¹⁶⁷

Sending Reward for the Deceased

Another important point to remember during the time of bereavement is īṣāluth-thawāb. This means to perform an optional good deed, e.g. tilāwah of the Qur'ān, tasbīḥ, ṣadaqah or nafl ṣalāh, and then to ask Allāh ﷻ to convey its reward to the deceased. When hearing of someone's demise, along with ta'zīyah, one's time is best spent in īṣāluth-thawāb. Ṣadaqah (giving in charity) is the best way of doing īṣāluth-thawāb, one reason being that by spending on something that will be of lasting benefit to people, the deceased will earn a perpetual reward.¹⁶⁸

These points cover the sunnah method of ta'zīyah. It is a sim-

165 Raddul-Muhtār 'alad-Durriil-Mukhtār, part 2, p.241

166 Ibid.

167 Mirqātul-Mafātiḥ, part 4, p.194

168 Mirqātul-Mafātiḥ, part 1, p.412

ple and effective way of helping those suffering loss. Any other practices or customs that are carried out in the name of ta'ziyah are baseless.



Allāh is sufficient for me.



36. Īmān and Islām

What is our objective in life?

The answer is simple: our objective in this world is to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

How can we acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ?

Again, the answer is simple: a) accept Īmān, and thereafter b) submit to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. In technical terms, the former is known as Īmān and the latter as Islām.

Īmān (Belief) & Islām (Submission)

A person with Īmān is known as a mu'min. A mu'min believes wholeheartedly, without a shadow of doubt, in Allāh ﷻ, His Oneness, His Attributes and everything that has reached him from Allāh ﷻ through His Final Messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ. His belief is firm and he harbours no doubts regarding it. He then proclaims his belief verbally: 'I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His Servant and Messenger.' By proclaiming the shahādah, a person accepts being under the Authority of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ. He is now a mu'min.

After Īmān comes the second stage, which is Islām: submission to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. A mu'min, having accepted the Authority of Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ, must now carry out everything that those authorities demand. A number of things now become obligatory, e.g. ṣalāh, zakāh and ṣawm, and a number of things become forbidden, e.g. lying, alcohol and adultery. Īmān demands action.

When a believer submits to the Will of Allāh ﷻ and carries out all that is required of him without hesitation, he becomes a Muslim.

This complete submission is what the Glorious Qur'ān calls for:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً

O believers, enter into Islām completely... (2:208)

It is also essential to fulfil the requirements of the whole Dīn. Of the five branches of Dīn, the first is 'aqā'id (beliefs) and the remaining four come under the heading of submission. These are 'ibādāt (worship), mu'āmalāt (transactions, such as buying, selling, renting etc.), mu'āsharah (social conduct) and ḥusnul-akhhlāq (good character, such as gratitude, love, mercy and generosity).

The Eternal Message of Submission

All the Messengers of Allāh ﷻ were Muslims: they all submitted entirely to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. And all the Messengers ﷺ called people towards Īmān and Islām. Perhaps the most shining example of submission found in the Qur'ān is that of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ.

The life of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ is filled with submission to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. The final messenger Muḥammad ﷺ has been commanded to follow this path of submission, as have we, his followers:

فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا

...So follow the path of Ibrāhīm, the upright one...(3:95)

Even during his last moments, after having lived a life of submission and while preparing for the journey to the Hereafter, the importance of submission was uppermost in the mind of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ. The Qur'ān recalls how, on his deathbed, he advised his children. He reminded them that Allāh ﷻ had chosen Islām as their religion and urged them to always remain in a state of Islām

until they breathe their last:

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ ۖ يٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

And Ibrāhīm exhorted his children with the same, as did Ya‘qūb: “My sons, Allāh has indeed chosen the Dīn for you, so do not let death overtake you but that you are Muslims.”
(2:132)

We learn from this that we should not just be content with Īmān, but we should also be in a state of Islām during every moment of our lives. We do not know when death will come, so we should make sure that we live every moment in submission to Allāh ﷻ in order that we die in a state of submission whenever death does come.

How to Submit to Allāh ﷻ

How can we bring submission into our lives?

Before we can answer this question, let us find out why it is that people do not submit to their Creator. The reason is that they submit to their nafs (base desires) instead. When a person is in a state of submission to his/her nafs, he/she cannot submit to Allāh ﷻ.

So in order to bring submission to Allāh ﷻ into our lives, we must free ourselves from submission to the nafs. By doing this, submission to Allāh ﷻ will be secured. However, as long as we remain in submission to our nafs, we will not be able to submit to our Creator.

The way to free oneself from submission to the nafs is to remember two things in abundance:

1. Remember that you are not going to live in this world forever; a time is going to come when you will have to depart and enter your grave. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

أَكْثِرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ

Remember frequently the destroyer of pleasures i.e. death.¹⁶⁹

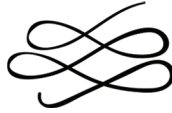
The more you remember death, the easier it will be to crush your desires and resist the demands of your nafs.

2. Remember that you will have to stand before Allāh ﷻ and answer for every second of your life. Allāh ﷻ says:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۖ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾

As for the one who feared to stand before his Rabb and restrained his nafs from (evil) desire, Jannah will be his abode.
(79:40-41)

So let us make a firm resolution; from now on we must submit ourselves to the Will of our Creator, as the acquisition of His Pleasure depends on it. It may seem a bit difficult in the initial stages, but Allāh ﷻ will make it easy. Spend time in the company of the ‘Ulamā and Mashāyikh. Stay in good company and stay away from people with bad habits and those environments that encourage submission to the nafs instead of Allāh ﷻ; and work hard to be good Muslims as Allāh ﷻ helps those who strive in His Path.



169 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: المآثر chapter: ما جاء في ذكر الموت Ḥadīth: 2462



37. Why Earthquakes Occur

At 12:56am on 27th February 2008, the UK was shaken by an earthquake of such magnitude that it made the headlines. Buildings shuddered, furniture shook, and people were awoken from their sleep. By morning, everyone was talking about it.

The largest earthquake to strike the UK in over 25 years was regarded by most people as no more than an exciting incident. Their curiosity was satisfied by scientific explanations and their interest ended there. They did not see the shaking of the earth beneath their feet as an opportunity to learn valuable lessons.

The question we need to ask is: ‘Why do earthquakes occur?’

We can learn a lot about the world around us by using the ‘aql (intellect) that Allāh ﷻ has given us. ‘Aql, however, has its inherent limitations, and as believers we should not remain content with the often incomplete picture of events that it can present. Where ‘aql reaches its limits, waḥy (divine revelation) takes over. As Muslims, we should turn to the teachings of our Beloved Nabī ﷺ to understand the significance of the recent earthquake.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has declared the cause of earthquakes to be when disobedience to Allāh ﷻ exceeds all limits.¹⁷⁰ Whatever the scientific explanation may be – and there is no need to reject or ignore scientific explanations – Allāh ﷻ made the earth shake. Allāh ﷻ uses physical agencies to bring about physical events in the universe, e.g. a child is born as a result of the union of its parents, yet Allāh ﷻ is the Originator; He gives children via the medium of the

170 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: علامات حلول المسخ والخسف chapter: ما جاء في علامة حلول المسخ والخسف Ḥadīth: 2359

parents. Allāh ﷻ may cause an earthquake to occur through the means of huge stresses building up at fault lines in the earth's crust or, if He wishes, without it. In either case, it is Allāh ﷻ who causes earthquakes.

Allāh ﷻ first causes small earthquakes, like the 5.2 quake felt in the UK, which do not result in any major harm. They do however, affect the hearts of people, causing a moment of fear, awe and a sense of one's mortality. These minor earthquakes can be viewed as wake-up calls from Allāh ﷻ, inviting His servants to take stock of their lives and turn to Him in repentance. In this way, they are a mercy from Him. It is reported that on the occasion of an earthquake occurring in the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, he turned to the Ṣaḥābah and said: 'Your Rabb wants you to turn to Him in repentance, so repent.'¹⁷¹

Allāh ﷻ states in the Glorious Qur'an:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضُ
الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Calamities have appeared on the land and the sea because of what the hands of men have earned, that He (Allāh ﷻ) may make them taste a part of what they have done, in order that they may turn back. (30:41)

When people do not take heed of these warnings and continue to disobey Allāh ﷻ, He may repeat the wake-up calls of magnitude 4 or 5 before suddenly unleashing a quake of magnitude 8, resulting in Qiyāmah-like scenes. Whole localities are razed to the ground, as if they had never existed. These events are not hypothetical, they are happening now, in our lifetime.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ foretold that as Qiyāmah nears, earthquakes will

171 Al-'Uqūbāt, chapter: أسباب العقوبات وأنواعها Ḥadīth: 18

become more frequent,¹⁷² a prophecy we are seeing come true with our very own eyes. The reason for the increase in earthquakes foretold by Rasūlullāh ﷺ is an increase in disobedience to Allāh ﷻ.

When, as a result of excessive disobedience, a large earthquake occurs anywhere, the Quranic principle is that everyone, good and bad, is afflicted.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً

And beware of a scourge that will not afflict the wrongdoers among you only... (8:25)

Everyone suffers: people die or suffer bereavement, injury, fear, financial loss, anxiety and depression etc. The victims of a catastrophic earthquake can be divided into four groups:

1. Good people who die. They are classified as shuhadā (martyrs) and will enter Jannah. Their suffering will be a means of elevating their status in Jannah.
2. Bad people who die. Due to their disobedience and unrepenting ways, they will be destined for Jahannam. Their suffering will be a punishment.
3. Good people who survive. The calamity is a test for them. By remaining patient and content with taqdīr and the Will of Allāh ﷻ they will be rewarded with closeness to Him.
4. Bad people who survive. The calamity is a warning and admonition for them to repent and change their ways.

What We Need to Do

1. Accept that the earthquake was a result of disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. Each individual should think: ‘Out of all the disobedient people, I am top of the list. It was because of me that the earthquake struck.’

172 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإستسقاء chapter: الزلازل والآيات Ḥadīth: 1045

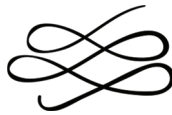
2. Thereafter, make tawbah and istighfār with sincerity.
3. When the earth quakes, so does the heart. Treat it as an opportunity to rectify your life. Make use of the fear that developed in your heart. Think: ‘I commit many sins; what if the earth had split and swallowed me up? It is only Allāh ﷻ who saved me.’ Thereafter repent sincerely and turn to Allāh ﷻ saying: O Allāh, forgive me.’
4. Give ṣadaqah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَتُطْفِئُ غَضَبَ الرَّبِّ وَتَدْفَعُ مِيتَةَ الشُّوْءِ

Truly, ṣadaqah extinguishes the anger of the Rabb and prevents an evil death.¹⁷³

5. Having experienced the disturbing effects of a small earthquake, try to imagine Qiyāmah. What will the mighty earthquakes of Qiyāmah and the Resurrection be like?

It is a very serious matter that the land we live on shook; it means that so much disobedience is taking place on it that Allāh ﷻ is displeased. We must turn to Allāh ﷻ and do tawbah, istighfār and rectify our lives. We should also have concern in this regard for those around us. May Allāh ﷻ make this earthquake a mercy for us and may it prompt us to change our lives for the better. Āmīn.



173 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الزُّكُوة chapter: فضل الصَّدَقَةِ Ḥadīth: 665



38. The Importance of Ḥalāl Income

Earning a ḥalāl livelihood is very important in Islām. The state of a Muslim's income – whether it is ḥalāl or ḥarām - has an enormous effect on his religious life.

The energy the body receives through the consumption of ḥalāl food and drink will be spent in the performance of good deeds, and the energy that comes from ḥarām sustenance will be spent in ḥarām and impermissible actions. When ḥarām enters the body, the tawfīq to do good deeds is removed. The difficulty many people feel in doing good deeds and staying away from bad deeds has a lot to do with the state of their income; ensuring a ḥalāl income significantly reduces this difficulty.

A great benefit of ḥalāl sustenance is that with a little effort good deeds become second nature. Ḥalāl earnings bring barakah to a person's knowledge and deeds.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبَلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَمَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِمَا أَمَرَ بِهِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

Allāh is pure, and only accepts what is pure. And Allāh has commanded the believers to do (the same) as He commanded the Messengers to do.

He then recited two verses of the Glorious Qur'ān:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ

O believers, eat from the pure things that We have provided for you... (2:172)

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا ط

O Messengers, eat from the pure things and act righteously...
(23:51)¹⁷⁴

Commenting on this second verse, the Mufasssīrīn have stated that eating ḥalāl results in the performance of good deeds, and that if a person eats ḥarām, he will not be able to do good deeds.¹⁷⁵

An incident involving two great Imāms, Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ and Imām Aḥmad ؒ illustrates how much barakah ḥalāl income brings to a person’s knowledge and actions.

Imām Aḥmad ؒ was the student of Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ. Once Imām Aḥmad ؒ invited Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ to his house as his guest. When the guest arrived, a meal was prepared. During the meal Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ was seen to have eaten a lot. The daughters of Imām Aḥmad ؒ later expressed their surprise to their father at the amount of food Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ had eaten. In the morning, the two Imāms went together to the masjid for Fajr. The daughters noticed that the water they had left for Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ, to do wuḍū for tahajjud, had not been touched! Again, they expressed their surprise to their father: their guest had eaten a large amount of food, had apparently not woken up for tahajjud and had left for Fajr without wuḍū! Imām Aḥmad ؒ asked his teacher about the matters that had caused him concern: the excessive eating (a mu’min does not eat so much), failure to wake up for tahajjud (it was inconceivable that a person of his status, knowledge and piety should not perform tahajjud), and that he had not performed wuḍū before Fajr.

Imām Shāfi‘ī ؒ put his student’s mind at ease. He explained that when he had sat down to eat, he had seen a nūr (radiance) descending upon the food and understood it to be due to its pure

174 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الزكوة chapter: تربيتها من الكسب الطيب وتربيتها Ḥadīth: 1029

175 Rūḥul-Ma‘ānī, part 9, p.241

and ḥalāl nature. He thought to himself that the food held such barakah that he should eat as much of it as possible, as it would lead to barakah in his knowledge and actions. That night, having parted from Imām Aḥmad رحمته الله after ‘Ishā, he witnessed the barakah of his student’s ḥalāl income in his knowledge as he did not go to sleep at all, rather, whilst sitting on the chair of Imām Aḥmad رحمته الله, a Ḥadīth of Nabī ﷺ came into his mind from which he derived a hundred new masā’il.¹⁷⁶

As mentioned, ḥarām income and sustenance also has its effects. The first is that the inclination to do good deeds disappears. Despite knowing right from wrong and the importance of doing good deeds and abstaining from sins, there is just no inclination to do good. The poet Ghālib has captured this condition in the following couplet:

جاننا ہوں ثواب طاعت و زہد پر طبیعت ادھر نہیں جاتی
I know about the rewards of obedience and zuhd;
But I just do not feel inclined towards them.

The second effect of ḥarām is an increase in the inclination towards disobedience and sin. The third effect is that du‘ās and acts of worship are not accepted.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ described a man on a long journey, dishevelled, covered in dust and stretching out his hands in a plea to his Rabb. He has so many qualities that would otherwise guarantee his du‘ās are accepted: he is a traveller; he is forlorn and heart-broken; he is holding up his hands in supplication; and he is crying, ‘O my Rabb, O my Rabb,’ yet his du‘ās are not heard. Rasūlullāh ﷺ pointed out that as the man’s food, drink and clothing are ḥarām, how can his du‘ās be accepted?¹⁷⁷ So from the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ we learn that even if all the factors that ensure the acceptance

176 Athar-ul-Ikhtilāf fil-Qawā’idil-Uṣūliyyah fī Ikhtilāfil-Fuqahā, part 6, p.16

177 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الزکوة chapter: قبول الصدقة من الکسب الطیّب وترتيبها Ḥadīth: 1029

of du‘ās are present, if a person’s income is ḥarām then his du‘ās will not be accepted.

Whether an item of food is ḥalāl or ḥarām for a person depends not only on its physical nature, but also on the nature of the money with which it is purchased. Many people pay meticulous attention to ensure the ingredients in what they buy are ḥalāl, and rightly so, yet give no thought to whether the money they buy it with is ḥalāl or not.

Spiritual progress will not occur if our income is not ḥalāl; therefore, we should pay close attention to how we earn our money. Any form of deception, cheating or dishonesty in earnings is ḥarām and not only results in an absence of barakah but also erects a barrier to spiritual progress. If we have doubts regarding any transaction or source of income, we should err on the side of caution. Regarding any doubtful transactions and earnings in the past, we should consult the ‘Ulamā and resolve any issues as soon as possible. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all sustenance that is ḥalāl and full of barakah. Āmīn.



The Maker



39. Ādāb of Janāzah

Our attitude when attending the janāzah ṣalāh and burial of a fellow Muslim is quite shameful. There is frivolity and noise and chatter only moments before burying the deceased, which is the first stage of the long journey of the Hereafter. Within earshot of bereaved family members, many of us can be found cheerfully catching up with old friends and acquaintances. All talk is worldly talk and there is little, if any, respect shown to the deceased or their relatives.

During the actual burial, a handful of people are engaged in it while the rest are busy passing time. Some even go to the extent of chatting on their mobile phones. Can we not even give the deceased an average level of respect by standing quietly while their last act on the surface of the earth is carried out?

We need to stop and think about the true significance of what the janāzah and burial entail. For example, if somebody we knew was summoned to appear before a court of law, we would remain concerned and anxious about the outcome of the proceedings. In the case of the deceased, they are about to face questioning by the angels of the grave, and their eternal future is to be decided, yet amazingly we behave as if we have no concern whatsoever.

When attending a janāzah and burial, we should remind ourselves of two important points in order to correct our behaviour:

1. We should remind ourselves of our own death. When it is certain that one day we too will face death, we should reflect on how much we have done to prepare for it. A janāzah is an

ideal time to imagine ourselves in the place of the deceased. One day it will be our turn to be placed in front of the rows at the janāzah ṣalāh; to be lifted on the shoulders of those people among whom, until recently, we used to walk and talk; to be lowered into the dark emptiness of the grave; and to have the earth slowly cover us up. How apt is the saying:

يَا صَاحِبِي لَا تَغْتَرَّ بِتَنَعُمٍ فَالْعُمُرُ يَنْفَدُ وَ النَّعِيمُ يُزُولُ

*O my friend, don't be fooled by luxuries;
For life will end and luxuries will disappear.*

إِذَا حُمِلَتْ إِلَى الْقُبُورِ جَنَازَةً فَاعْلَمْ بِأَنَّكَ بَعْدَهَا مَحْمُولٌ

*When you carry the deceased to the grave;
Know that after him it will be you who will be carried.*¹⁷⁸

This remembrance of death will also help us to curb unlawful desires. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ يَعْنِي الْمَوْتَ

Remember frequently the destroyer of pleasures i.e. death.¹⁷⁹

How pitiful is our condition that instead of taking advantage of this opportunity, we cannot let go of our preoccupation with the world. Even when seeing our fellow Muslim leaving the world, we do not take it as a warning and a wakeup call from Allāh ﷻ.

2. We should pray for the deceased and recite a portion of the Glorious Qur'ān or some other form of dhikrullāh and send its reward for the deceased. The very purpose of the janāzah ṣalāh we have gathered for is to pray for the deceased. He no longer has the ability to do any good deeds to benefit himself, so we should send for him as much reward as we possibly can. We all know our own condition: just how often do we remember our

178 Rūḥul-Bayān, part 5, p.218

179 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الزهد chapter: ما جاء في ذكر الموت Ḥadīth: 2462

friends and family after they have been buried? Can we not spend the time before the ṣalāh and during the burial reciting some portion of the Glorious Qur’ān or reciting لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ as much as possible?

My late father ﷺ would always tell me to remember those who have passed away, through du‘ā and īṣāluth-thawāb. ‘In return,’ he would say, ‘Allāh ﷻ will create people who will remember you when you die.’

After bearing these two points in mind, we should also try to ensure that all aspects of the janāzah and burial are in accordance with the sunnah of our Beloved Rasūl ﷺ. The following are a number of areas in which deficiencies are generally found in our society and where attention is needed:

- a. Even after the grave is filled and the burial is over, it is preferable to remain for a short while at the graveside praying for the forgiveness of the deceased and praying that they be given steadfastness during the questioning in the grave.¹⁸⁰ This is also a sign of concern and respect for our brother/sister who has departed and is comforting for the bereaved. Unfortunately, we tend to become preoccupied with eating arrangements etc., which is evident from an announcement regarding food being made as soon as the du‘ā is over.
- b. Many people think that only the kalimah shahādah should be recited when lifting or carrying the deceased. This is incorrect; any dhikr will suffice.
- c. Many people make no attempt to throw soil into the grave and do not see it as a virtuous act. In many places machinery and the services of non-Muslims are used to fill up the grave.
- d. While placing the deceased in the grave, the following should be recited:

180 Raddul-Muḥtār ‘alad-Durriḥ-Mukhtār, part 2, p.237

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَىٰ مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

In the Name of Allāh and upon the way of Rasūlullāh.¹⁸¹

- e. The body of the deceased should be placed in the grave in such a way that the whole body faces the qiblah; it is not sufficient to place the body on its back and just turn the face towards the qiblah.
- f. It is impermissible for a non-maḥram male to look at the face of a deceased female and vice-versa. Similarly, while placing the body of a female in the grave, a sheet should be used to act as a screen.¹⁸² This is only required, however, when there is no coffin. If there is a coffin then no sheet is needed.
- g. Many people cover the coffin with a sheet with Āyatul Kursī written on it. This is disrespectful to the verse of the Qurʾān. Furthermore, at the time of burial the sheet is wrapped up and thrown on the ground without care and respect.
- h. Many people do not do taʿziyah properly and simply feel it sufficient to greet the bereaved straight after the burial. The custom of doing muʿānaqah (embracing) with the bereaved before and after the janāzah is also groundless.
- i. Often, a close relative of the deceased holds on to the janāzah and walks with it all the way to the graveside. The Fuqahā have written that the sunnah method of carrying the janāzah is to walk ten paces supporting the front right-hand corner of the janāzah, then ten paces supporting the back right-hand corner, then the front left, and then the back left in the same way.¹⁸³

My friends, let us try to correct our behaviour and earn the great rewards associated with attending a janāzah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

181 Sunan Ibn Mājah, kitāb: إدخال الميت القبر chapter: 1532

182 Raddul-Muhtār ʿalad-Durri-Mukhtār, part 2, p.236

183 Raddul-Muhtār ʿalad-Durri-Mukhtār, part 2, p.231

مَنْ اتَّبَعَ جَنَازَةَ مُسْلِمٍ إِيْمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا وَكَانَ مَعَهُ حَتَّى يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهَا وَيُفْرَغَ مِنْ
دَفْنِهَا فَإِنَّهُ يَرْجِعُ مِنَ الْأَجْرِ بِقِيرَاطَيْنِ كُلُّ قِيرَاطٍ مِثْلُ أُحُدٍ وَمَنْ صَلَّى عَلَيْهَا
ثُمَّ رَجَعَ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُدْفَنَ فَإِنَّهُ يَرْجِعُ بِقِيرَاطٍ

Whoever follows the janāzah of a Muslim, with Īmān and the hope of reward, and remains with it until the ṣalāh is performed and the deceased is buried, he returns with two qīrāt of reward, one qīrāt being equal to (Mount) Uḥud. And whoever performs the janāzah ṣalāh and then returns before the burial, he returns with one qīrāt (of reward).¹⁸⁴

When news of a janāzah reaches us, we should remember that it is a right of the deceased that we attend, and when we do attend, we should ensure that the occasion is fruitful for the deceased and for ourselves by remembering the advices outlined above. May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to remember death frequently and, when our time comes, may He grant us a good death. Āmīn.



The Shaper (of all forms)

184 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: اتباع الجنائز من الإيمان Ḥadīth: 47



40. A Good Parent, a Good Friend

Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdil-Qādir Ar-Rūmī  has defined the words ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ in Majālisul-Abrār as follows:

‘A friend is he who strives to improve a person’s Hereafter, even though it may bring worldly loss to that person.

And an enemy is he who strives to destroy a person’s Hereafter, even though it may bring worldly benefit to that person.’¹⁸⁵

This principle should be our guide for evaluating friendships. It is not the amount of material benefits we gain from a person that dictates whether they are real friends, but the amount of concern they have for our Hereafter. If a person is concerned with improving our Hereafter, to the extent that he is even prepared to see us undergo worldly loss rather than suffer loss in the Hereafter, then he is a friend.

Take the example of a businessman who is badly in debt and gets the chance to make a lucrative, though impermissible, investment and recoup his losses. Those around him can do one of two things: fearing the loss that will result in the Hereafter if such a transaction is made, they can try to dissuade him from getting involved in it, even though it will mean he remains in debt. Alternatively, they can ignore the loss of the Hereafter and look instead towards the worldly gain and freedom from debt that the transaction promises and encourage the businessman to go ahead. The former are friends; the latter are not.

185 Majālisul-Abrār, p.444

With this in mind, we should look around us and evaluate who our real friends are and who, in light of this principle, are not. Thereafter, we should pay attention to what our real friends tell us and disregard what others say. Equally as important, is the need to consider whether we ourselves are really friends or not to those around us. In particular, we need to take a hard look at whether or not we are friends to our children.

Those parents who encourage their children along the path of worldly progress while neglecting their religious progress are not friends to their children. Even many outwardly religious people slip up when it comes to this point. Despite seeing the irreligious state of their children, they support their worldly endeavours. They give their children support in fulfilling their worldly ambitions and careers, yet hesitate when it comes to sitting down with them and discussing matters of religion. Such parents should think how they would react if, instead of being guilty of disobedience to Allāh ﷻ, their children started disobeying them. In all probability they would throw caution to the wind and reprimand them! How can a parent rate his/her own rights higher than the Rights of Allāh ﷻ?

Parents need to honestly ask themselves whether they feel any pain in their hearts when they see their children living irreligious lives. Do they feel any grief knowing that their children do not perform ṣalāh, the most important rite of Islām after declaration of faith? Do they feel the same concern seeing their children failing in their duty to Allāh ﷻ as they would do if their children were failing at school or college?

Hidāyah (guidance) is in the Control of Allāh ﷻ, and only He knows how a particular child will turn out, but He has given parents certain responsibilities. Parents can only be called friends of their children if they give priority to their children's religious

needs and if they are willing to accept worldly loss for their children in return for their religious wellbeing.

On the Day of Qiyāmah, parents will be summoned before the ‘Arsh (throne) of Allāh ﷻ and their sinful children will complain that their parents did not teach them about Dīn or attempt to raise them according to Dīn. The parents will be asked to explain in detail what they had taught their children and how they had trained them. Before that day comes we should give priority to the religious upbringing of our children. And this entails reminding them of Islamic teachings and manners with kindness and tact from a young age.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ loved his little grandsons, Sayyidunā Ḥasan and Sayyidunā Ḥusayn ؑ, very much. Despite this, he would not miss any opportunity for tarbiyah. Once, Sayyidunā Ḥasan ؑ picked up a date and put it in his mouth.¹⁸⁶ The date was from the dates of ṣadaqah which were unlawful for the family of Rasūlullāh ﷺ to eat. The child was so young that he would not have understood if he had been told to spit out the date, or the reason why he should not have put it in his mouth in the first place. Rasūlullāh ﷺ took the date out of the child’s mouth with his blessed fingers and then gently pointed out why he should not have put it in his mouth.¹⁸⁷ In doing so he taught the Ummah an important lesson in how to bring up children. Children should be taught right and wrong and good manners from an early age, for even if they do not understand at the time, when they get older the words of advice that had entered their ears and settled in their hearts will serve as a reminder. We should not think that ‘they are only children’ and shy away from talking to them about Dīn. Instead, we should make time for them and give them the attention they deserve.

186 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-jihād wa-s-sayr chapter: من تكلم بالفارسية والرومانية Hadīth: 3083

187 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-zakāh chapter: أخذ صدقة التمر عند صرام التخل... Hadīth: 1498

Parents need to give their children quality time and attention and be there for them. They need to provide a loving and affectionate environment in the home and give them respect and recognition. If they do not, then it is only human nature that children will look elsewhere for their needs. In search of love they will get entangled in unlawful relationships and in search of respect they will become gang members. If parents are real friends of their children, they will protect them from all these harms and their precious du'ās will assist their children in attaining great success in the world as well as the Hereafter.



The Most-Forgiving



41. Value Every Moment

Sayyidunā Abū Dardā رضي الله عنه and Ḥasan Baṣrī رضي الله عنه have both said:

إِنَّ أَدَمَ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ أَيَّامٌ فَكُلَّمَا ذَهَبَ يَوْمٌ ذَهَبَ بَعْضُكَ

O son of Ādam, You are nothing but days. Whenever a day passes, a part of you passes.¹⁸⁸

A day that has passed will never return. Every morning at sunrise the day says:

مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ فِي خَيْرٍ فَلْيَعْمَلْهُ فَإِنِّي غَيْرُ مُكَرِّرٍ عَلَيْكُمْ أَبَدًا

Whoever is able to do some good should do it, for I will never return to you.¹⁸⁹

Just think! Our childhood days have passed; for many their youth has passed and others have reached old age, waiting only for death to come. Allāh ﷻ says:

إِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ

Indeed, when the specified time of Allāh (the time of death) comes, it is not delayed...(71:4)

Before that time comes, we should make the most of our lives. We should resolve that from now on we will not waste a single moment and we will spend each second in only profitable ways.

In order to give practical form to this resolution, there follows a number of beneficial points of guidance that are tried and tested and derived from the teachings of our pious predecessors. We

188 Shu'abul-Īmān, kitāb: الرَّحْدُ وقصر الأمل Ḥadīth: 10663; Ḥilyatul-Awliyā wa Ṭabaqātul-Aṣfiyā, part 2, p.148

189 Shu'abul-Īmān, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: مَا جَاءَ فِي لَيْلَةِ النَّصْفِ مِنْ شُعْبَانَ Ḥadīth: 3840

should try to familiarise ourselves with them and implement them in our lives.

1. Organise Time

The first point is to organise your time. Our pious predecessors were very particular about effective time management, for it prevents time being wasted. So make a programme for the whole day and night in the form of a timetable and strictly adhere to it. At any particular time do only what you have assigned for that time and do not delay anything from its appointed time.

Ḥasan Baṣrī رحمہ اللہ says: ‘Beware of procrastination.’¹⁹⁰ Do not delay anything until tomorrow, for ‘tomorrow’ is simply a deception and a diversion. Procrastination is the biggest cause of people’s neglect and failure. So make a habit of completing every task at its appointed time. In relation to organising one’s time, I should also add that when you are confronted by two or more options, do the one that is most necessary and which promises the most beneficial outcome.

2. Abstain from Futile Activities

The second point is to abstain from futile activities and pointless talk. When we spend time in some permissible but non-beneficial activity, we argue that it is permissible and therefore harmless. Such thinking is incorrect; a great loss is actually suffered because an extremely valuable asset is spent in an activity that has no benefit.

Before doing anything, we have a habit of asking ourselves whether it will cause any harm to our worldly life or our life in the Hereafter. If the answer is no, we feel there is no harm in doing it, even though it may not be beneficial. This way of

190 Kitābuz-Zuhd wa yalihi Kitābur-Raqā’iq, chapter: التخصيص على طاعة الله part 1, p.4

thinking is wrong. Before doing anything we should ask ourselves if it will be beneficial for our worldly life and our life in the Hereafter. If the answer is no, we should stay away from it, for though it is not harmful in itself, to spend a portion of life in an activity that is of no use in the world or the Hereafter is in fact a loss. No one would spend money on something that brings no benefit. When spending money on something, people do not think about its possible harms, what they think about is whether it will be of benefit or not. If it does not offer any benefit, people will not spend money on it.

We can understand something else from this too: if we have to save ourselves from things that do not benefit us, how can there be any justification for spending time on things that are harmful in this world or the Hereafter? Today, our youth are destroying their prospects for the Hereafter and their worldly lives through wasting time in many sinful and fruitless activities.

Sin and disobedience to Allāh ﷻ brings harm in both worlds, so save yourselves from them. There is nothing worse than disobedience to Allāh ﷻ when it comes to wasting time. May Allāh ﷻ protect us. Āmīn.

3. Unnecessary Gatherings

You should save yourselves from spending time in unnecessary gatherings; the more you mix with people, the more time will be wasted in futile talk. Nowadays, we not only engage in useless and futile talk in our gatherings, we also indulge in major sins such as backbiting and slander. During weddings or while visiting the bereaved or the sick, people assemble for hours on end and waste time in unprofitable talk. Therefore, abstain from spending time in gatherings and mixing with people.

4. Safeguarding the Tongue

When you need to speak and you cannot avoid it, control your

tongue. Be brief in your speech and do not speak without necessity. Hold fast to the principle, ‘weigh your words before you speak’. The tongue indulges in futility the most, more than anything else. By abstaining from unnecessarily mixing with people and by engaging in dhikr, the tongue is safeguarded.

5. Muḥāsabah (Self-Assessment)

Fix a time daily and do muḥāsabah of the past twenty-four hours, so you know how your time is being spent, how much is being lost and how much is bearing fruit. If time has been spent in good activities, thank Allāh ﷻ and ask for the ability to do more. If it has been spent in wrong ways, repent and make a firm resolution to keep away from such things in the future.

Inshā'allāh, by implementing these strategies, it will help us to avoid wasting the precious time that we have been gifted.



The Subduer



42. Ramaḍān – a Mercy for All

Ramaḍān is a month of mercy, forgiveness and deliverance from the fire of Jahannam. Sayyidunā Salmān Fārsī ؓ narrates that once, while addressing the Ṣaḥābah ؓ at the end of Sha‘bān, Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

وَهُوَ شَهْرٌ أَوَّلُهُ رَحْمَةٌ وَأَوْسَطُهُ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَآخِرُهُ عِتْقٌ مِّنَ النَّارِ

...It (Ramaḍān) is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from the Fire...¹⁹¹

Generally, people can be divided into three categories:

1. The muttaqīn servants of Allāh ﷻ.

Who are the muttaqīn? They are the servants of Allāh ﷻ who refrain from disobeying Him, and who, if they do ever commit a sin, do not delay in repenting. In this way they remain pure and their state is such that if they were to depart from this world at any moment, they would go straight to Jannah.

2. Those who mix good deeds with bad deeds.

This is the category to which most of us belong. Sometimes we are overcome with regret due to sitting in gatherings of the ‘Ulamā and the Mashāyikh, or on blessed nights or blessed occasions and places, and therefore we beg Allāh ﷻ to forgive us. In this way, our sins are washed away but then, some days later, we relapse and go back to the way we were before. Or it may be that we repent from one sin but not from another, e.g. we repent

191 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: الصَّيَام chapter: صحَّ الخبر: فضائل شهر رمضان إن صحَّ الخبر: Ḥadīth: 1976

from missing ṣalāh but not from lying, or vice versa. In other words, we are not consistent when it comes to obeying Allāh ﷻ.

3. Those who are disobedient to Allāh ﷻ.

They do not carry out the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and when they sin, they do not repent. They carry a burden of sin on their shoulders at all times and their condition is such that if they were to depart from this world, they would go straight to Jahannam.

The first category, who keep themselves pure and are not in need of forgiveness, will find that Allāh ﷻ showers them with mercy and bounties right from the very first day of Ramaḍān. For the second category, it is as if Allāh ﷻ is saying that although during the last eleven months they have disobeyed Him for half that time, in return for ten days work He will forgive their sins come the eleventh of Ramaḍān. The third category, those who have done nothing but wrong, are invited to work for twenty days, and then from the twenty-first day Allāh ﷻ will grant them deliverance from the fire of Jahannam.

So it is clear that during Ramaḍān every category can reap the fruits of mercy, forgiveness and deliverance from the Fire of Jahannam. Through the immense Mercy of Allāh ﷻ, He has made it easy for us to do this. A Ḥadīth describes how Allāh ﷻ helps His servants during Ramaḍān:

إِذَا جَاءَ رَمَضَانُ فَتُحْتَفَتُ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ وَتُغْلَقُ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ وَصُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ

When Ramaḍān comes the doors of Jannah are opened, the doors of Jahannam are closed and the shayāṭīn are imprisoned.¹⁹²

This means that the actions that lead to Jannah are made easy and the actions that lead to Jahannam are made difficult. It can be ob-

192 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: فضائل شهر رمضان chapter: فضل شهر رمضان Ḥadīth: 1091

served that people who never offer Fajr ṣalāh outside of Ramaḍān feel no burden in doing so in Ramaḍān, and people who would normally find even two raka'āt of nafl ṣalāh difficult, perform twenty raka'āt tarāwīḥ every night with ease during Ramaḍān.

This year we should all make the intention to work hard so that before the crescent of 'Īd is sighted, we are included in the list of the friends of Allāh ﷻ - the muttaqīn. I have heard my beloved Shaykh, Hājī Fārūq ﷺ, say that as Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'ān: 'O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those that came before you, so that you can become muttaqīn,'¹⁹³ we should beseech Him to make us of the muttaqīn, as that is what He has created this month for.

We should also hold fast to the following points:

- Abstain from all sins, be they major or minor.
- Do not waste a single second.
- Do as much tilāwah of the Glorious Qur'ān as possible.
- Mix as little as possible with others, for the more we get together with others, the more we talk; and talk eventually ends up becoming sinful, be it in the form of ghībah (back-biting), slander, accusations, making fun of people etc. I have heard on many occasions from my beloved teacher, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Hashim ṣahib ḥaḍīṣahullāh, that Shaykhul-Ḥadīth Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā ﷺ would tell those spending Ramaḍān with him, 'eat well, drink well and sleep well but do not talk.'
- Ask Allāh ﷻ to grant you His Mercy, His Love and His friendship.
- Contemplate over the past and make resolutions for the future.

193 Sūratul-Baqarah, verse 183

- In a Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has directed us towards four things we should do in abundance during the blessed month: recitation of the kalimah ṭayyibah, asking for forgiveness, asking for Jannah and seeking refuge from Jahannam.¹⁹⁴ My late father رحمه الله taught me a special formula of du‘ā to recite abundantly in Ramaḍān when I was a child back in India. He taught me the words:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ، أَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

There is none worthy of worship besides Allāh; I seek forgiveness from Allāh; I ask You (O Allāh) for Paradise, and I seek refuge in You (O Allāh) from the Hellfire.

It was only when I learnt this Ḥadīth years later, that I realised that by teaching me this simple formula, my beloved father رحمه الله was helping me to practise on it.

- During the last precious portion of the night, perform tahajjud and then sit in the darkness of your room alone and turn to Allāh ﷻ, asking for all your needs of this world and the Hereafter.
- Ten to fifteen minutes before breaking the fast, forget everything and just turn to Allāh ﷻ and ask Him to fulfil all your needs.

May Allāh ﷻ make this Ramaḍān a turning point for us all, and may He include us in the honoured group of those who are His special friends. Āmīn.

I humbly request all readers to also make du‘ā for me, my parents, teachers, Mashāyikh, family and associates during the blessed month.

194 Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzaymah, kitāb: فضائل شهر رمضان إن صحّ الخبر: chapter: الصَّيَام: Ḥadīth: 1976



43. Delaying Ḥajj

Ḥajj is one of the fundamental pillars of Islām, and obligatory upon every Muslim male or female who meets its requirements and who has been granted the capability to carry it out by Allāh ﷻ. If there are no Dīnī excuses to prevent you from fulfilling the obligation of ḥajj, you should not delay.

Shayṭān's Ploy

Every year however, Shayṭān whispers the following thought in the minds of those who are under an obligation to go for ḥajj: 'I have some important matters preventing me from going this year, but I will definitely go next year, no matter what happens, and I will absolve myself of this obligation.' In this way Shayṭān secures a year's grace for himself. The following year, just before ḥajj, he will play the same trick again and secure yet another year. Shayṭān misleads people in this manner right up to their graves.

It is another cunning ploy of Shayṭān that whatever he whispers to people, he never encourages them to rule out the intention of fulfilling any of the Commands of Allāh ﷻ. For example, someone who has been neglecting ṣalāh for years will not think to himself that he never intends to perform ṣalāh. Similarly, someone who indulges in drinking alcohol will never think that he is never going to give it up. This is the very condition of many Muslims regarding ḥajj; not for a moment do they entertain the thought of leaving this world without fulfilling the obligation of ḥajj, but on the other hand, they never make a firm decision to do it either.

The Affection of Rasūlullāh ﷺ for His Ummah

Being so affectionate, kind and merciful, anything that would place his Ummah in difficulty bore heavily on Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ describes this quality in the Qur'ān:

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

Surely there has come to you, from your midst, a Messenger who feels it very hard upon himself if you face a hardship, who is very anxious for your welfare; and for the believers he is very kind, very merciful. (9:128)

At every juncture, Rasūlullāh ﷺ has tried to save us from harm. He ﷺ has said regarding those people upon whom ḥajj is farḍ and who have made the intention to go:

مَنْ أَرَادَ الْحَجَّ فَلْيَتَعَجَّلْ

Whoever intends ḥajj should hurry!¹⁹⁵

This is because even when someone makes the intention to go for ḥajj, Shayṭān erects obstacles in his path and whispers all sorts of thoughts and worries into his heart. Our Beloved Nabī ﷺ warned us not to be deterred by these tricks, but to start preparations straight away.

Trust in Allāh ﷻ

Everything is in the Control of Allāh ﷻ, and when a servant of His makes the firm intention to go for ḥajj, He removes all difficulties and obstacles. Some people, misled by Shayṭān, worry about their children or their parents, while others worry about their businesses and earnings. All of this is actually a test from Allāh ﷻ to see whether His servant is prepared to sacrifice everything in order to fulfil the obligation he has to Allāh ﷻ. If you resolve to make these

195 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: المناسك chapter: التجارة في الحج Ḥādīth: 1726

sacrifices, Allāh ﷻ will make your heart firm, grant you courage and take over the responsibility of settling all of your affairs.

Look at the example of the ‘People of the Cave’ described in the Qur’ān. A handful of young men were up against an idolatrous king and his idolatrous people. There were nothing but obstacles in their path of upholding tawḥīd, yet when they rose to the challenge, Allāh ﷻ strengthened them and protected them:

وَرَبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ إِذْ قَامُوا فَقَالُوا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

We made their hearts firm when they stood up and said: “Our Rabb is the Rabb of the heavens and the earth...” (18:14)

An Invitation from Allāh ﷻ is a Great Honour

Allāh ﷻ does not invite just anyone to His House; it is a great honour to be given the opportunity to visit the sacred cities of Makkah Mukarramah and Madīnah Munawwarah. If we had true love for Allāh ﷻ we would long to visit His House, even if it was not obligatory upon us, and we would be prepared to undergo any hardship to get there. Those who, despite having the means, have not yet received the tawfiq to undertake the journey should be concerned about their condition; could it not be that Allāh ﷻ is displeased with them and so does not want them to be guests of His House? Tawbah and istighfār should be made immediately in abundance and humility adopted, beseeching Allāh ﷻ to grant them the privilege of visiting the Ḥaramayn.

Perform Ḥajj before it is Too Late

We need to consult the ‘Ulamā and Muftīs concerning our own circumstances to find out if we really do have a Dīnī excuse to postpone going for ḥajj. People postpone ḥajj for all sorts of reasons: some do not go because they want their parents to perform ḥajj first; some wives, who have a maḥram available to accompany them, put off ḥajj in order to go with their husbands; some

husbands wait for their wives, etc. If a person were to die without having fulfilled the obligation of ḥajj, there are dire consequences in the Hereafter. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

مَنْ كَانَ لَهُ مَالٌ يَبْلُغُهُ حَجَّ بَيْتِ رَبِّهِ أَوْ يَجِبُ عَلَيْهِ فِيهِ زَكَاةٌ فَلَمْ يَفْعَلْ يَسْأَلُ
الرَّجْعَةَ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ

Whoever has wealth that will make him reach the ḥajj of the House of His Rabb or as a result of which zakāh becomes obligatory upon him, but he does neither (of the two), then he shall at the time of death beg to return (back to the world so that he can have another chance of acquiring Jannah by fulfilling the two obligations).¹⁹⁶

If someone leaves a waṣiyyah (bequest) requesting his next of kin to perform ḥajj on his behalf, it is hoped that Allāh ﷻ will grant forgiveness once the ḥajj is performed, but he is still a sinner for failing to perform ḥajj despite having the means during his life-time.¹⁹⁷ And it is a sad fact that even if a waṣiyyah is left, people nowadays have so much love for wealth that they are not prepared to even spend a pound for the sake of their departed parents. They do not have the time or the concern to make the journey, even if the money their parents left them is more than sufficient to cover the costs. Therefore, each individual should ensure that the obligation of ḥajj is fulfilled at the earliest opportunity.

May Allāh ﷻ grant a safe journey to all those who are going for ḥajj this year and grant them al-ḥajjul-mabrūr (accepted ḥajj). May He guide those upon whom ḥajj is farḍ but who have not yet resolved to go, and may He grant all the necessary means to those who long to go for ḥajj but are unable to do so. Āmīn.

196 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: التفسير chapter: سورة المنافقون Ḥadīth: 3592

197 Raddul-Muḥtār ‘alad-Durriil-Mukhtār, part 2, p.600



44. The Greatest Advocate of Racial Equality

The recent US elections culminated in a barrage of headlines announcing history had been made and the American Dream was alive and well.¹⁹⁸ The election of the first black president of the United States in its two-hundred-year history reassured the public that in the Land of the Free, anyone can do anything, even become president. The Reverend Jesse Jackson was in tears when the country and the world heard the news that the walls were coming down and that African Americans in the US were finally taking their place as equals with their fellow countrymen. Even during campaigning, the dreams of prominent black activists of the past had been revisited and extolled. The country over, people shared the dream and pinned their hopes on this election being the day when, in the words of Martin Luther King Jr, ‘I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character.’

Dr. King said this some forty years ago, but some fourteen hundred years previously, Nabī ﷺ had not only taught us beautiful principles regarding race, but within years, or rather months, had gone on to implement them and make the ‘dream’ a reality. In the light of historical facts, civil rights and racial equality movements have little choice but to recognise Muḥammad ﷺ, the Nabī of Islām, as the most vocal and successful advocate of racial equality.

Racial equality is a fundamental principle of Islām, set in stone

198 This article was written in December 2008.

in the Glorious Qur’ān and the words and actions of Nabī ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ states:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into peoples and tribes so that you may know one another (not that you may despise each other); truly, the most noble among you before Allāh are those with the most taqwā; indeed, Allāh is the All-Knowing, the All-Aware. (49:13)

This verse was revealed on the day of the Liberation of Makkah Mukarramah. When the time for ṣalāh drew near, the question arose as to who would call the adhān. Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ, an Abyssinian, was conferred the honour of being the first person to call the adhān in the sacred city. In accordance with the instructions of Nabī ﷺ, Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ climbed onto the roof of the Ka’bah and called the adhān. A member of the Quraysh, who had not yet accepted Islām, remarked that it was a good thing his father was not alive to witness this wretched day, while another said, ‘Could Muḥammad not find anyone other than this black crow to call the adhān?’ Sayyidunā Jibra’īl ؑ informed Nabī ﷺ of their conversation and they were summoned and questioned. They admitted to what they had said, after which Allāh ﷻ revealed this verse.¹⁹⁹

Throughout his life, Nabī ﷺ nurtured his followers to understand and embrace racial diversity. He would remind them:

إِنَّكَ لَيْسَ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ أَحْمَرَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْضَلَ بِتَقْوَىٰ

You are neither better than a red (white) person nor a black person, unless you surpass him in piety.²⁰⁰

199 Al-Jāmi’ li Ahkāmīl-Qur’ān, part 16, p.341

200 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: مسند الأنصار رضي الله عنهم Ḥadīth: 21407

On another occasion he said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ

Allāh ﷻ does not look at your faces nor your wealth, but looks at your hearts and your actions.²⁰¹

He also declared:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَلَا إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنَّ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ أَلَا لَا فَضْلَ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجَمِيٍّ وَلَا لِعَجَمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا أَحْمَرَ عَلَى أَسْوَدَ وَلَا أَسْوَدَ عَلَى أَحْمَرَ إِلَّا بِالتَّقْوَى

O people, know that your Rabb is One and your father (Ādam ﷺ) is one. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; a red (white) person has no superiority over a black person, nor does a black person have any superiority over a red (white) person, except by virtue of taqwā.²⁰²

Taqwā i.e. being watchful of one's thoughts and actions and shunning every sin, is the noblest character trait. In this way, the 'content of character' is the true measure of worth and superiority recognised by Islām.

This criterion has been employed throughout Islamic history, resulting in people from different racial minorities holding high ranks and being remembered to this day with love and reverence and regarded as authorities. Who better to illustrate this than Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ, who was of a dark complexion and very beloved and close to Nabī ﷺ. Sayyidunā Bilāl ؓ, an ex-slave from Abyssinia, is fondly remembered by the Ummah as the mu'adhdhin of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. Sayyidunā 'Umar ؓ revered him so much that he used to say about him, 'Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ؓ is our master and

201 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: البرّ والصّلة والأداب chapter: ... تحريم ظلم المسلم وخذله. Ḥadīth: 2646

202 Musnad Aḥmad, chapter: أحاديث رجال من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم Ḥadīth: 23489

he freed our master (i.e. Sayyidunā Bilāl رضي الله عنه).’²⁰³

Sayyidunā Usāmah ibn Zayd رضي الله عنه was also loved very much by Nabī ﷺ, as was his father, Sayyidunā Zayd رضي الله عنه. Nabī ﷺ is reported to have said about Sayyidunā Usāmah رضي الله عنه and his father, ‘He (Sayyidunā Zayd رضي الله عنه) was amongst the most beloved people to me, and he (Sayyidunā Usāmah رضي الله عنه) is amongst the most beloved people to me after him.’²⁰⁴ His mother was Sayyidah Barakah رضي الله عنها,²⁰⁵ an Abyssinian, and he shared her dark complexion. He was given a position of great responsibility by being made a commander-in-chief over Muslim forces that contained eminent Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم like Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رضي الله عنه and Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه.²⁰⁶ This was an embodiment of the principles of racial equality taught by Nabī ﷺ.

There are many other examples that can be mentioned of people whose skin was of a dark complexion, yet the Muslims did not judge them by their colour, but by the content of their character.

America’s choice of a black president can be seen as a hopeful sign that racial discrimination is declining in the country, yet there is still a long way to go before Dr. King’s dream becomes a reality. The claims of the Land of the Free will continue being tested until the day comes when the creed and colour of the White House incumbent, whether white or black, Christian, Hindu, Jew, Sikh or Muslim, becomes a non-issue. Only when the standard set by Nabī ﷺ is reached, will we be able to say that racial equality has been achieved.

203 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: المناقب chapter: مناقب بلال بن رباح... Ḥadīth: 3742

204 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: المناقب chapter: مناقب بلال بن رباح... Ḥadīth: 3719

205 Mirqātul-Mafātīḥ, part 6, p.433

206 Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, kitāb: الفضائل chapter: ما جاء في أسامة وأبيه رضي الله عنهما Ḥadīth: 34480



45. The Promise of Success

When inviting people to Islām, Rasūlullāh ﷺ used to say:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ تَفْلِحُوا

O people! Say: ‘There is no deity but Allāh,’ you will attain success.²⁰⁷

This promise of success does not mean that a person will get all that he wants, here in this very world, when he accepts Islām and becomes a mu’min. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has not promised that; what he ﷺ has promised is that a person will ultimately attain success, a success after which there is no failure. One way success may manifest is in the Hereafter only and not in this world. Another manifestation is success in this very world followed by success in the Hereafter, though it will be after undergoing difficulties. This principle is the same whether we look at things from the perspective of the individual or from a collective perspective.

In fact, if we look carefully at the Qur’ān and the Aḥādīth, we find that those who accept Īmān will be put through tests and trials. Coming through those trials with patience and trust in Allāh ﷻ and His Decree is a sign of ultimate success. Therefore, during hardships and oppression, we should not become agitated and fearful. Allāh ﷻ says:

أَمْرٌ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمْ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ

207 Al-Mustadrak ‘alaṣ-Ṣaḥīḥayn, kitāb: الإيمان Ḥādīth: 39

أَمِنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصَرَ اللَّهُ ۖ لَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

Do you think that you will enter Paradise while you have not yet been faced (by difficult circumstances) the likes of what those who came before you faced? They were afflicted by hardship and suffering, and were so shaken that the Prophet, and those who believed with him, started saying: ‘When will the Help of Allāh come?’ (Then they were comforted by the Rasūl who said to them:) ‘Behold, the Help of Allāh is near.’ (2:214)

الْعَمَّ ۖ أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

Alif-Lām-Mīm. Do people think that they will be left (at ease) only on their saying, ‘We believe’ and not be put to test? Indeed, We did test those who came before them... (29:1-3)

Once, when asked by the Ṣaḥābah رضي الله عنهم to pray for an end to the hardships they were going through at the hands of the idolaters of Makkah Mukarramah, Rasūlullāh ﷺ reminded them saying,

قَدْ كَانَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ، يُؤْخَذُ الرَّجُلُ فَيُخْفَرُ لَهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ، فَيُجْعَلُ فِيهَا، فَيَجَاءُ بِالْمِنْشَارِ فَيُوضَعُ عَلَى رَأْسِهِ فَيُجْعَلُ نِصْفَيْنِ، وَيُمَشَّطُ بِأَمْشَاطِ الْحَدِيدِ، مَا دُونَ لَحْمِهِ وَعَظْمِهِ، فَمَا يَصُدُّهُ ذَلِكَ عَنْ دِينِهِ

Among those who came before you, a man would be seized and a pit dug for him. He would be placed in it, then a saw would be brought and put on his head, and he would be sawn into two halves. His flesh would be combed with iron combs and removed from his bones. Yet, none of that would make him leave his Dīn...²⁰⁸

Ḥikmah behind Hardship

There is much ḥikmah (wisdom) behind these trials. Allāh ﷻ says,

208 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإكراه chapter: القتل والهوان على الكفر Ḥadīth: 6949

إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِثْلُهُ ۖ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ ۚ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَلِيَمْحَصَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَخْرُجَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

If you have received a wound, they have received a similar wound. We bring around such days in turns among the people, so that Allāh may know those who believe, and so that He may pick some of you to be martyrs - and Allāh does not like the unjust - and so that Allāh may purify those who believe and eradicate the rejecters. (3:140-141)

From this verse we learn something of the Divine Wisdom behind afflictions, adversities and trials:

1. Through undergoing hardships patiently, the true believers are distinguished and known. The path of Īmān is a path of love; when someone declares the kalimah, he declares his love for Allāh ﷻ. The path of love is full of tests, through which the lover's claim is tested. For those who claim to be believers, trials and adversities have the effect of separating the wheat from the chaff and ascertaining those who are true in their claim of loving their Creator.
2. Through adversity, some people can attain the rank of shahādah. If trials and tribulations were never to come, how would anyone ever achieve the status of shahādah?
3. In return for undergoing hardships in this world, people are purified of their sins. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يُصِيبُهُ أَدَى شَوْكَةٍ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا إِلَّا كَفَّرَ اللَّهُ بِهَا سَيِّئَاتِهِ كَمَا تَحْطُ
الشَّجَرَةُ وَرَقَهَا

There is no Muslim who suffers a difficulty, be it the prick of a thorn or greater, except that due to it Allāh pardons his sins, just as a tree sheds its leaves.²⁰⁹

209 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: al-umṭl fāl-umṭl chapter: ṭm al-umṭl fāl-umṭl, Ḥadīth: 5647

4. Oppressors eventually bring destruction on themselves by their own hands. When people are oppressed by those who reject the truth, the Chastisement of Allāh ﷻ descends upon them.

Some other wisdoms are:

- Through times of hardship a person has the chance to exercise ṣabr (patience). The reward for ṣabr is such that Allah ﷻ will reward the patient ones personally. Through patiently bearing hardships, one's status in Jannah is elevated and his reward in the Hereafter is increased. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

يَوْمَ أَهْلُ الْعَافِيَةِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حِينَ يُعْطَى أَهْلُ الْبَلَاءِ الثَّوَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ جُلُودَهُمْ
كَانَتْ قُرِضَتْ فِي الدُّنْيَا بِالْمَقَارِضِ

On the Day of Qiyāmah, when the people who lived life in safety will see the reward given to the people who suffered hardships, they will wish their own skins had been cut up with scissors in the world.²¹⁰

- During times of hardship, people turn to Allāh ﷻ and develop a closer bond with Him and acquire His nearness.
- It is only during adversities that you can recognise who is a real friend and who is a hypocrite.

What You Can Do

When witnessing Muslims suffering at the hands of others, we should not become agitated or scared, nor should we despair. Ultimately, our belief is that Allāh ﷻ will grant success to the believers.

What we should have is concern, worry and sympathy for the afflicted, the demands of which are that we should do whatever we can to alleviate their suffering, while at all times remaining within the limits set by the Dīn. Practical steps include:

210 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الرِّهْدِ Ḥadīth: 2567

1. Tawbah and istighfār. This means that we should contemplate over our lives and realise that disobedience to our Creator is also a cause of trials and tribulations happening in the world. Therefore, we should sincerely beg Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness and repent, firmly resolving never to commit any sin ever again. The spiritual and material benefits of tawbah and istighfār are immense.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَنْ لَزِمَ الْإِسْتِغْفَارَ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنْ كُلِّ ضِيقٍ مَخْرَجًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ هَمٍّ فَرْجًا
وَرَزَقَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ

Whoever holds fast to istighfār, Allāh creates a way out for him from every difficulty and grants him relief from every worry and provides him sustenance from sources he cannot even imagine.²¹¹

2. Adopt taqwā. After doing tawbah, we should maintain a life free of sin, a life in which we are constantly mindful of the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and are careful never to commit any sins. The essence of taqwā is to avoid any disobedience to Allāh ﷻ. Like tawbah and istighfār, taqwā brings Divine Help, ease and rewards. Allāh ﷻ promises:

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ

Whoever fears (disobedience to) Allāh, He brings forth a way out for him. (65:2)

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ يُسْرًا ۖ

And whoever fears (disobedience to) Allāh, He brings about ease for him in his affair. (65:4)

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ

And whoever fears (disobedience to) Allāh, He will write off

211 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الإستغفار chapter: في الإستغفار Ḥadīth: 1511

his evil deeds, and will give him a huge reward. (65:5)

3. Du‘ā. Du‘ā is a weapon for a believer. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ الدُّعَاءَ يَنْفَعُ مِمَّا نَزَلَ وَمِمَّا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ فَعَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ بِالدُّعَاءِ

Du‘ā benefits (a person) with regards to what has already befallen, and with regards to what has not yet befallen. So hold fast, O servants of Allāh, to du‘ā.²¹²

لَا يَرُدُّ الْقَضَاءُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ

Nothing can ward off something that has been divinely decreed except du‘ā.²¹³

We should pray to Allāh ﷻ with complete conviction that He will accept our du‘ās. We should not only pray once or twice when a calamity befalls, but consistently over and over again, for as long as it is needed.

4. Give ṣadaqah. Rasūlullāh ﷺ is reported to have said:

بَاكِرُوا بِالصَّدَقَةِ فَإِنَّ الْبَلَاءَ لَا يَتَخَطَّاهَا

Hasten in giving ṣadaqah, for tribulations cannot get past ṣadaqah.²¹⁴

5. Staying within the confines of the law of the land and within the limits of the Dīn, we should do all we can to apply political pressure to bring an end to the suffering. Petitions, lobbying, demonstrations etc. are ways of doing this.
6. Make as much charitable donations as you can, in order to help the victims meet their basic needs.

May Allāh ﷻ grant relief to all those suffering throughout the world from any type of calamity and hardship, and grant us all the ability to assist them. Āmīn.

212 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الدَّعَوَاتِ Ḥadīth: 3844

213 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: القدر chapter: الدَّعَاءُ Ḥadīth: 2277

214 Al-Mu‘jamul-Awsat, Ḥadīth: 5643



46. The Destroyer of Pleasures

Our stay in this world is temporary and sooner or later we will have to return to our permanent abode in the Ākhirah. There can be no comparison between the life of this world and the life of the Ākhirah. The duration of our stay in this world, be it sixty or seventy years, is utterly insignificant and a drop in the ocean compared to our stay in the Ākhirah, even if a person were to be granted a long life and every conceivable pleasure in this world. Allāh ﷻ says:

فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

So, (remember that) the enjoyment of the worldly life is but trivial in (comparison with) the Hereafter. (9:38)

Allāh ﷻ also commands his Rasūl ﷺ:

قُلْ مَتَاعُ الدُّنْيَا قَلِيلٌ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۖ

...Say: 'The enjoyment of the world is but a little, and the Hereafter is better for those who have taqwā.' (4:77)

The Ākhirah will be far better, but only for those who will find enjoyment there i.e. those who adopt taqwā, who suppress their base desires and who abstain from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ in this world. As for those who will be thrown into the Fire of Jahannam for disobeying Allāh ﷻ, there will be no enjoyment for them and the worldly life will be better for them. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

الدُّنْيَا سِجْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِ وَجَنَّةُ الْكَافِرِ

The world is a prison for the believer and Paradise for the disbeliever.²¹⁵

215 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الزهد والرقائق Ḥadīth: 3076

One interpretation of this Ḥadīth is that even if a believer were to be given every pleasure and comfort in the world and be saved from even the slightest grief, when compared with what he will receive in the Ākhirah, it will be like having stayed in a prison, devoid of any luxury. And for a disbeliever, the severity to come in the Ākhirah will make his time in the world, no matter how unpleasant and full of grief it may have been, seem like having been in Paradise.²¹⁶

So the Ākhirah is better for those who:

1. Control their desires, and by doing so,
2. Adopt taqwā. It is only possible for someone to have taqwā if they are able to control their desires, for taqwā means to abstain from every sin, be it major or minor. After adopting taqwā a person is able to,
3. Prepare for the Ākhirah. And he who prepares for the Ākhirah, knowing that it is far better than the world, is in reality an intelligent person. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

الْكَيِّسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ

The clever one is he who subjugates his nafs and works for what is to come after death...²¹⁷

The Key Question

So suppressing the base desires is the key to success in the Ākhirah, but how can this task be made easy?

The answer is given by Rasūlullāh ﷺ in a Ḥadīth:

اَكْثِرُوا ذِكْرَ هَازِمِ اللَّذَاتِ يَعْزِي الْمَوْتَ

Remember frequently the destroyer of pleasures i.e. death.²¹⁸

216 Lam'ātut-Tanqīh, part 8, p.397

217 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صفة القيامة والرقائق والورع Ḥadīth: 2628

218 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: الزهد chapter: ما جاء في ذكر الموت Ḥadīth: 2462

Remembering death frequently is the way to control desires. When we think about our inevitable death, a certain fear is created in our hearts. When this happens we should not push that fear aside, for it is the very thing we need to enable us to crush our impermissible desires. It is a sign of intelligence and foresight to remember death often, as explained by Rasūlullāh ﷺ when asked who is the most intelligent and cautious person:

أَكْثَرُهُمْ ذِكْرًا لِلْمَوْتِ وَأَشَدَّهُمْ إِسْتِعْدَادًا لِلْمَوْتِ قَبْلَ نُزُولِ الْمَوْتِ، أَوْلَيْكَ
هُمُ الْأَكْيَاسُ، ذَهَبُوا بِشَرَفِ الدُّنْيَا وَكَرَامَةِ الْآخِرَةِ

Those who remember death most frequently and who prepare the most for death before it comes. They are the clever people. They have taken away with them the eminence of this world and the honour of the Hereafter.²¹⁹

Remembering Death

Each individual should take out some time daily to remember death, anything between five to fifteen minutes. If this is not possible due to negligence or a busy schedule then you should take out at least fifteen minutes per week to remember death. The easiest way to ensure punctuality is to fix a day and time, e.g. fifteen minutes every Friday before going to sleep.

Go into a secluded place where you will not be disturbed during the darkness of the night, and think about your departure from this world. Convince yourself that a day will come sooner or later when you will have to depart and it will be sooner rather than later. Try hard to convince yourself. Shayṭān and the nafs try hard to make us defer the inevitable in our minds, prompting us to think, ‘I’m still young; it’s my belief that death can come at any time, to the healthy or the sick, but in my case it will be after many years.’ We are subconsciously prevented from accepting that it can hap-

219 Al-Mu‘jamul-Awsat, Ḥadīth: 6488

pen to us, for if we did accept it, we would not commit sins. Only that person continues sinning who believes firmly that he is not going to die soon.

And because death can come suddenly, we need to ask ourselves whether we have made any preparations for that moment. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

يُعْتَلُ كُلُّ عَبْدٍ عَلَى مَا مَاتَ عَلَيْهِ

Every person will be resurrected in the state in which he died.²²⁰

Ask yourself, ‘What if I were to depart now? I am currently involved in many sins and still have to repent. What if death strikes at this very moment? Am I in a position to face Allāh ﷻ? What if the angel of death were to arrive while I am deriving pleasure through sins like gazing with lust at a non-maḥram or committing fornication? How will I face Allāh ﷻ?’

Then go into the world of imagination: you are on your death-bed and all that you have are your good and bad deeds. No one can save you, not even loved ones, relatives, friends or doctors. The time to depart is here and because of your sinful life, the angel of death has come with angels who will take you to Sijjīn, where the souls of the people of Jahannam are taken, not to ‘Illīyyīn, where the souls of the people of Jannah are taken.

Thereafter, imagine you are being washed and shrouded, taken to the grave and lowered into it. Ask yourself that when you are left in the darkness of the grave, will it become spacious or constricted? Will it become a garden from the gardens of Paradise or a pit from the pits of Jahannam? Will you have enough good deeds to save you from the snakes and scorpions of the grave? When you

220 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الأمر بحسن الظنّ بالله تعالى عند الموت chapter: وصفة الجنة ونعيمها وأهلها
Ḥadīth: 2984

are subjected to the questioning of the grave will you be able to answer correctly? Will the interrogating angels treat you kindly or harshly?

And how will your reckoning be on the Day of Qiyāmah? Will you be given your Book of Deeds in your right hand or your left hand? Will you have enough good deeds to enable you to cross the Bridge of Şirāṭ?

If you sit in the darkness of the night and ask yourself these questions, I assure you that you will repent there and then, for it is the promise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ that frequently remembering death helps suppress unlawful desires. And once you can suppress your desires, you can adopt taqwā and attain the everlasting success of the Ākhirah.



The Most-Bestowing



47. A Clear Proof

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿١﴾

Indeed, We have sent down the Dhikr (the Qur'ān), and indeed We are its Guardians. (15:9)

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ proclaims that it is He and He alone who has revealed the Glorious Qur'ān to mankind, which means it is His Word. This claim is followed by a proof to validate it, that Allāh ﷻ Himself is its Guardian and Protector. When Allāh ﷻ protects something, nothing and no one can ever interfere with it, so the continual preservation of the Qur'ān is a proof that it is the Word of Allāh ﷻ. There are many other proofs of the divine origin of the Qur'ān, including its i'jāz (inimitability) which makes it impossible for mankind to invent even a single verse to match the Qur'ān in its perfection. However, the preservation of the Qur'ān is a proof that even a child can understand.

1,430 years have gone by²²¹ and it is still plain for everyone to see that not a single change has occurred in the Qur'ān. To fulfil the promise of protecting the Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ has created a comprehensive system consisting of scribes who accurately copy the text; Huffāẓ who accurately memorise its words; Qurrā who preserve its correct pronunciation and mode of recitation; and Mufas-sirīn, Muḥaddithīn, Fuqahā and 'Ulamā who protect its meaning and message.


Non-Muslim experts also acknowledge that despite the passage of fourteen centuries, it has not undergone even the slightest alter-

221 This article was written in March 2009.

ation, not of a single letter or ḥarkat (diacritical mark).

It is obvious that a very powerful being must be safeguarding the Qur'ān for it to have been preserved over so many centuries.

The Protected Book

‘Allāmah Qurṭubī  narrates an interesting story about the preservation of the Qur'ān. Once a stranger attended one of the debates that the ‘Abbāsī Khalīfah, Ma'mūn Rashīd, used to hold at his court. The man spoke eloquently during the debate, and afterwards Ma'mūn summoned him. Sensing that he was not a Muslim he asked him whether he was a Jew. The man replied that he was. Ma'mūn then invited him to embrace Islām and, as a test, offered him incentives for doing so. However, the man preferred to keep his religion, the religion of his forefathers.

A year later, the same man attended the court of Ma'mūn as a Muslim and spoke learnedly on Islamic jurisprudence. Afterwards, Ma'mūn called him and asked him if he was the same man who had come the year before. He replied that he was, and upon being asked how he had become a Muslim he told his story:

‘After I had left the debate the previous year, I decided to examine the different religions. Being a good calligrapher I made three copies of the Tawrāt, making some additions and omissions in the process. I took the copies to the Jews and they bought them from me. I then made three copies of the Injīl, again making some additions and omissions, and took them to the Christians, who bought them. Then I did exactly the same with the Qur'ān and took the copies to the Muslims. They checked them and when they noticed the additions and omissions, they discarded the copies and refused to buy them. I realised then that this was a protected book, and that was how I came to embrace Islām.’²²²

222 Al-Jāmi' li Ahkāmīl-Qur'ān, part 10, pp.5-6

Enthusiasm for Memorising the Qur'ān

The preservation of the Qur'ān is a great miracle and the means Allāh ﷻ employs are also amazing. Parents who encourage their children to memorise the whole Qur'ān are aware of the rewards they and their children will receive for doing so, but the children themselves are not. If you were to ask the students of a typical ḥifẓ class what the rewards for memorising the Qur'ān are, the majority would not be able to reply. Despite this, the desire Allāh ﷻ places in their hearts to memorise the Qur'ān is such that very few, if any, would dream of giving it up.

Wherever you go, you will see that there are never enough ḥifẓ classes and that they are always oversubscribed. Just think: what power is there that is keeping our children committed to memorising the Qur'ān? There are countless other well-known good deeds that promise great rewards, yet people do not adhere to them with such commitment and dedication as to memorising the Qur'ān. Allāh ﷻ Himself puts the love of memorising His Word into the hearts of young people.

Nowhere in the whole world will you see classes full of children memorising a book that they do not understand. It is a miracle of the Qur'ān that people are able to learn a whole foreign alphabet and how to read in a foreign language without also learning to understand the language, and then to memorise a whole book in that language, and then to keep it in their memories for the rest of their lives.

Remarkable Ḥuffāẓ

Throughout history there are examples of people who memorised the Qur'ān at a very young age and also in a very short time. Ibn Labbān ﷻ memorised the whole Qur'ān in just one year, remarkable in itself, but even more amazing is that he completed his

memorisation at the age of five!²²³ Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar Al-‘Asqalānī رحمہ اللہ became a Ḥāfiẓ by the age of nine and at the age of twelve led the tarāwīḥ ṣalāh in Al-Masjidul-Ḥarām.²²⁴ Ibn Shihāb Az-Zuhrī رحمہ اللہ memorised the whole Qur’ān in eighty days.²²⁵ When Imām Muḥammad رحمہ اللہ went to study under Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمہ اللہ, he was asked whether he had memorised the whole Qur’ān or not, for admission to his classes was conditional on being a Ḥāfiẓ. He replied that he had not, but his desire to acquire knowledge was so great that he returned after just one week and told Imām Abū Ḥanīfah رحمہ اللہ that he was now a Ḥāfiẓ!²²⁶

Connect Yourself to the Qur’ān

After learning something of the miraculous nature of the Glorious Qur’ān, we need to take some practical steps to connect ourselves with it:

1. Connect yourself to the Qur’ān by reciting it regularly. Recite one juz daily, or if that is not possible then half a juz or a quarter, but recite daily. If the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ in its various forms such as tasbīḥ, taḥmīd, ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī, du‘ā etc. are compared to individual ‘vitamins’ that are beneficial to a person’s spiritual health, the Qur’ān can be likened to a multi-vitamin, for it contains them all.
2. Attend tajwīd classes in your locality in order to learn how to recite the Qur’ān properly, as it is one of the rights of the Qur’ān.
3. Attend the durūs (lessons) of the Qur’ān delivered by the ‘Ulamā in your locality in order to understand the message of the Qur’ān.

223 Al-Ḥiyal fil-Fiqh, p.36

224 An-Nukat ‘alā kitāb Ibnīṣ-Ṣalāḥ, p.36

225 Tadhkiratul-Ḥuffāz, part 1, p.137

226 Bulūghul-Amānī fī Sīratil-Īmām Muḥammad ibnīl-Ḥasan Ash-Shaybānī رحمہ اللہ, p.605

4. Practise upon the teachings of the Qur'ān.
5. Spread the beautiful message of the Qur'ān.
6. Respect the people of the Qur'ān, i.e. the Ḥuffāz, Qurrā and 'Ulamā. Refrain from disrespecting them and talking ill of them at all costs. Sayyidunā Abū Dardā رضي الله عنه has said:

أَطْلُبُوا الْعِلْمَ فَإِنْ عَجَزْتُمْ فَأَحِبُّوا أَهْلَهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تُحِبُّوهُمْ فَلَا تُبْغِضُوهُمْ

Search for 'ilm. If you are unable to, then have love for the people of 'ilm. And if you cannot have love for them, then (at the very least) do not entertain hatred for them.²²⁷

May Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَبِحَمْدِهِ grant us love for the Qur'ān, an affinity with it and the ability to memorise it, recite it in the proper manner, understand it and act according to it. Āmīn.



The Most-Providing

227 Şifatus-Şafwah, part 1, p.240



48. Ta‘līm and Tarbiyah

Children are a Blessing

Being gifted with children is a great blessing from Allāh ﷻ. For any blessing we receive we need to do shukr, i.e. be grateful to Allāh ﷻ. True shukr requires the following:

1. Realise the blessing is the result of the Grace of Allāh ﷻ and that it has come to you without your being deserving of it.
2. Acknowledge gratitude in your heart and mind and express it verbally as well.
3. Use the blessing in the way Allāh ﷻ wants you to and observe the rules and limits He has set for it.

As with all blessings, Allāh ﷻ has set rules and limits regarding the blessing of children too, e.g. when to be lenient, when to reprimand, what to teach them, what to keep them away from etc. Following these rules when dealing with children is called ta‘līm and tarbiyah.

Giving children correct ta‘līm and tarbiyah is a major responsibility of parents. If they fail to make proper arrangements for the ta‘līm of their children and do not give them proper tarbiyah, they will face severe questioning on the Day of Reckoning. Failure to provide children with ta‘līm and tarbiyah is in fact failure to do shukr for the blessing of children.

Sending children to madrasah from the age of four or five to the age of thirteen or fourteen and completely handing over the responsibility of ta‘līm and tarbiyah to their teachers is not suffi-

cient or satisfactory. Even after enrolling children in a madrasah, parents need to be aware of how they are learning and how their conduct and character is forming.

How Much Ta‘līm?

Every child needs to be educated to the extent that he/she becomes aware of all the questions of ḥalāl and ḥarām that are likely to confront an average person in his/her life. Every child should know what is farḍ and wājib and what is optional, and the difference between makrūh taḥrīmī, which entails sin, and makrūh tanzīhī, which does not.

In addition to this, every child needs to understand that when confronted with any situation in life that he/she has no knowledge about, a qualified ‘Ālim or Muftī needs to be consulted. The masā’il relating to business are an example; they are not taught as standard, for every child will not need them, but when a child grows up to become a businessman, he must acknowledge the need to consult a Muftī at every step, in order to learn the masā’il of business.

Where to Obtain ‘Ilm

إِنَّ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ دِينٌ فَانْظُرُوا عَمَّنْ تَأْخُذُونَ دِينَكُمْ

Truly this ‘ilm is Dīn, so be careful from whom you take your Dīn.²²⁸

In today’s age in particular, when both authentic and inauthentic ‘ilm is widespread, correct ta‘līm is essential. People nowadays resort to the internet if they want to know something and Google provides them with information on the masā’il they are looking for, without any check on authenticity. Part of ta‘līm is to teach children the correct avenues for acquiring ‘ilm.

228 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, chapter: فِي أَنَّ الْإِسْلَامَ مِنَ الدِّينِ

In Islām, great importance is given to the chains of teachers and students that go back to the fountainhead of ‘ilm, Rasūlullāh ﷺ. When the source of ‘ilm is authentic, the ‘ilm taken from that source will also be authentic. Therefore, the source of ‘ilm should be someone linked to a chain of authentic teachers and who is regarded as authentic by the contemporary reliable ‘Ulamā.

Tarbiyah

Tarbiyah means training your children’s hearts and minds in such a way that they live their lives according to the ta‘līm they receive. It is not enough, for example, just to teach them that alcohol is ḥarām; it is also necessary to nurture within them love for Allāh ﷻ and His Commands and fear of His Displeasure and Jahannam, so that a genuine desire not to displease Allāh ﷻ and fear of the consequences of their actions are what drive them to abstain from alcohol. Without this sort of tarbiyah, youngsters will know that alcohol, drugs, zinā, theft etc. are ḥarām yet still indulge in them. So ta‘līm and tarbiyah are two distinct things.

Take the example of ṣalāh. A child of seven receives the ta‘līm that ṣalāh, five times a day, is farḍ, and his father also takes him to the masjid for ṣalāh regularly. However, when the child reaches his teens, he stops going for ṣalāh. The father complains that his child used to be so good and has suddenly turned bad, whereas it is the failure of the father to do tarbiyah of his child’s heart and mind about ṣalāh, which is the real cause of the child abandoning ṣalāh, after reaching the age of independence.

The Power of Tarbiyah

Tarbiyah should result in children never acting contrary to the ‘ilm they learn, no matter what the circumstances. They should have this message firmly ingrained in their minds that Allāh ﷻ is the One Who controls benefit and harm, and to obey Him is to please

Him and to disobey Him is to displease Him. And seeing as He controls benefit and harm, it is not possible for someone to lose out by pleasing Him, whatever the circumstances, even though the intellect may argue differently.

An episode from the life of Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qādir Jīlānī ؒ sufficiently illustrates this point. His mother carried out his tarbiyah properly and one of the points she stressed to him was to always tell the truth and never lie. She then sent him away to study ‘ilm, cleverly sewing some money into his clothing so that it would not be stolen on the journey. Whilst travelling, he ran into some bandits, and when they asked if he had anything valuable he told them he had money and also where it was hidden. When the leader of the bandits asked him why he had admitted to having money, he simply said that his mother had taught him to always tell the truth, for it pleases Allāh ﷻ.

Shayṭān always tricks people by telling them of all the potential harms of telling the truth and the potential benefits of lying, but the tarbiyah of the mother of Shaykh ‘Abdul-Qādir Jīlānī ؒ made him realise that benefit can only come from obeying and pleasing Allāh ﷻ. The bandits were greatly moved by this. They repented and returned everything they had stolen.²²⁹

Some Advice on Tarbiyah

In order to do tarbiyah properly, parents should show love to their children, be their friends, give them rewards for good behaviour and sit and talk with them. They should read stories of our pious predecessors to them and also take them into the company of the ‘Ulamā and Mashāyikh.

If a child makes a mistake, parents should not ignore tarbiyah and just suffice with a reprimand. Today’s mistakes, if left un-

229 Mir’ātul-Asrār, pp.563-64

attended, will grow and grow. If, for example, a child tells a lie, then the parents should understand that the sickness of lying is in the child's heart and will not be removed by just shouting or getting angry with the child. Concerned parents should refer to the experts, the Mashāyikh, for a solution. If the sickness is not cured through tarbiyah then the child will go on lying, only in ways that his parents will not detect.

Finally, it should be understood that being harsh and overly strict with children is not tarbiyah. Love is what is needed. If children are treated with love 90% of the time, then on the rare occasions parents do get angry for some reason, the child will feel ashamed rather than resentful.

May Allāh ﷻ grant all parents the ability to be truly grateful for the great blessing they have been given in the form of children. And may He also grant them the ability to fulfil the requirements of shukr by ensuring that ta'lim and tarbiyah are properly carried out. Āmīn.



The Opener



49. Spending to Succeed

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

مَا نَقَصَتْ صَدَقَةٌ مِنْ مَالٍ

Ṣadaqah does not decrease wealth.²³⁰

We learn from this Ḥadīth that no one will ever suffer financial loss due to spending in the Path of Allāh ﷻ. This principle is absolute. Financial experts and economists may not agree, but the words of Rasūlullāh ﷺ can never be wrong. The intellect says that spending, whether in worldly matters or for ṣadaqah, decreases one's wealth. It calculates that someone with £1,000 who spends £100 on helping an orphan or widow, or on building a masjid, will be left with £900, so spending decreases wealth. However, we believe in the statement of Rasūlullāh ﷺ that ṣadaqah does not decrease wealth. The thought that it does, comes from Shayṭān, and is in direct contradiction to the teachings of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Shayṭān's Promise

This ploy of Shayṭān has been described in the Qur'ān:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ

Shayṭān threatens you with poverty, and commands you to indecency... (2:268)

When dealing with people who are not particularly religious, Shayṭān scares them with the threat of poverty and tries to persuade them not to spend in the Path of Allāh ﷻ at all. The ap-

230 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: إstimābāb al-ʿafw wal-tawāḍiʿ chapter: البِرّ والصّلة والأدب Ḥadīth: 2671

proach he takes with religious people is to persuade them to spend only what is obligatory, arguing that anything beyond that would lead to poverty. He asserts that zakāh, which is farḍ, is already a drain on resources, so giving voluntary ṣadaqah on top of zakāh will only incur a further decrease in wealth. Furthermore, he reminds them of their other religious financial obligations, like spending on their families etc. in an attempt to discourage them from spending voluntarily in the Path of Allāh ﷻ.

Shayṭān will exert his energies to stop a person spending a mere £5 towards the construction of a maṣjid, scaring him with thoughts of poverty, yet he will allow the same individual to happily squander £50 in the marketplace, as he has no interest in preventing him from doing so. He stops believers spending in ways that bring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, and encourages them to indulge in extravagance and wastefulness, as it brings the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ.

It is therefore essential that we do muḥāsabah (self-assessment) at every step, in case our approach to spending is actually lowering our value in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ; this will curb our spiritual and religious progress and please Shayṭān.

The Promise of Allāh ﷻ

وَاللّٰهُ يَعِدُّكُمْ مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

...And Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and tremendous bounty; and Allāh is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.
(2:268)

While Shayṭān promises only poverty, Allāh ﷻ promises forgiveness and tremendous bounty, both of which are blessings that secure success in this world and the Hereafter. As a result of forgiveness, Allāh ﷻ will grant immense barakah in rain, crops, wealth and children in this world and will also grant bounties in

the Hereafter. ‘Tremendous bounty’ refers to both the everlasting bliss in the Hereafter and increase in wealth in this world.

The Return on Ṣadaqah

In fact, Allāh ﷻ has appointed an angel who supplicates day and night:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْطِ مُنْفِقًا خَلَفًا

O Allāh! Bestow a (good) return on the spender.²³¹

The manner in which Allāh ﷻ, through His Wisdom, gives this return can take either one of two forms:

1. Allāh ﷻ rewards the giver with an actual increase in wealth, either straight away or after some time.²³²
2. By giving ṣadaqah, Allāh ﷻ protects the giver’s remaining wealth from future loss, which is a return in itself.²³³ For example, a person was going to suffer a loss of £1,000, but by giving £200 ṣadaqah he is protected from that loss. He has, in effect, been given £800.

Become a Skilful Spender

Moreover, Allāh ﷻ will also reward the person in the Hereafter and will multiply his reward according to the same principles mentioned above, i.e. if a person spends £1, Allāh ﷻ will reward him for spending at least £10 and thereafter more, according to the level of sincerity and sacrifice.

Allāh ﷻ uses a beautiful example to illustrate how He multiplies the reward for spending in His Path:

مَثَلُ الَّذِي يَنْفِقُونَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ اَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِّائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللّٰهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَّشَاءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾

231 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الزَّكَاةُ chapter: قول الله تعالى فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَى وَاتَّقَى... Ḥadīth: 1453

232 Ma‘ālimut-Tanzīl, part 3, p.683

233 Faḥṣul-Mun‘im, part 4, p.359

The example of those who spend in the Way of Allāh is just like a grain that produced seven ears, each ear having a hundred grains; and Allāh multiplies (the reward further) for whom He wills. Allāh is All-Embracing, All-Knowing. (2:261)

Allāh ﷻ compares the reward of spending in His Path to planting a single grain, which produces a plant bearing seven hundred grains. Allāh ﷻ repays a person who spends with sincerity in His Path and patiently bears any difficulties involved, by giving a reward in the Hereafter equal to having spent seven hundred times the amount that was spent. Furthermore, at a time of His Choosing, He rewards the giver with seven hundred times the original amount in this very world. And that is not all; Allāh ﷻ gives even more when He wills.

The use of a similitude by Allāh ﷻ in this verse, instead of just saying that He will give a seven-hundred-fold reward, provides us with a number of important lessons related to spending in the Path of Allāh ﷻ:

1. A seed will only germinate and grow if the ground it is sown in is fertile. Similarly, ṣadaqah will only bring reward and an increase in wealth if it is spent on a proper and deserving cause;
2. The seed must not be rotten but must be healthy and sound. Similarly, the wealth given in ṣadaqah must not be ḥarām, but must have been acquired by ḥalāl means; and
3. The person sowing the seed must be an expert in farming. He must know how to plough the ground, how deep to sow the seed, how to water it etc. Similarly, the person giving ṣadaqah must have expertise in the masā'il related to spending.²³⁴

So ṣadaqah will only produce a seven-hundred-fold harvest when the 'ground' and the 'seeds' are sound and the giver is a com-

234 Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān, part 3, p.303

petent ‘farmer’. And it is only then that ṣadaqah will be a true investment for the future.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to spend in His Path and earn the vast rewards He has promised in both worlds. Āmīn.



سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ

Pure is my Rabb (from all imperfections),
the Magnificent.



50. The Mirror of a Believer

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Invite (people) to the way of your Rabb with wisdom and good counsel... (16:125)

This is the order of Allāh ﷻ to every believer. Rasūlullāh ﷺ spent his entire life calling towards the Path of Allāh ﷻ with the concern that every single human being should be saved from the Fire of Jahannam and granted entry into Jannah. Out of this concern, he continuously instructed and taught people to do good and refrain from sins.

As followers of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, we also need to adopt this concern for our Muslim brothers and sisters and our fellow human beings. We should ask ourselves: ‘How can I help others to follow the straight path, reach Allāh ﷻ, acquire entry into Jannah and secure refuge from the Fire of Jahannam?’

Be a Mirror

Rasūlullāh ﷺ has said:

الْمُؤْمِنُ مِرْآةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

A believer is a mirror for (another) believer.²³⁵

When you stand in front of a mirror, it shows your physical appearance. It reveals what is good about the way you look as well as any defects you may have. In this Ḥadīth, Rasūlullāh ﷺ instructs every believer to be like a mirror for other believers. A number of

235 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الأدب chapter: التَّصْبِيحَةِ وَالْحَيَاةِ Ḥadīth: 4837

important points can be derived from this Ḥadīth:

1. If you witness another believer behaving incorrectly, you should inform him, for you are a mirror for him and a mirror points out the defects of the one who stands in front of it. However, a mirror reveals the faults silently, without bringing disgrace; you should do the same too.²³⁶
2. A mirror does not only reveal physical defects but also physical beauty. Similarly, when advising a fellow believer, you should highlight his mistake in the overall context of his good attributes, an approach that is more palatable to the one being advised and less likely to cause resentment.²³⁷ Take the example of someone who performs sajdah in a manner contrary to the sunnah: inform him of his mistake after commending him on the correctness of the rest of his ṣalāh.
3. Just as you are a mirror for other believers, every other believer is also a mirror for you. So every Muslim is simultaneously a mirror and a person standing in front of a mirror: an advisor and one who is advised.²³⁸
4. If a mirror reveals a defect in your appearance you may be upset, but you will not feel resentment or anger towards the mirror. Similarly, when another Muslim adopts the role of a mirror and advises you of something you are doing wrong, you should not get offended.²³⁹ Why should we take offence when someone points out a shortcoming in us which, if left unattended, would make us unsuccessful at the time of death, in the grave and on the Day of Qiyāmah? Instead, we should be happy. In fact, it is only those who have love and concern for us that will go to the trouble of informing us of our shortcomings.


236 Sharḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd, part 18, pp.677-78

237 Ibid.

238 Fathul-Wadūd, part 4, p.361

239 Mazāhir-e-Ḥaqq, part 4, p.552

The Dīn commands us to point out the mistakes of a fellow brother in a polite manner, tactfully, with wisdom and concern. However, even if someone were to point out a fault impolitely, we should still not take offence and still be happy that he helped to save us from harm in the Hereafter. If we were walking along a path and about to fall into a hole and someone shouted in an impolite manner for us to stop, we would still thank him and be grateful and indebted to him for saving us, despite his manner.

Qārī Ṣiddīq Bandwī  was a great scholar and a very pious saint. He treated me with much love and affection. I had the privilege of accompanying him during his one and only visit to the UK, in the latter days of his life. During a talk in Walsall he said, ‘Assume you have two doors to your house, one at the front and one at the back, and you only ever use the front door. One day, your neighbour is in his garden and notices a huge crack in the back wall of your house. He then knocks on your door and tells you about the structural damage to your house, and advises you to tend to it without delay. Will you feel happy he told you or unhappy? Will you feel indebted to him or not?’ We all answered that we would be happy and indebted to him. The Shaykh continued, ‘If someone sees a structural problem in our spiritual and religious ‘building’, and says for example, that backbiting is ḥarām and thus will bring our spiritual structure down, why do we feel offended?’

Concern for One’s Rectification

Our Mashāyikh have mentioned that while being concerned for the spiritual wellbeing of others, we should always be concerned about our own rectification too. A person who is particular about his appearance will often be seen standing before a mirror. Those who are concerned about their spiritual rectification and wish to purify themselves from any religious mistakes, will also be seen ‘standing before the mirror’ by asking their friends to point out

any shortcomings and highlight where they see room for rectification. The fact is, at times we cannot see our own faults and it takes someone else to point them out to us.

Sayyidunā ‘Umar Fārūq ؓ had great concern for his self-rectification, despite his eminent status and despite having been given glad tidings of Jannah by Rasūlullāh ﷺ on numerous occasions. A question he once asked Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ibnul-Yamān ؓ reflects this concern. Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ؓ was known as Ṣāḥibu Sirri Rasūlillāh ﷺ, i.e. one in whom Rasūlullāh ﷺ confided certain information that no one else knew. One such piece of information was the names of those among the apparent Muslims who were actually hypocrites. Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ, concerned about his own standing in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ, once asked whether his own name was among the list of hypocrites, upon which Sayyidunā Ḥudhayfah ؓ assured him that it was not.²⁴⁰

Four Ways to One’s Rectification

Our Mashāyikh have explained that there are four ways through which a person’s rectification can be attained:

1. The best way is to find a pious Shaykh, hand yourself over to him and give him full liberty to carry out your spiritual rectification in the way he sees fit. Normally, complete rectification is not possible without the guidance of a Shaykh. However, until you find a Shaykh, adopt one of the following three methods:
2. When you see someone doing something wrong, reflect immediately on your own life and question yourself whether you are free of that shortcoming or not.
3. Keep your ears open to what your adversaries say about you. It is part of life that people have adversaries, those who dislike us and talk about us. You should reflect on the faults they perceive

240 Tārīkh Dimishq, part 12, p.276

in you. If those faults truly exist, they should be rectified.

4. Tell your friends to act as mirrors and notify you of any faults they see in you.

These latter three methods are also beneficial for those who have a Shaykh.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfiq to strive for our rectification. Āmīn.



Pure is my Rabb (from all imperfections),
the Most High.



51. ‘Ilm is the Key

The sole purpose of our creation is to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. The bridge that leads to the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ is ‘ibādah (worship). It is for this reason that Allāh ﷻ says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

I have created the jinns and the humans solely for My ‘ibādah.
(51:56)

What is ‘Ibādah?

‘Ibādah is the combination of Īmān (belief) and al-‘amaluṣ-ṣāliḥ (good deeds).

What is Īmān?

Īmān is to accept and believe from the depth of one’s heart, without the slightest doubt, in everything that was conveyed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ, whether the intellect can comprehend it or not. Once it is established that a particular matter was conveyed to Rasūlullāh ﷺ from Allāh ﷻ, then it is necessary to believe in it without a shadow of doubt.

What is Al-‘Amaluṣ-Ṣāliḥ?

Al-‘Amaluṣ-Ṣāliḥ is to fulfil the Commands of Allāh ﷻ according to the way shown by His Beloved Nabī ﷺ. In the Qur’ān, Allāh ﷻ commends those who have Īmān and perform good deeds:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾

Indeed, those (people) who accept Īmān and perform good

deeds, for them are gardens of Paradise beneath which rivers flow. That is the great success. (85:11)

Understanding Īmān and Al-‘Amaluṣ-Ṣālih

Now we need to ask ourselves a very important question: how do we learn and understand what Īmān and good deeds are?

The answer is: through authentic ‘ilm (sacred knowledge).

Without correct ‘ilm one cannot acquire correct ‘aqidah (belief) and without correct ‘ilm one cannot follow the whole Dīn in the correct way. It is for this reason, Allāh ﷻ and His Rasūl ﷺ have laid much emphasis on the acquisition of ‘ilm and we find a vast treasure of Aḥādīth that mention the virtues of ‘ilm and those who acquire it.

إِنَّ الْعُلَمَاءَ وَرَثَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

Indeed, those with ‘ilm are the inheritors of the Ambiyā.²⁴¹

Why does a Nabī come into this world? He does so to guide people towards the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. And what is the responsibility of the ‘Ulamā? It is to guide the Ummah towards the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ. People cannot acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ without ‘ibādah, which is not possible without Īmān and good deeds, which in turn are not possible without ‘ilm. Therefore, the ‘Ulamā inherit the mission of the Ambiyā ﷺ; they acquire ‘ilm and then pass it on to the people, who can then perfect their Īmān and a‘māl (deeds) in order to do the ‘ibādah of Allāh ﷻ, thereby acquiring His Pleasure and Jannah.

مَنْ خَرَجَ فِي طَلَبِ الْعِلْمِ فَهُوَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ

One who goes out in quest of ‘ilm is in the Path of Allāh until he returns.²⁴²

241 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: العلم chapter: ما جاء في فضل الفقه على العبادة Ḥadīth: 2874

242 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: العلم chapter: فضل طلب العلم Ḥadīth: 2837

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

Allāh makes the path to Jannah easy for one who undertakes a journey for the acquisition of ‘ilm.²⁴³

The Fundamental Sources of ‘Ilm

The primary source of ‘ilm is the Glorious Qur’ān and the primary commentary of the Qur’ān is the Aḥādīth of Rasūlullāh ﷺ. These are the two fundamental sources of ‘ilm. That is why Rasūlullāh ﷺ has greatly emphasised the greatness of the Qur’ān:

الْقُرْآنُ أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ

The Qur’ān is more beloved to Allāh than the heavens, the earth and what they contain.²⁴⁴

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ

The best among you is he who learns the Qur’ān and teaches it.²⁴⁵

يُقَالُ - يَعْنِي لِصَاحِبِ الْقُرْآنِ - اقْرَأْ وَارْتَقِ وَرَتِّلْ كَمَا كُنْتَ تُرْتِّلُ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّ مَنْزِلَكَ عِنْدَ آخِرِ آيَةٍ تَقْرَأُ بِهَا

It will be said to a person who possesses ‘ilm of the Qur’ān, ‘Recite and ascend (the steps of Jannah) and read slowly (with tajwīd) as you used to recite in the world, for where you finish reciting will be your abode.’²⁴⁶

Only Authentic ‘Ilm

The Fuqahā have studied, analysed and derived Dīnī rulings from these fundamental sources and we now have a vast treasure of ‘ilm to benefit from, that guides us at every step of our lives. However,

243 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الذِّكْرُ وَالِدُّعَاءُ وَالتَّوْبَةُ وَالِاسْتِغْفَارُ chapter: فضل الاجتماع على تلاوة القرآن... Ḥadīth: 2797

244 Sunanud-Dārimī, kitāb: فضائل القرآن chapter: فضل كلام الله على سائر الكلام Ḥadīth: 3401

245 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: فضائل القرآن chapter: خيركم من تعلم القرآن وعلمه Ḥadīth: 5014

246 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: فضائل القرآن Ḥadīth: 3136

what is absolutely essential is that the ‘ilm one acquires is from authentic sources. Only correct and authentic ‘ilm is of benefit. It is a common practice nowadays to search for Islamic knowledge on the internet and accept whatever material is presented, even if it does not give the name of the author, or it is authored by someone whose background and integrity is unknown. This is an incorrect approach, for it is vital to know the credentials and authenticity of the source of your ‘ilm.

Be Careful Who You Take Your Dīn From

The source of ‘ilm should be someone linked to a chain of authentic teachers and who is regarded as authentic by the contemporary ‘Ulamā. This chain of teachers and students going back to the fountainhead of ‘ilm, Rasūlullāh ﷺ, is essential in Islām as a way of preserving the authenticity of ‘ilm as it is passed from one generation to the next.

The Places of ‘Ilm Are Forts

It is important to realise that the places where ‘ilm, the key to Paradise, is taught are great blessings. They are the forts in which authentic ‘ilm, and therefore Dīn, is safeguarded. They are critical for the propagation of Dīn, for Dīn can only be successfully propagated if it has been safeguarded first. Without sound ‘ilm, ‘aqīdah will not be sound, and whatever is propagated in the name of Dīn will be tainted and false. ‘Ilm will exist for as long as the madāris exist, and as long as ‘ilm exists Dīn will remain.

Everything Depends on ‘Ilm

One of the signs of Qiyāmah is the extinction of ‘ilm. Allāh ﷻ will take away ‘ilm by taking away the people of ‘ilm i.e. the ‘Ulamā. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ إِنْ تَزَاعَا يَتَزَعَا مِنْ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنْ يَقْبِضُ الْعِلْمَ بِقَبْضِ الْعُلَمَاءِ

Indeed, Allāh will not take away ‘ilm just like that, by taking it away from the hearts of the people; He will take away ‘ilm by taking away the ‘Ulamā...²⁴⁷

Allāh ﷻ will take away ‘Ulamā, and ‘ilm will remain no more. When that happens, the ma‘rifah (recognition) of Allāh ﷻ will become extinct, because the ma‘rifah of Allāh ﷻ can only come about through ‘ilm. And when ma‘rifah will become extinct, there will not be a single person to remember Allāh ﷻ; and when that happens this world will come to an end. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said:

لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى لَا يُقَالَ فِي الْأَرْضِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ

The Hour will not come as long as ‘Allāh, Allāh’ is uttered on the surface of the earth.²⁴⁸

So in actual fact, the madāris and ‘Ulamā are a blessing for everyone in the whole world, be they Muslim or otherwise.

Value the People and Places of ‘Ilm

Therefore, the places and people of ‘ilm should be cherished and respected. We must not fall prey to the misconceptions that are held regarding them and must not speak ill of them. Speaking ill of the madāris or the ‘Ulamā is in effect a direct attack on the Dīn of Allāh ﷻ, for they protect it. We should pay heed to the advice Sayyidunā Abū Dardā ؓ:

أَطِيبُوا الْعِلْمَ فَإِنْ عَجَزْتُمْ فَأَحِبُّوا أَهْلَهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تُحِبُّوهُمْ فَلَا تُبْغِضُوهُمْ

Search for ‘ilm. If you are unable to, then have love for the people of ‘ilm. And if you cannot have love for them, then (at the very least) do not entertain hatred for them.²⁴⁹

So our purpose in life is to acquire the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ, for

247 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: كيف يقبض العلم chapter: 102

248 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: ذهاب الإيمان آخر الزمان chapter: 137

249 Ṣifatus-Ṣafwah, part 1, p.240


which ‘ibādah is necessary; this in turn depends on Īmān and good deeds, both of which require authentic ‘ilm, which is taught and safeguarded by the madāris and ‘Ulamā.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us a proper understanding of the true objective of life and the way to attain it. Āmīn.



إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا
إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Indeed, we belong to Allāh and indeed,
to Him we will return.





52. Appreciating the Importance of Janāzah

Picture the scene: a ship is sinking, rapidly succumbing to the waves while people scramble desperately for lifeboats... Or picture a house that is aflame, a chaos of smoke, fire and heat, with people running for the fire exits. In both cases, the fleeing people have no time to take anything with them except the one item that is most valuable to them.

One person makes a grab for his wallet, ignoring his other possessions, reasoning that money can buy him more; another ignores money and valuables and takes his laptop with him, as it contains the fruits of years of effort which the wealth of the whole world cannot replace; another takes nothing but a letter from a loved one that is of immense sentimental value. Each cares for what he believes to be most important and looks with amazement at the choices the others make.

In our day to day lives, we also adopt the same sort of attitude: we make decisions based on what we personally feel is important, regardless of what the really important things may be, often to the amazement of others.

Understanding How to Behave at a Janāzah

Take the example of the janāzah of a fellow Muslim. Before and after the janāzah ṣalāh, while lifting the janāzah and during and after the burial, the most important thing for all concerned should be that the deceased successfully passes the questioning in the grave and attains salvation in the Hereafter. Unfortunately, due to being far from Dīn and negligent of what is to come in the Hereafter,

very few people have this concern.

Instead, we see people standing around chatting before and after the janāzah ṣalāh, and even during the burial. And straight after the du‘ā, which they treat as a mere formality, they head straight home. Others feel that the janāzah is a convenient time to do ta‘ziyah, and start offering their condolences in public at the graveside. As for those associated to the deceased, although they busy themselves in the burial, they only give importance to things like shaping the grave, placing a plant on it, sprinkling water over it or making announcements for food! They do not realise that the deceased deserves our attention and concern and that we should be busy praying to Allāh ﷻ to help him/her at this critical time.

The Advice of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and His Companions

Rasūlullāh ﷺ would advise his Companions to pray for the deceased after a burial and remain by the graveside for a while. He is reported to have said:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا لِأَخِيكُمْ، وَسَلُّوا لَهُ بِالتَّائِبَاتِ، فَإِنَّهُ الْآنَ يُسْأَلُ

Pray for the forgiveness of your brother and that he be granted steadfastness, for at this moment he is being questioned.²⁵⁰

When Sayyidunā ‘Amr ibnul-‘Āṣ was nearing death he instructed his son:

فَإِذَا أَنَا مُتُّ فَلَا تَصْحَبْنِي نَائِحَةٌ، وَلَا نَارٌ، فَإِذَا دَفَنْتُمُونِي فَشُتُّوا عَلَيَّ التُّرَابَ شُنًّا، ثُمَّ أَقِيمُوا حَوْلَ قَبْرِي قَدْرَ مَا تَنْحَرُ جَزُورٌ وَيُقَسَّمُ لَحْمُهَا، حَتَّى أَسْتَأْنِسَ بِكُمْ، وَأَنْظُرَ مَاذَا أَرَاغِعُ بِهِ رُسُلَ رَبِّي

When I die, no wailing woman or fire should accompany me, and when you bury me pour the soil over me then stand around my grave for the time it takes to slaughter a camel and

250 Sunan Abī Dāwūd, kitāb: الجنائز chapter: وقت الإنصراف في الاستغفار عند القبر للميت في الإصراف Ḥadīth: 3206

distribute its meat, so that I may take solace from you and know what to reply to the messengers (angels) of my Rabb.²⁵¹

Changing Prevalent Attitudes

We need to change these negative trends related to the janāzah by adopting the following practices:

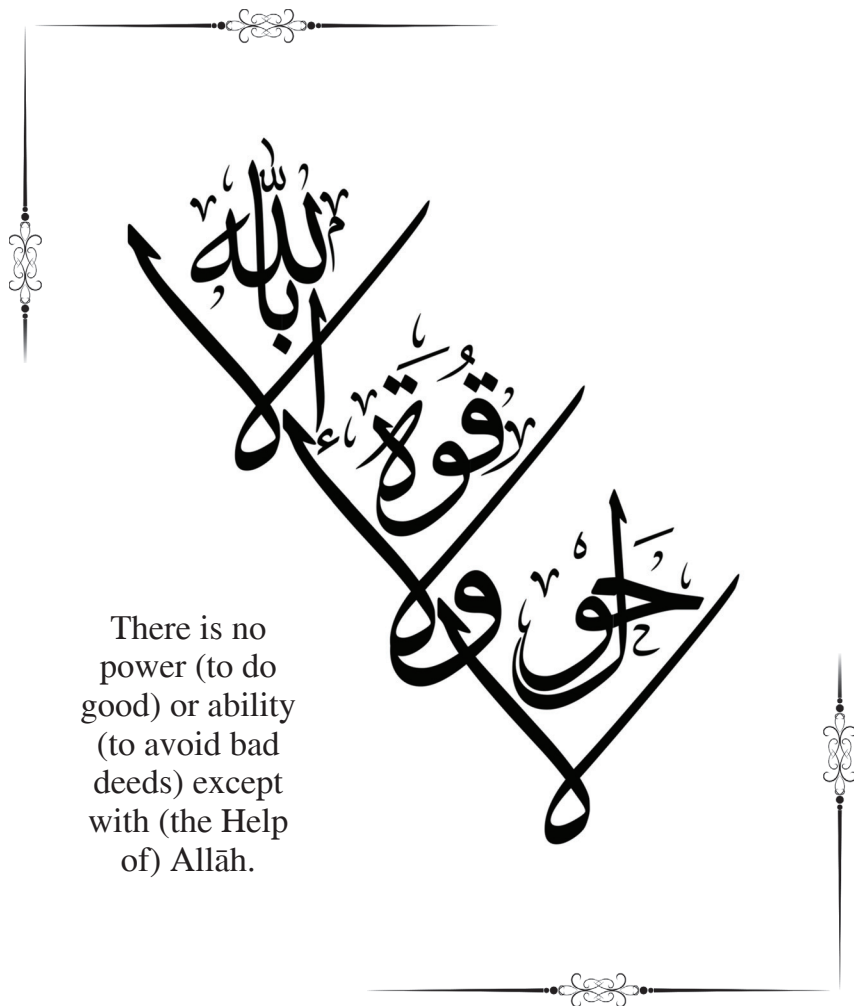
1. When you hear of a death, recite the masnūn du‘ā and pray for the deceased that may Allāh ﷻ make the journey ahead easy.
2. Free up some time, and sitting on your own at home or in the masjid, engage in some ‘ibādah e.g. tilāwah, dhikr, optional ṣalāh, and send its reward to the deceased.
3. Give some ṣadaqah and send its reward to the deceased.
4. During the day and night, whenever you remember the deceased, make du‘ā for him/her.
5. When going to the graveyard for ṣalātul-janāzah, recite the kalimah ṭayyibah, ṣalāt ‘alan-Nabī, tasbīḥ, Sūrah Yā Sīn or any portion of the Qur’ān and send its reward to the deceased.
6. While at the graveyard, remain in a state of concern for the deceased with dhikr and du‘ā.
7. After the burial, make a heartfelt du‘ā for the deceased.
8. Thereafter, engage yourself in dhikr, istighfār, tilāwah and du‘ā at the graveside.

There is a great need for us to bring our understanding of the janāzah in line with the Dīnī understanding. If we are successful in this and we change our present culture, everyone will benefit, including ourselves when our own time comes to depart from this world. If we do not change our ways, each of us can understand for ourselves the loss we will suffer.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the tawfīq to truly understand the de-

251 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: وكذا الهجرة والحج Ḥadīth: 113

mands of the situations we find ourselves in daily, and may He make us from those who give importance to the things that are truly important. Āmīn.



There is no
power (to do
good) or ability
(to avoid bad
deeds) except
with (the Help
of) Allāh.



53. Five Terms, One Meaning

After belief, it is required from a believer that he totally submits himself to his Creator.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً

O believers, enter into Islām completely... (2:208)

This practical submission, after accepting Īmān, is known as Islām. It is to carry out whatever Allāh ﷻ has commanded and to refrain from whatever He has prohibited. For example, if a situation arises in which one can cast a lustful glance, then to refrain from it is Islām. And similarly, at the time of Fajr ṣalāh, to get up and fulfil the obligation of ṣalāh is also Islām. In simple words, to refrain from all things that would lead to the Displeasure of Allāh ﷻ will be called Islām.

Another term for the same concept is istiḳāmah. A companion of Rasūlullāh ﷺ once asked him, ‘Grant me such advice regarding Islām that I will not have to ask anybody else regarding it other than you.’ Nabī ﷺ said,

قُلْ آمَنْتُ بِاللَّهِ فَاسْتَقِمْ

Say, ‘I believe in Allāh,’ and thereafter adopt istiḳāmah.²⁵²

The meaning of this statement is that after accepting faith in Allāh ﷻ, His Messengers ﷺ, the other tenets of faith and all that was conveyed by Nabī ﷺ, the believer must adopt istiḳāmah.

Literally, istiḳāmah means to be firm and steadfast. In the Dīn it

252 Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: جامع أوصاف الإسلام Ḥadīth: 30

means to remain firm and fulfil every Command of Allāh ﷻ. After accepting the Authority and Sovereignty of Allāh ﷻ, to spend every second under that authority is istiqāmah; to look at, eat, touch, consume, wear and do only that which He permits. This results in spending every moment under the Authority of the One Who is the sole Authority, never disobeying Him even in the slightest. A part of istiqāmah, and therefore Islām, is also to repent immediately when, out of human weakness and despite trying to abstain, one sins. Nabī ﷺ has said:

كُلُّ ابْنِ آدَمَ خَطَّاءٌ وَخَيْرُ الْخَطَّائِينَ التَّوَّابُونَ

Every human is prone to sin; the best from those who sin are those who repent.²⁵³

Another term for this same mind-set is taqwā, for just as Islām and istiqāmah are to refrain from all disobediences to Allāh ﷻ, so is taqwā. ‘Allāmah Sayyid Maḥmūd Ālūsī Baghdādī ﷺ quotes a couplet which defines taqwā:

خَلَّ الذُّنُوبَ كَبِيرَهَا وَصَغِيرَهَا ذَاكَ الثَّقَى
وَاصْنَعْ كَمَا شِ فَوْقَ أَرْ ضِ الشَّوْكِ يَحْذَرُ مَا يَرَى
لَا تَحْقِرَنَّ صَغِيرَةً إِنَّ الْجِبَالَ مِنْ الْخَصَى

*Abstain from all sins, major and minor, that is taqwā;
And behave like the one walking on a thorny path making
sure he remains safe from the thorns that he observes;
Never underestimate a minor sin, because mountains form
from the accumulation of small pebbles.*²⁵⁴

Yet another name for the same concept is kamālul-Īmān (perfection of Īmān). Belief alone means a person has attained nafsul-Īmān (belief), and then by staying away from all disobediences and fulfilling all the commands, a person attains perfection in

253 Sunanut-Tirmidhī, kitāb: صفة القيامة والرقائق والورع Ḥadīth: 2667

254 Rūḥul-Ma‘ānī, part 1, p.111

his Īmān. This is why we see that there are many Aḥādīth of Nabī ﷺ in which he negates the Īmān of perpetrators of certain actions, meaning that they have not yet reached the stage of perfection in their Īmān due to certain acts of disobedience in their lives:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ أَكُونَ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ وَالِدِهِ وَوَلَدِهِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

None of you can be a (perfect) believer until I become more beloved to him than his father, children and all (other) people.²⁵⁵

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

None of you can be a (perfect) believer until he desires for his brother what he desires for himself.²⁵⁶

The term al-‘amaluṣ-ṣāliḥ also portrays the same concept. When a person shuns those actions that Allāh ﷻ has forbidden and does what Allāh ﷻ has ordained, he will be considered to be carrying out al-‘amaluṣ-ṣāliḥ.

In essence, all five terms refer to the mind-set that the Creator should not be disobeyed in any way whatsoever. The acquisition of this mind-set and thereafter, practice will ensure safety and ease in this world, at the time of death, in the grave, on the Day of Qiyāmah and on the Bridge of Ṣirāṭ, and will inevitably see us to Jannah.

In this world, Allāh ﷻ will grant blessings in abundance, as He mentions regarding those who adopt taqwā:

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Had the people of the towns believed and adopted taqwā, We would have opened for them blessings from the heavens and the earth... (7:96)

255 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: حب الرسول من الإيمان Ḥadīth: 15

256 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: الإيمان chapter: ما يحب لأخيه ما يحب لنفسه Ḥadīth: 13

وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ ۚ

Whoever fears (disobedience to) Allāh, He brings forth a way out for him, and provides him (with what he needs) from where he does not even imagine. (65:2-3)

As mentioned earlier, repenting to Allāh ﷻ is also part of taqwā. And Allāh ﷻ says regarding those who repent:

اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ۖ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا ۖ وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا ۚ

Seek forgiveness from your Rabb; indeed He is Most-For-giving. And He will cause the heavens to rain upon you in abundance, and will help you with riches and sons, and make orchards and rivers for you. (71:10-12)

And at the time of death:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا لَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ۖ

Surely, those who declared, ‘Our Rabb is Allāh,’ then remained steadfast, on them the angels will descend (at the time of death), saying, ‘Do not fear, and do not grieve; and be happy with the good news of the Jannah that you had been promised.’ (41:30)

In the grave, the Help of Allāh ﷻ will be there during the questioning by the angels:

يُنَبِّئُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ

Allāh keeps those who believe (and carry out good deeds) firm with the stable word (kalimah ṭayyibah) in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. (14:27)

And on the Day of Qiyāmah and also on the Bridge of Şirāt, where it will be pitch dark, Allāh ﷻ will create light for such people; a light which only they will be able to benefit from:

يَوْمَ لَا يُخْزِي اللَّهُ النَّبِيَّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ نُورُهُمْ يَسْعَىٰ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ

...on the Day when Allāh will not disgrace the Nabī and those who believed (and carried out good deeds) with him. Their light will run ahead of them, and on their right (on the Bridge of Ṣirāt)... (66:8)

And ultimately Allāh ﷻ will grant them eternal success:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them there are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the big achievement. (85:11)

These are the rewards for Islām, istiḳāmah, kamālul-Īmān, al-‘amaluṣ-ṣāliḥ and taqwā.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

Surely, those who declared, ‘Our Rabb is Allāh,’ then remained steadfast, they will have no fear, nor shall they grieve. Those are the people of Paradise, who will live there forever as a reward for that good which they used to do. (46:13-14)

Nabī ﷺ has said:

أَسْلِمَ تَسْلَمَ

Adopt Islām (total submission), you will be granted safety (from disgrace in both worlds).²⁵⁷

The season of ḥajj reminds us of the great Prophet of Allāh ﷺ, Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ؑ, and his sacrifices. One of the great qualities which became instrumental in his success was his quality of Islām i.e. total submission.

257 Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī, kitāb: كيف كان بدء الوحي إلى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم chapter: بدء الوحي
Ḥadīth: 7

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

When his Rabb commanded him, ‘Submit,’ he said, ‘I submit to the Rabb of all the worlds.’ (2:131)

May Allāh ﷻ grant us all the ability to adopt Islām, total submission to Allāh ﷻ, and benefit from what Allāh ﷻ has promised in return. Āmīn.



I have placed my trust in Allāh.



54. How to Invite Towards Islām

Nowadays, Islām is the topic of discussion in many circles. As Muslims, we need to take advantage of this and engage in inviting people towards the correct understanding of our beautiful religion. Allāh ﷻ says:

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالنُّوعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ

Invite (people) to the way of your Rabb with wisdom and good counsel... (16:125)

However, when engaging in discussions, we should not discuss and debate the injunctions of Dīn, e.g. ḥijāb, jihād, ṣalāh, zakāh, ḥajj etc., but always focus on the core beliefs.

The most fundamental belief is tawḥīd, i.e. the Existence, Oneness and Sovereignty of Allāh ﷻ. Once a person accepts the concept of tawḥīd, the next step is to focus on explaining the concept of risālah i.e. the prophethood of Rasūlullāh ﷺ or the concept of Kitābullāh i.e. establishing the authenticity of the Glorious Qur’ān. It should be understood that acceptance of the authenticity of risālah necessitates the acceptance of Kitābullāh: if the concept of risālah is accepted then so must the belief in the Glorious Qur’ān, as it was conveyed to us by Nabī ﷺ. Similarly, if the authenticity of the Qur’ān is accepted then so too must be the prophethood of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, as it is proved through the Glorious Qur’ān.

Once a person recognises, acknowledges and believes in the Sovereignty of Allāh ﷻ and the risālah of His Final Messenger ﷺ and that the Qur’ān is the infallible Word of Allāh ﷻ, unchanged throughout the ages, then logic demands that he/she also believe

in the remaining tenets of Islām. Once an authority is accepted, every command issued by that authority must also be accepted.

As far as the Commands of Allāh ﷻ are concerned, they are of two types: al-amr ma'qūlul-ma'nā (commands that can be understood by our intelligence) and al-amrut-ta'abbudī (commands that are carried out in subservience to Allāh ﷻ without being understood).

Discussing commands belonging to the first category may initially prove beneficial, e.g. to speak about ṣawm (fasting) and all its benefits, but the conversation may lead on to commands of the second category, which are not comprehensible by our limited intelligence. Questions may arise such as: why is it necessary to fast for thirty days and not only fifteen days? Why do we need to wash only certain parts of the body during ablution and not the whole body? Why do we need to pray five times a day? Why is there only one rukū' whilst the sujūd are two? Why is zakāh only 2.5% and not 5%? Such questioning can go on and on.

It must be understood that all religions of the world, at some point or another, demand from their followers that they believe in their tenets blindly, because that is what faith involves. Therefore, this requirement of Islām should not be viewed negatively, but as a test of one's willingness to believe in Allāh ﷻ unconditionally. One way Islām differs from other religions is that they do not invite challenges to their core beliefs in the same manner. The fundamentals of Islām are open to question as long as they are accompanied with a sincere resolve to seek the truth. Once this truth has been established, once this realisation has taken place and once these authorities are accepted, then there is no room for further discussion. One can challenge the fundamentals of the faith but not the commands, otherwise what is the point of believing? Such feeble belief would lack any value.



55. At the Year's End

Having just completed 1430 years since the memorable hijrah of Nabi ﷺ from Makkah Mukarramah to Madīnah Munawwarah, and with the completion of the year 2009, many references are being made to the 'New Year'. However, the question arises as to what a Muslim's take should be on these events.

Upon the passing of a year, the common trend is to celebrate, e.g. birthdays, wedding anniversaries etc. However, in certain spheres this is not the case. Take the example of a businessman who, at the end of the financial year, takes stock of the past year. He goes through the records of the past year meticulously, accounting for every single penny. He checks to see if he made a profit, and if so, then considers how he can make more in the coming year. He checks his expenses and whether he can make any further savings. He does all this so that he can make the coming year more profitable than the one that has just passed.

This should be the case at the end of the year in every Muslim's life, for we too have been sent to this world as businessmen with the commodity of time, also known as life. We will one day have to account for every second of our lives in the Court of Allāh ﷻ, when our Book of Deeds will be presented to us.

وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ اقْرَأْ كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ
الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا ﴿١٤﴾

We will bring forth a book for him that he will find wide open (and We will say to him): 'Read your book. Sufficient are you today to take your own account.' (17:13-14)

Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه, emphasising the same point, says:

حَاسِبُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُحَاسِبُوا، وَزِنُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُوزَنُوا وَتَأْهَبُوا
لِلْعَرْضِ الْأَكْبَرِ

Take account of yourselves (in this world) before you are reckoned (in the Hereafter by the Creator). And weigh your deeds before they are weighed. And prepare for the Great Summoning.²⁵⁸

It is our belief that on the Day of Judgement Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَبِحَمْدِهِ will reckon us for everything that we did in the world.

يَوْمَ تَحِذُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا ۖ وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ
أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا ۖ

On the day when every person will be confronted with whatever good he had done and whatever evil he had done, he will wish that there was a great distance between him and that (day)... (3:30)

No matter how minute or trivial our deeds may be, we will find them present in our Book of Deeds.

مَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ۖ

So, whoever does an atom’s weight of good will see it; and whoever does an atom’s weight of evil will see it. (99:7-8)

The reckoning will be so precise that people will say:

يُؤْتِنَا مَا لِي هَذَا انكِتَابٍ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا ۚ وَ
وَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا ۚ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا ۚ

‘Woe to us! What a book is this? It has missed nothing, minor or major, but has taken it into account.’ Thus, they will find whatever they did present before them, and your Rabb will not wrong anyone. (18:49)

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We need to keep this reality in mind and reflect regularly on our actions through the means of murāqabah and muḥāsabah. Murāqabah means to supervise and oversee oneself to ensure that one stays away from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ and spends every moment seeking His Pleasure. Muḥāsabah means taking account of one's activities at the end of the day, week and year, thanking Allāh ﷻ for being granted the ability to perform good actions and seeking forgiveness for any sins one may have committed. Inshā'allāh, by adhering to this approach we will see a great change in our lives. We will find ourselves being very careful how we spend every second of our lives.

The end of a year is a time to reflect and say to ourselves: 'Another year from my precious life has passed. Who knows how many more years, if any, I have remaining?' Let us spend them in those avenues that bring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and stay away from those things that bring His Displeasure, so that we can meet Allāh ﷻ in a state that He is pleased with us.



The All-Knowing

Glossary

‘Abbāsī Khalīfah	A Caliph during the period of the ‘Ab-bāsī Caliphate
Abū Dāwūd	Refers to a well-known book of Ḥadīth compiled by Imām Abū Dāwūd ؓ
ādāb (sg. adab)	Etiquettes
Ādam ؑ	The first human being and a Prophet of Allāh ؑ
adhān	Call to prayer
AH	‘After Hijrah’ (migration), this is used to indicate the year according to the Islamic calendar
Aḥādīth (sg. Ḥadīth)	Refer to Ḥadīth
A’immah (sg. Imām)	Refer to Imām
Ākhirah	The realm of the Hereafter
al-‘amaluṣ-ṣāliḥ	Good deed
Al-Bukhārī (Ṣaḥīḥul-Bukhārī)	The most authentic book of Aḥādīth, compiled by Imām Bukhārī ؓ. Also regarded as the most authentic book in Islām after the Glorious Qur’ān
Al-Ḥadīthul-Qudsī	A prophetic narration in which Nabī ؑ attributes the narration to Allāh ؑ
al-ḥajjul-mabrūr	An annual pilgrimage which has been performed with all its due rights and accepted by Allāh ؑ
alḥamdulillāh	‘All Praise is for Allāh’

‘Ālim (pl. ‘Ulamā)	Islamic scholar
‘Allāmah	A title for a scholar, signifying great learnedness
Al-Masjidul-Aqṣā	Masjid in Jerusalem which is the third most sacred Masjid in Islām
Al-Masjidul-Ḥarām	‘The Sacred Masjid’ in Makkah Mukarramah in which the Ka‘bah is situated
Ambiyā (sg. Nabī)	Prophets
āmīn	‘Amen’, An expression uttered at the end of a supplication. It is a supplication in itself meaning ‘O Allāh! Accept.’
Amīrul-Mu‘minīn	Leader of the believers
An-Nasa’ī	Refers to a well-known book of Ḥadīth compiled by Imām Nasa’ī <small>رحمہ اللہ</small>
‘aqīdah (pl. ‘aqā’id)	Belief, a tenet of faith
‘Arafah	An area neighbouring Makkah Mukarramah where those performing the annual pilgrimage must go on the 9th of Dhul-Ḥijjah
‘Aṣr	Compulsory late afternoon prayer
At-Tirmidhī	Refers to a well-known book of Ḥadīth compiled by Imām Tirmidhī <small>رحمہ اللہ</small>
Āyatul-Kursī	The title of the verse in the Qur’ān in Chapter 2, verse 255
bāligh	A person who has reached puberty
barakah (pl. barakāt)	Blessing
Baytul-Maqdis	Another name for Al-Masjidul-Aqṣā
bid‘ah	An innovative practice or belief which has no basis in Islām
Book of Deeds	The book in which every deed is recorded. Every individual will receive their Book of Deeds on the Day of Judgement

Bridge of Şirāt	The bridge that goes over Hell which is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword. One must cross it to enter Paradise
Byzantine	Also known as the Eastern Roman Empire which split from the Western Roman Empire in 285 AD. It lasted until 1453 when it was taken over by the Ottoman Empire
Constantinople	Modern day Istanbul
dāruḥ-‘ulūm	A full time Islamic educational institute which teaches the sciences of Islām at an advanced level
da‘wah	Invitation, calling towards Allāh ﷻ
dhikr/dhikrullāh	Remembrance of Allāh ﷻ
Dhul-Ḥijjah	The twelfth and final month of the Islamic calendar
Dhul-Ḥulayfah	An area located close to Madīnah Munawwarah. This is one of the boundaries beyond which those intending to visit Makkah Mukarramah are not permitted to cross without being in the state of iḥrām
Dīn	Religion, used specifically to refer to Islām
Dīni	Religious
du‘ā	Supplication
Fajr	Compulsory early morning prayer
farḍ (pl. farā’iḍ)	Compulsory act
Fuqahā’ (sg. Faqīh)	Islamic jurists
Ḥadīth (pl. Aḥādīth)	Saying, action, affirmation, physical or moral quality of Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Ḥāfiẓ (pl. Ḥuffāẓ)	One who has memorised the whole Qur’ān
ḥafīzahullāh	A supplication which translates to

	‘May Allāh protect him’
ḥājī (pl. ḥujjāj)	One who is performing the annual pilgrimage
ḥajj	Annual pilgrimage
ḥalāl	Lawful, permitted
Ḥaram, Ḥaram Sharīf	Sacred or sanctuary, refers to the sacred precinct of Makkah Mukarramah or Madīnah Munawwarah
ḥarām	Forbidden, impermissible
Ḥaramayn	The two sacred precincts at Makkah Mukarramah and Madīnah Munawwarah
Ḥawwā	Eve, the wife of the Prophet Ādam ﷺ
ḥifẓ	Memorising the Glorious Qur’ān
ḥijāb	The act of a woman concealing her physical appearance in order to preserve her modesty
hijrah	Migration, specifically referring to the historic migration of Rasūlullāh ﷺ from Makkah Mukarramah to Madīnah Munawwarah
‘ibādah	Worship, obedience, servitude
Iblīs	The name of Shayṭān
Ibn Mājah	Refers to a well-known book of Ḥadīth compiled by Imām Ibn Mājah رحمه الله
Ibnul-Khaṭṭāb	‘Son of Al-Khaṭṭāb’, the agnomen given to Sayyidunā ‘Umar رضي الله عنه
Ibrāhīm ﷺ	The Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him)
‘Īd	Day of celebration which takes place twice in a year; the first; ‘Īdul-Fiṭr, upon the conclusion of the month of Ramaḍān and the second; ‘Īdul-Aḍḥā, on 10th Dhul-Ḥijjah

IDA	Islāmic Da‘wah Academy
iḥrām	A state that one must come into when intending to perform ‘umrah or ḥajj
‘Illiyīn	The place where the souls of the believers will be gathered
‘ilm	Knowledge, specifically used to refer to sacred knowledge of Islām
Imām (pl. A’immah)	Leader, title for a leading authority in Islāmic knowledge, or one who leads the congregational prayer. A leader of the Muslims is also titled Imām
Īmān	Belief in Allāh ﷻ and all the articles of faith
Injīl	The Bible
inshā’ allāh	‘If Allāh wills’
‘Īsā ﷺ	The Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him)
iṣāluth-thawāb	The act of performing a good deed and passing its reward to someone else
‘Ishā	Compulsory night prayer
iṣlāḥ	Spiritual rectification
Ismā‘īl ﷺ	The Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him), son of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him)
istighfār	Seeking forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ
istiqāmah	Steadfastness upon the commands of Allāh ﷻ
i‘tikāf	To remain in the boundary of the masjid for any period of time with the intention of doing so
Jahannam	Hell
Jamarāt	The pillars/walls which signify the three places where Shayṭān appeared to dissuade Ibrāhīm ﷺ from slaugh-

	tering Ismā‘īl ﷺ. They are pelted on the 3rd, 4th and 5th day of the annual pilgrimage
janāzah ṣalāh	Prayer offered for the deceased
janāzah	A term for the body of the deceased or the funeral itself
Jannah, Jannatul-Firdaws	Paradise
Jibra’īl ﷺ	The archangel Gabriel (peace be upon him)
jihād	Refer to mujāhadah
juz’	Portion, specifically one of the thirty parts of the Qur’ān
Ka‘bah	The House of Allāh ﷻ situated in Makkah
kalimah	Refer to kalimah ṭayyibah
kalimah shahādah	The specific statement through which one testifies belief in Allāh ﷻ as the only deity and in Muḥammad ﷺ being the Servant and Messenger of Allāh ﷻ
kalimah ṭayyibah	The specific statement through which one expresses belief in Allāh ﷻ as the only Deity and in Muḥammad ﷺ being His Messenger. This is the first tenet of Islām. Sometimes referred to as the ‘kalimah’ alone
kamālul-īmān	Perfection of faith
khādim	Servant or assistant
khaṭīb	One who gives lectures and sermons. Normally used to refer to one who delivers the Friday sermon
Khaybar	An oasis situated in the north-western region of Saudi Arabia, approximately 150 kilometres north of Madīnah Munawwarah

Khulafā'	'Caliphs', specifically referring to the caliphs who were chosen to lead the Muslim Ummah after the demise of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, i.e. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ؓ, Sayyidunā 'Umar ؓ, Sayyidunā 'Uthmān ؓ and Sayyidunā 'Alī ؓ
Kitābullāh	Book of Allāh ﷻ, i.e. the Qur'ān
Last Day	Refer to Qiyāmah
Laylatul-Barā'ah	'Night of emancipation', the night preceding 15th Sha'bān
Laylatul-Jumu'ah	Night preceding the day of Friday
Laylatul-Qadr	'Night of power', the night which is better than 1,000 months
Madīnah Munawwarah	A city in Saudi Arabia where Rasūlullāh ﷺ migrated to from Makkah Mukarramah and where the second most important masjid in Islām is situated
madrasah (pl. madāris)	An institute where the knowledge of Islām is taught, usually from a foundational to intermediary level
Maghrib	Compulsory post-sunset prayer
maḥram	A person whom one is not permitted to marry in Islām due to certain reasons, such as a blood relation
Majālisul-Abrār	A book compiled by Shaykh Aḥmad ibn 'Abdīl-Qādir Ar-Rūmī ؒ
Makkah Mukarramah	A city in Saudi Arabia wherein the Ka'bah is situated and the birthplace of Rasūlullāh ﷺ
makrūh	A disliked action
makrūh taḥrīmī	A disliked action which is prohibited
makrūh tanzīhī	A disliked action which one should refrain from

mas'alah (pl. masā'il)	Question or issue, often used to refer to questions regarding the commands of Islām
māshā'allāh	'What Allāh willed', a supplication which is uttered upon learning of something pleasing
Mashāyikh (sg. Shaykh)	refer to Shaykh
masjid (pl. masājid)	Mosque
Masjid Namirah	Masjid situated in 'Arafah, most commonly known for where the Ṣuhr and 'Aṣr prayer is offered on the second day of the annual pilgrimage
Masjid Nabawī	Masjid in Madīnah Munawwarah which is the second most sacred Masjid in Islām
Mawlānā	'Our leader', title given to Islamic scholars in the Indian subcontinent
Minā	An area of Makkah Mukarramah where those performing ḥajj will spend the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th days
mu'adhdhin	One who makes the call to prayer
Mufasssirrīn (sg. Mufasssir)	Quranic commentators or exegetes
Muftī	Islamic jurist
Muḥaddithīn (sg. Muḥaddith)	Specialist scholars of Ḥadīth
Muḥarram	First month of the Islamic calendar
mujāhadah	Striving for the cause of Dīn
mukhliṣīn (sg. mukhliṣ)	Those who are sincere in their intention, solely to please Allāh ﷻ
mu'min	Believer
Mount Uḥud	Mountain in Madīnah Munawwarah, close to where one of the most important battles during the time of Rasūlullāh ﷺ took place

Mūsā ﷺ	The Prophet Moses (peace be upon him)
Muslim (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)	The second most authentic book of Aḥādīth, compiled by Imām Muslim ﷺ
Mutakallimīn (sg. Mutakallim)	Specialist scholars of Islamic beliefs
muttaqīn (sg. muttaqī)	Those who adopt the quality of staying away from disobedience to Allāh ﷻ
Muzdalifah	An area of Makkah Mukarramah where those performing ḥajj will go after completing their stay in ‘Arafah
Nabī (pl. Ambiyā)	Prophet, also used to refer to Muḥammad ﷺ
nafl	Optional
nafs	Base desires
Najd	A province in the central region of Saudi Arabia, where the capital city Riyadh is located
nikāḥ	Marriage ceremony
niṣāb	The minimum wealth threshold which one must possess for zakāh to become obligatory
non-maḥram	That person whom one is permitted to marry
Nūḥ ﷺ	The Prophet Noah (peace be upon him)
nūr	Radiance, light
Ottoman	The great empire which ruled over Central Asia, Western Asia and Eastern Europe from the period 1299CE to 1923CE
qaḍā ṣalah	A compulsory prayer offered after its stipulated time
qaḍā ṣawm	A compulsory fast offered after its stipulated time

qiblah	The direction of the Ka‘bah which one faces during prayer
Qiyāmah	The Day of Judgement
Quraysh	The tribe which Rasūlullāh ﷺ belonged to
qurbānī	refer to uḍḥiyah
Qurra (sg. Qārī)	Experts in Quranic recitation
Rabb	The Cherisher and the Sustainer of the whole creation, Allāh ﷻ
Rajab	The seventh month of the Islamic calendar
Ramaḍān	The ninth month of the Islamic calendar
raka‘āt	Units of prayer, prayers consist of 2, 3 or 4 units
risālah	Prophethood
Rasūl (pl. Rusul)	A Prophet of Allāh sent with a divine book or scripture
Rasūlullāh	‘Messenger of Allāh’, a title used to refer to Muḥammad ﷺ
Rawḍah	Garden, a special area in Masjid Nabawī located between the house of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and his pulpit. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said regarding this area that it is a garden from the gardens of paradise
rūḥ	Soul
rukū‘	The bowing posture during prayer
Rusul (sg. Rasūl)	Refer to Rasūl
ṣāliḥīn (sg. ṣāliḥ)	Pious people
ṣadaqah	Charity
ṣadaqah jāriyah	A type of charity that brings perpetual reward for the one who carries it out, even after death

Şahābah (sg. Şahābi)	‘Companions’, those who came into the company of Rasūlullāh ﷺ as Muslims and passed away as Muslims
sajdah	The prostration posture during prayer
ṣalāh	Prayer
ṣalāt ‘alan-nabī	Sending salutations upon Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Ṣawm	Fasting, to abstain from food, drink and marital relations between dawn and sunset with the intention of fasting
sayyidah	‘Most-respected’, a title of honour given to a female
sayyidunā	‘Our most-respected’, a title of honour given to a male
Sha‘bān	The eighth month of the Islamic calendar
shahādah	Testimony (of faith), martyrdom
shahwah	Carnal desire
shayāṭīn	Helpers of Shayṭān
Shaykh (pl. Mashāyikh)	Spiritual mentor
Shaykhul-Ḥadīth	A title given to an expert of Ḥadīth who teaches Şaḥīḥul-Bukhārī
Shayṭān	Devil
Shu‘ayb ؑ	The Prophet Jethro (peace be upon him)
shuhadā’ (sg. shahīd)	Martyrs
shukr	Gratitude
ṣiddīqīn (sg. ṣiddīq)	A term used to refer to people who have attained the highest rank after the Prophets (peace be upon them)
Sīrah	The biography of Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Straight Path	The path that leads to the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ
ṣūfiyā (sg. ṣūfī)	Those individuals who have achieved excellence in the field of spirituality

suḥūr	A pre-dawn meal before fasting
sujūd (sg. sajdah)	Prostrations
Sunnah	The way of Rasūlullāh ﷺ
Sūrah	A chapter of the Qur'ān. There are 114 sūrahs in total of varying lengths in the Qur'ān
Sūrah Yā Sīn	The 36th chapter of the Qur'ān. This chapter is commonly referred to as the heart of the Qur'ān
Sūratul-Qalam	The 68th chapter of the Qur'ān
Tābi'ī (pl. Tābi'in)	Follower, one who came into the company of the Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنهم as a Muslim and passed away as a Muslim
Tablīgh Jamā'ah	A da'wah movement focused on reviving the practice of Islām amongst Muslims
tafsīr	Commentary of the Qur'ān
tahajjud	The voluntary night prayer
taḥmīd	Praising Allāh ﷻ
tajwīd	The science of correct recitation of the Qur'ān
talbiyah	A certain supplication recited when in the state of iḥrām
ta'līm	To teach, usually refers to teaching Islām
taqwā	Piety, the quality of staying away from every disobedience to Allāh ﷻ
taqdīr	Fate, what has been decreed by Allāh ﷻ
tarāwīḥ	A prayer performed after 'Ishā only during the month of Ramaḍān
tarbiyah	Moral and spiritual nurturing, especially of children
tasbīḥ	Glorifying Allāh ﷻ

ṭawāf	Circumambulation of the Ka‘bah
tawbah	Repentance
tawfīq	Divinely granted ability
tawhīd	Proclamation of the Oneness of Allāh ﷻ
Tawrāt	The Torah
ta‘ziyah	Consoling the bereaved
tilāwah	Recitation of the Glorious Qur’ān
Truce of Ḥudaybiyyah	A peace treaty that was agreed between the Muslims and the polytheists of Makkah in 6 AH
uḍḥiyah	Animal sacrifice during the three days of 10th, 11th and 12th Dhul-Ḥijjah
‘Ulamā (sg. ‘Ālim)	Refer to ‘Ālim
Ummah	Nation, commonly used to refer to the global Muslim community
‘umrah	The minor pilgrimage
wahy	Divine revelation
wājib	Necessary
wakīl	Agent
walimah	Wedding banquet hosted by the groom after consummation of the marriage
waṣiyyah	Bequest
wuḍū’	Ablution, the prescribed method of purification from the state of minor impurity
Ya‘qūb ﷺ	The Prophet Jacob (peace be upon him)
yaqīn	Conviction, certainty in belief
zakāh	Compulsory charity
zinā	Adultery
zuhd	Abstinence from the world
Zuhr	Compulsory early afternoon prayer

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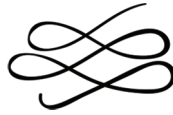
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