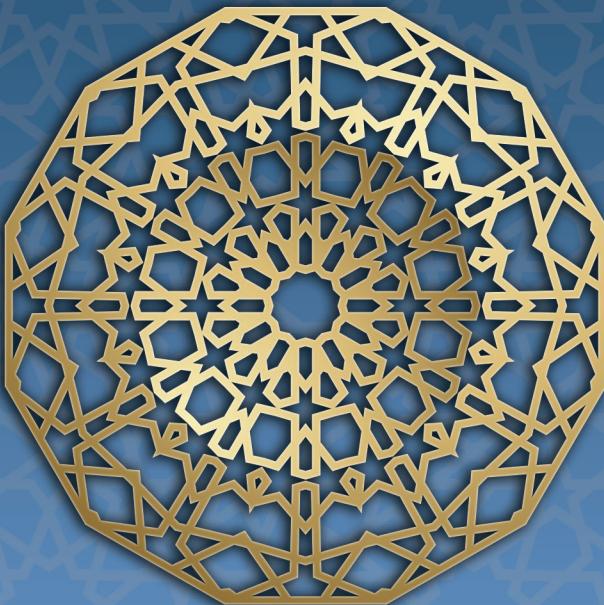


WINNING THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE



By Shaykh-ul-Hadīth, Ḥaḍrat Mawlānā
Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafizahullāh*

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BY SHAYKH-UL-HADĪTH ḤADRAT MAWLĀNĀ MUHAMMAD SALEEM DHORAT

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Foreword

It is only through the sheer Grace of Allāh ﷺ that this unworthy servant of Dīn is writing a foreword for this beautiful work of my beloved teacher, my spiritual mentor, the beloved of the ‘Ulamā and Mashāyikh, Shaykh-ul-Hadīth, Ḥadrat Mawlānā Muhammad Saleem Dhorat *ḥafizahullāh*.

Whilst the respected Shaykh is not in need of any introduction, I share a brief insight for those who have yet to benefit from the respected Shaykh. The respected Shaykh *ḥafizahullāh* is at the vanguard of the revival of authentic Islamic teachings in the western world and an inspiration for the Muslim youth. He tirelessly toils day and night due to his deep concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the Muslim Ummah, his affection for members of society at large and his love and care for all.

The respected Shaykh is a divinely enlightened personality, known for his unique approach in simplifying the beautiful teachings of Islām, in both speech and writing. He addresses the need of the moment in an easily comprehensible manner, inspiring all to fully adopt the beautiful teachings of Islām.

The booklet in the hands of the reader is one such example; it is a heartfelt discourse delivered by the respected Shaykh *ḥafizahullāh* at the 22nd Annual Youth Conference organised by the Islāmic Da‘wah Academy in March 2015. Over the years, the annual conference has been a source of guidance for both young and old, comprising of a 3 to 4 hour programme, wherein participants are able to learn the pure teachings of Islām and

reconnect themselves to the Almighty Creator. Lectures are delivered by authentic and God-fearing ‘Ulamā (scholars), who provide insights and reminders on how to become better Muslims and good citizens.

In *Winning the Hearts of People* the respected Shaykh outlines three core principles that underpin positive relationships within one’s family, friends and society at large, taken from the teachings of the Merciful Messenger ﷺ. Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was undoubtedly one who led by example, and the honourable Shaykh cites many examples from his blessed life to substantiate these principles, thereby highlighting his exemplary character and conduct.

At a time when Islām itself is generally misinterpreted, misrepresented and misunderstood in the media, the topic discussed also has the benefit of shedding some light on the true teachings of Islām and the lofty qualities it advocates; thus, firmly dispelling negative notions and validating that Islām is about cultivating positive relationships, through forgiveness, humility and preference to others.

This work also invites those immersed in conflict to resolve their differences; to revive family ties, which in the case of many, are sadly non-existent; and to develop genuine friendships. Undoubtedly all these factors play an important role in developing a harmonious community and society, which is a need of our time. It is also hoped that this work will allow ignorant critics to pause and take a deep breath, allowing a cool breeze of enlightenment to blow through their hearts and minds and appreciate the beauty of Islām and how the noblest of men, the Prophet ﷺ, humbled himself to win the hearts of

friend and foe. He ﷺ set the best of examples for not only his followers, but the whole of mankind.

Alḥamdulillāh, through the tawfīq of Allāh ﷺ, I had the honour of transcribing and preparing this long overdue publication. Thereafter my dear colleagues Mawlānā Zubayr Vantra and Brother Dawud Ahmadji assisted with the editing and now, alḥamdulillāh, it is ready for publication.

May Allāh ﷺ accept the efforts of all who contributed in any manner. May Allāh ﷺ bless the honourable Shaykh and accept all his efforts to preserve the pure teachings of Islām, bless him with good health and a long life and may we see many more works of the respected Shaykh benefit us all until the Last Day. Āmīn.

(Mawlānā) Muhammad Isa Abdullah
Muḥarram 1440 / September 2018



الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ، الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ وَحْدَهُ، وَالصَّلٰةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى مَنْ لَا نَبِيٌّ بَعْدَهُ، أَمَّا بَعْدُ: فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰيهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ: صِلْ مَنْ قَطَعْتَ، وَاعْفُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ، وَأَحْسِنْ إِلٰى مَنْ أَسَاءَ إِلٰيَكَ، أَوْ كَمَا قَالَ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلٰيهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي يَقْهُوا قَوْيٰ، سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ، اللّٰهُمَّ افْعُنَا بِمَا عَلَمْتَنَا وَعَلَمْنَا مَا يَنْفَعُنَا.
إِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلٰى النَّبِيِّ، يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلٰيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيْمًا، اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلٰى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلٰى أَلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَتْبَاعِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِ.

Allāh ﷺ, through His Infinite Mercy, has granted us the opportunity to participate in this 22nd Annual Youth Conference organised by the Islāmic Da‘wah Academy. May Allāh ﷺ accept the efforts of the organisers, volunteers, supporters and all the participants and grant us all salvation in the Hereafter.

Today, I would like to briefly discuss three very important and valuable lessons taught to us by our beloved Nabī ﷺ:

- 1) Join ties with those relatives who break ties with you;
- 2) Forgive those who oppress you;
- 3) Do good to those who do bad to you.

First Lesson

صلْ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ

Join Ties with Those Who Break Ties with You
(Ahmad)

Joining and maintaining the ties of kinship with relatives is known as *Şilat-ur-Rahim* in Arabic. All relatives, close and distant, should be treated well, regardless of whether they reciprocate or not. *Şilat-ur-Rahim* is a very important command of the Sharī'ah. Nabī ﷺ has said in a ḥadīth:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ قَاطِعُ

One who breaks ties of kinship will not enter Jannah.
(Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

One who breaks ties of kinship or does not behave correctly with his relatives and does not stay on good terms with them, will not enter Jannah (Paradise). This means that such a person will not be granted direct entry into Jannah, despite having departed from the world with īmān; first he will have to face punishment and only after this will he be granted entry into Jannah.

Şilat-ur-Rahim – One of the Noble Qualities of our Nabī ﷺ

After Nabī ﷺ received revelation for the first time, he left the cave of Hirā and hurried home to his wife Sayyidah Khadījah ﷺ. Concerned and worried, he ﷺ related his experience to her. He ﷺ was aware that he had been made the Final Messenger, responsible for conveying the Message of Allāh ﷺ to the whole

of humanity. He ﷺ was in no doubt that he had seen Sayyidunā Jibra'il ﷺ, an angel sent by Allāh ﷺ with divine revelation. He ﷺ was aware of all these facts, but the anxiety he felt was due to his humbleness. He ﷺ felt that the responsibility laid upon his shoulders was beyond his abilities. He ﷺ felt that there was a possibility that he would not be able to succeed in the blessed mission for which he had been chosen. Therefore, when relating the whole incident to Sayyidah Khadījah ﷺ, he ﷺ said:

لَقَدْ خَيِّبْتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي

I fear upon myself.

He ﷺ feared that he would not be able to fulfil the responsibility that Allāh ﷺ had placed on his shoulders and, as a result, he would become a failure, and to fail is a form of disgrace.

Sayyidah Khadījah ﷺ was a very wise woman. She recognised the nature of his anxiety and therefore reminded him of his exemplary character, to reassure him that he ﷺ need not fear. She said:

كَلَّا وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْرِبُكَ اللَّهُ أَبْدًا

Never! I swear by Allāh that Allāh will never disgrace you.

Furthermore, she mentioned six qualities of Nabī ﷺ to substantiate why Allāh ﷺ would never disgrace him:

1) Maintaining ties of kinship

إِنَّكَ لَتَصْلِلُ الرَّحْمَةَ

Indeed, you tie the bonds of kinship;

Nabī ﷺ always looked after the wellbeing of his relatives. He ﷺ was always concerned about their welfare and took care of

them. He ﷺ would try to protect them from harm and loss and would always wish to see them prosper. He ﷺ was kind, sincere and good to them.

2) Speaking the truth

وَتَصْدِقُ الْحَدِيثَ

And you speak the truth;

3) Looking after the socially burdensome

وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ

And you bear the responsibility of those who are regarded as a burden;

He ﷺ took care of those who were regarded as a burden, even by their own families, for example: the mentally or physically disabled; orphans; widows; and those people whom society normally neglects or views as good for nothing.

4) Caring for the destitute

وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ

And you strive to provide for those who have nothing;

5) Being hospitable to all

وَتَقْرِي الصَّيْفَ

And you are hospitable to guests (even welcoming strangers who are visiting Makkah Al-Mukarramah);

6) Assisting everyone in need

وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَابِ الْحَقِّ

And you aid those afflicted by calamity. (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

Sayyidah Khadījah ﷺ believed that the bearer of these outstanding traits could never face disgrace and so reassured Nabi ﷺ. After listening to his wife, Rasūlullāh ﷺ remained silent. His silence was an implicit affirmation that anyone who has these six qualities will not be disgraced, neither in this world nor in the hereafter.

Putting ‘Friends’ Before Relatives

The very first of these six qualities is tying the bonds of kinship. We have been ordered by Allāh ﷺ and His Messenger ﷺ to be good to our relatives in all circumstances. Unfortunately, this is a command that the whole Ummah is neglecting today.

Nowadays, friends have become more important than relatives, especially amongst the youth. The people important to us are those whose company we enjoy and who we regard as fun. Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, cousins, etc. have all become boring. We do not enjoy their company. We give all our attention to our friends who are our priority.

Our circle of friends keeps changing too. The circle of friends that we have today came into existence a few years ago. Before that, there was a different circle of friends. A few years before that, there was yet another. Why does our circle of friends keep changing? Because we are not genuine in our friendship. Whenever we realise that a particular person is more fun than our current friend, we change friends. This isn’t friendship, rather it is selfishness.

Sadly, we have deprived ourselves of the taste of true friendship. The reality is that we are friends to no one and no one is our

friend. We just look for enjoyment and satisfaction for our nafs (base desires). Such ‘friendship’ attracts the displeasure of Allāh ﷺ and will turn into enmity in the hereafter. Allāh ﷺ says:

﴿الْأَخْلَقُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌ لَا الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

Friends, on that Day, will be enemies of each other, except those who possess taqwā (those who obeyed Allāh ﷺ and as a result were friends for the sake of Allāh ﷺ only.) (43:67)

Imagine two friends blaming each other on the Day of Judgement. One will say, “O Allāh ﷺ, he misled me and encouraged me to do wrong.” The other friend will argue, “O Allāh ﷺ, no, it was he who misled me and encouraged me to do wrong.” Friends will become enemies to one another. They will argue against each other in the Court of Allāh ﷺ, each will say:

﴿يُوَيْلٌ لِّيٰتِي لَمْ أَتَخْذُ فُلَانًا حَلِيلًا﴾

Woe to me, I wish I had not taken so-and-so for my friend.
(25:28)

True Friendship

It is true friendship that will last in this world and in the everlasting life of the hereafter. What is true friendship? It is friendship based on taqwā and maintained for the sake of Allāh ﷺ. For example, you have a friend and you love him for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ because he has īmān, knowledge, piety and good character, he strives to bring good to the community and he looks after the poor and needy, etc. This true friendship brings much goodness to a person in both worlds.

Two Muslims who are genuine friends and love each other

solely for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ, will be under the shade of the Throne of Allāh ﷺ on the Day of Qiyāmah. Nabī ﷺ has mentioned seven types of people whom Allāh ﷺ will grant shade under His throne on the Day of Qiyāmah, when there will be no other shade. One of these groups is:

رَجُلَانِ تَحَابَّا فِي اللَّهِ اجْتَمَعَا عَلَيْهِ وَتَفَرَّقَا عَلَيْهِ

...Two people who loved each other for the sake of Allāh. They united upon that (basis) and separated from each other upon that... (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

When they meet, they meet for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ and if the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ demands that they separate and break ties, then they break ties only for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ.

They will be taken under the shade of the Throne of Allāh ﷺ as soon as they are resurrected from the grave. This will be a gesture from Allāh ﷺ indicating that their reckoning will be easy. In fact, it is possible that such people will be granted entry into Jannah without any reckoning at all.

On the Day of Qiyāmah, Allāh ﷺ will say:

أَيْنَ الْمُتَحَابُونَ بِجَلَالِي

Where are those people who loved each other for the sake of My Glory?

الْيَوْمَ أُظْلِمُهُمْ فِي ظُلْمٍ يَوْمَ لَا ظُلْمٌ إِلَّا ظُلْمٌ

I will grant them My shade today when there is no shade except My shade. (Muslim)

Those genuine friends who love each other only for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ are loved by Allāh ﷺ. Rasūlullāh ﷺ has narrated

an incident of a person who went to visit a friend residing in another locality. Allāh ﷺ sent an angel to him in human form. The angel asked him where he was going. He replied, “I am going to visit a friend of mine who lives in this town.” The angel asked, “Have you done him a favour, the repayment of which you intend to get?” The man replied, “No, (I am visiting him) only because I love him for the sake of Allāh ﷺ, the Exalted and Glorious.” The angel said, “I am a messenger to you from Allāh ﷺ (with the message that) Allāh ﷺ loves you just as you love your brother for His sake.” (Muslim)

When making friends, let us love each other only for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ; let us not look at the colour of the person, his background, nationality, lineage, social status or financial position.

Love of Nabī ﷺ for Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ and Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ

History bears testimony that our beautiful religion of Islām teaches equality and justice, not prejudice. There is no better illustration of this than the occasion of the liberation of Makkah Al-Mukarramah. It is easy to imagine the glory of that day; after eight years in exile, Rasūlullāh ﷺ entered Makkah as its liberator, accompanied by the Ṣahābah (Companions) ﷺ. He ﷺ was so humble that he sat on his camel with his head lowered, to the extent that his beard was almost touching the saddle.

All eyes were on Nabī ﷺ who was entering Makkah Al-Mukarramah with a companion sitting behind him on the same camel. Who was the companion? Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ? Sayyidunā ‘Umar ﷺ? Sayyidunā ‘Uthmān ﷺ? Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ?

His grandchildren Sayyidunā Ḥasan ﷺ and Sayyidunā Ḥusayn ﷺ? A Qurayshī or even an Arab? No! At that historical and glorious moment, Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ was riding with him, the son of Sayyidunā Zayd ﷺ, the freed slave of the Prophet ﷺ.

Nabī ﷺ said about Sayyidunā Zayd ﷺ and his son Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ:

وَإِنْ كَانَ لَمِنْ أَحَبِّ النَّاسِ إِلَيَّ، وَإِنَّ هَذَا لَمِنْ أَحَبِّ النَّاسِ إِلَيَّ بَعْدَهُ

He (Zayd ﷺ) was from among the most beloved people to me, and he (Usāmah ﷺ) is among the most beloved people to me after him. (Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

Sayyidunā Zayd ﷺ and his son Sayyidunā Usāmah ﷺ were so beloved to Nabī ﷺ that one day, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ saw a young man and asked someone who he was. The person said, “He is Muḥammad ibn Usāmah ﷺ.” Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ lowered his head, sat quietly for a while, then raised his head and said, “If Nabī ﷺ saw him, he would certainly have loved him.” (Al-Bukhārī) Knowing the love Nabī ﷺ had for his father and grandfather, Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ﷺ was sure that Nabī ﷺ would have loved him (Muḥammad ibn Usāmah ﷺ) as well.

Soon after the liberation, another unique scene was witnessed, at the time of the first ṣalāh, Nabī ﷺ started asking as to the whereabouts of Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ. When he came forward, Nabī ﷺ told him to climb onto the roof of the Ka‘bah and call out the adhān. Think for a moment. The adhān being called out was the first after the liberation of Makkah Al-Mukarramah. Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ called out the adhān in the presence of approximately ten to fourteen thousand Ṣahābah ﷺ and Nabī ﷺ led the ṣalāh.

Some members of the Quraysh could not digest that this honour was bestowed upon Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ, a former slave, who had no worldly status whatsoever. One of them said, “Praise be to Allāh, Who took away my father so that he is not here to see this day!” A second person said, “Could Muhammad not find someone else other than this black crow to call the adhān?” A third person said, “If Allāh wishes, He will change this state of affairs.” A fourth said, “I will not say anything, for I fear that the Lord of the Heavens will inform (Muhammad ﷺ) of it.” (Al-Qurtubī) And this is precisely what happened. Informing Nabī ﷺ of their conversation, Allāh ﷺ revealed the following verse:

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَّقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَاوَرُ فُؤُلُوْا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنَّفُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَّسِيرٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

O people, indeed We have created you from one male and one female, and We have made you into families and tribes so that you may recognise one another. Surely the noblest of you, in the Sight of Allāh, is the one who has the most taqwā. Surely, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Aware. (49:13)

This meant that the Qurayshīs and Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ all belonged to the same family. Differences of tribe and family, colour and race, do not exist so people can despise each other, but so that they can recognise one another. Allāh ﷺ has created people with different faces, colours, backgrounds, nationalities, tribes, names, etc. to make it easier for people to recognise and identify each other; otherwise, the whole world would be in chaos.

The Criteria for Superiority

As far as the element of superiority is concerned, Allāh ﷺ revealed:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقْعُدُمْ

Surely, the noblest of you in the Sight of Allāh is the one who has the most taqwā. (49:13)

Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ may have been a slave, poor and without social status, but he was very highly regarded by Allāh ﷺ due to his high level of taqwā. It was due to this excellence that Allāh ﷺ granted him great honour, not only in this world but also in the heavens. Nabi ﷺ narrates that during the night of Mi'rāj, he heard the footsteps of Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ walking in front of him in Jannah. (Al-Bukhārī)

Sayyidunā 'Umar ﷺ used to say regarding Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ:

أَبُو بَكْرٍ سَيِّدُنَا أَعْتَقَ سَيِّدَنَا

Abū Bakr is our master, who freed our master (i.e. Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ). (Al-Bukhārī)

Despite his own great status, Sayyidunā 'Umar ﷺ was conveying the message that he considered both Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ and Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ as his superiors.

The True Meaning of Maintaining Ties

So our Nabi ﷺ has warned us against breaking ties of kinship. We have to maintain the bonds of kinship in all conditions, whether our relatives treat us well or not. If our relatives behave well with us, there is no reason for us not to be good to them. In that case, being good to them is no great achievement. Being

good to them when they do not behave well with us is the real act of excellence. This is exactly what Nabī ﷺ has taught us:

صِلْ مَنْ قَطَعَكَ

Join ties with those who break ties with you. (Ahmad)

In another ḥadīth, Nabī ﷺ says,

لَيْسَ الْوَاصِلُ بِالْمُكَافِئِ وَلَكِنَّ الْوَاصِلَ الَّذِي إِذَا قُطِعَتْ رَحْمَةٌ وَصَلَّاهَا

One who reciprocates is not the one who truly joins ties; one who truly joins ties is he who joins ties when they are broken. (Al-Bukhārī)

He who behaves well with relatives when they behave well with him, but turns his face away when they turn their faces away, is not fulfilling the Command of Allāh ﷺ. The one truly worthy of being called a ‘wāṣil’ (one who joins ties), is the one who behaves well with his relatives despite being treated badly by them.

So let us make a firm resolution that, inshā’allāh , from now on we will give due attention to this Command of Allāh ﷺ. If we are wealthy, we will help our poor relatives; if we are healthy, we will help our sick or disabled relatives; if we have status, we will make sure that our deprived relatives also benefit from our status.

We understand from the teachings of our Nabī ﷺ that when a person gives ṣadaqah or lillāh to a poor person who is not a relative, Allāh ﷺ will grant him the reward of one good deed. However, when a person spends on a poor relative, Allāh ﷺ will grant him the reward of carrying out two virtuous deeds: Ṣadaqah and maintaining family ties. (‘Umdat-ul-Qārī)

Nabī ﷺ also said:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ أَنْ يُيْسَطِ لَهُ فِي رِزْقِهِ وَيُسَأَّ لَهُ فِي أَثْرِهِ فَلَا يَصِلُّ رَحْمَةً

He who wishes that his sustenance be increased and his lifespan be prolonged should join ties of kinship.

(Al-Bukhārī, Muslim)

Everyone desires two things in this world: a long life and plenty of money. If a person has a long life but is deprived of wealth then there is no enjoyment; and if someone has money but a short life, he is unable to utilise it. However, if someone enjoys both, he is considered greatly blessed.

These teachings explain the great rewards of maintaining family ties, especially with those relatives who break them. Let us maintain ties and the bonds of kinship only for the Pleasure of Allāh ﷺ. Send gifts to each other, stay in touch through calls and messages, visit each other on occasions of happiness and sorrow and help each other during times of need. Take the initial step by contacting your distanced relatives. Ask them for forgiveness if need be, even if you are not the one at fault.

Second Lesson

أُعْفُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَكَ

Forgive Those who Oppress You
(Ahmad)

To forgive a person who does wrong to you is a very courageous act and commendable in the Court of Allāh ﷺ. Allāh ﷺ says:

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ لَّا نَذِلَّكَ لَمَنْ عَزَّمَ الْأُمُورَ ﴿٤٣﴾

Indeed, he who exercises patience and forgives, that is certainly from the most courageous acts. (42:43)

To have patience when being oppressed, bothered, deprived of rights, wrongly accused or abused is very praiseworthy, yet it is just the first step. The second step, which is the greater deed, is to also forgive the oppressor thereby giving up the opportunity to seek justice in the Hereafter.

Allāh ﷺ, praising the people of Jannah, mentions one of their remarkable qualities,

وَإِذَا مَا أَغْضَبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

When they become angry, they forgive. (42:37)

It is natural to feel angry when being ill-treated by someone. In order to exercise patience and to forgive, we must have the ability to control anger. Allāh ﷺ, whilst mentioning some outstanding qualities of the muttaqīn (god-fearing), says:

وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

...the ones who swallow anger and forgive people. And

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

The one who is unable to suppress his anger will not be able to exercise patience, and if he is unable to exercise patience, he will not be able to forgive.

By saying “forgive those who oppress you”, Nabī ﷺ is indicating that we need to purify our hearts to such a level that we are not only able to suppress anger and exercise patience in the face of oppression, but also forgive the oppressor. When the heart is impure then instead of forgiving, people are heard saying, “I will never forgive him! I will see him on the Day of Qiyāmah!” We need to realise that everyone makes mistakes. We too make mistakes. If we make a habit of forgiving others, Allāh ﷺ will incline the hearts of people towards forgiving us.

Nabī ﷺ and His Two Cousins

When Nabī ﷺ was on his way to liberate Makkah Al-Mukarramah, he met his two cousins Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith and ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Umayyah. Up until then, they had been staunch enemies of Islām and had left no stone unturned in trying to harm Nabī ﷺ. However, when they realised that defeat was imminent and Nabī ﷺ was going to be victorious, they came forward to ask him for forgiveness. Nabī ﷺ turned his face away from them and ignored them for some time. He ﷺ did this so that they could realise their mistakes and repent sincerely with much remorse.

Sayyidah Ummu Salamah ؓ, the wife of Nabī ﷺ, became concerned and said, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, (Abū Sufyān ibn Ḥārith is) the son of your paternal uncle and (‘Abdullāh ibn Abī

Umayyah is) the son of your paternal aunt and your brother in-law.” (Al-Ḥākim) She also said, “It should not happen that the son of your paternal uncle and the son of your paternal aunt become from those who are the most deprived and most unfortunate people.” (Zād-ul-Ma‘ād)

Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ was also their cousin and they begged him for guidance. He said that he would show them a method by which they would acquire the attention of Nabī ﷺ. He advised them to greet Nabī ﷺ face to face and say what the brothers of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ had said to him. (Zād-ul-Ma‘ād)

It is worth noting here that the behaviour of Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ and the noble wife of Nabī ﷺ in this situation is in stark contrast to the way many friends and family would behave today. Many are likely to discourage forgiveness and prevent peace by bringing up past incidents.

Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ and His Brothers

The brothers of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ intended to kill him due to jealousy. They threw him into a well and left him to his fate. Allāh ﷺ, through His mercy and power, saved him and ultimately elevated him to become the governor of Egypt. Years later, during a time of famine, the brothers travelled to Egypt in search of food. They presented themselves before the governor not realising he was their brother. Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ recognised them straight away but did not reveal his identity. When he did disclose his identity, he said:

﴿هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوسُفَ وَآخِيهِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ جَهَلُونَ﴾

Do you remember what you did with Yūsuf and his brother

(*Binyāmīn*) when you were ignorant? (12:89)

The brothers looked at Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ in shock and asked:

عَلَّمَكَ لَأَنَّكَ يُوسُفُ

Is it that you are, in fact, Yūsuf?

Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ replied:

أَنَا يُوسُفُ وَهَذَا أَخِيْ قَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَتَّقِيْ وَيَصْبِرُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيِّعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

*(Yes) I am Yūsuf and this is my brother (*Binyāmīn*). Indeed, Allāh has favoured us. Verily, the one who abstains from the displeasure of Allāh and exercises patience (is from those who do good), and Allāh surely does not let the reward of the muhsinīn (those who do good) go to waste.”* (12:90)

The term “muhsinīn” refers to those who hold fast to taqwā by abstaining from disobedience to Allāh ﷺ, and who remain patient during adversities and difficulties. A muhsin is a special friend of Allāh ﷺ. Once a person reaches the spiritual status of being a muhsin, Allāh ﷺ looks after him in this world and in the hereafter.

As soon as the brothers realised that the governor of Egypt was their brother Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ, they said:

تَالَّهِ نَقْدُ اتَّرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ

By Allāh, indeed Allāh has preferred you over us, and we were really the wrong doers. (12:91)

How did Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ react? He immediately said:

لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

There is no blame upon you today. May Allāh forgive you, and He is the Most-Merciful. (12:92)

Not only did he forgive them, he also sought forgiveness for them from Allāh ﷺ. Furthermore, when Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ met his father Sayyidunā Yaqub ﷺ, he created an excuse for his brothers. He did not enumerate the grievances he had suffered at their hands or hold them responsible for the long period of separation; rather, he attributed what had passed to Shaytān. He said:

مِنْ بَعْدِ آنَ تَرَاغَ الشَّيْطَنُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ إِخْرَقِي

*...After Shaytān caused a rift between me and my brothers...
(12:100)*

So Sayyidunā ‘Alī ﷺ reminded his two cousins of the incident of Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ and advised them that if they followed the same method, there was hope that Nabī ﷺ would forgive them. Abū Sufyān ibn Hārith and ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Umayyah went to Nabī ﷺ and said:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَقَدْ أَثْرَكَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا لَخَاطِئِينَ

O Rasūlullāh, indeed Allāh has preferred you over us, and we were really the wrong doers.

Immediately, Nabī ﷺ turned his face towards them with a smile and said:

لَا تَثْرِيبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

There is no blame upon you today. May Allāh forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful. (Zād-ul-Ma‘ād)

Forgiveness of Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān Ibn Ḥarb ﷺ

As Nabī ﷺ proceeded towards Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Abū Sufyān came to spy on the Muslims but was spotted by Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdul-Muṭalib ﷺ. Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ﷺ sincerely wished that Abū Sufyān would accept Islām. He took him straight to Nabī ﷺ.

When Nabī ﷺ saw Abū Sufyān, the first words he uttered to him were:

وَيَحْكُمْ يَا أَبَا سُفْيَانَ، أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لَكَ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، أَلَمْ يَأْنِ
لَكَ أَنْ تَعْلَمَ أَنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

Woe to you, O Abū Sufyān. Has the time not come for you to recognise that there is no deity besides Allāh? Has the time not come for you to recognise that I am the Messenger of Allāh?

Abū Sufyān ﷺ showed signs of agreement and upon encouragement from Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ﷺ, he accepted Islām. (As-Sirah An-Nabawiyah)

The honour that Nabī ﷺ bestowed upon Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ﷺ thereafter was immeasurable. Nabī ﷺ said, “Whoever enters the house of Abū Sufyān will be forgiven today.”

Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ﷺ replied, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, my house is too small.”

Nabī ﷺ said, “Whoever enters the Ka‘bah will be forgiven today.”

Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ﷺ said, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the Ka‘bah is also too small.”

Nabī ﷺ said, “Whoever enters Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām will be forgiven today.” Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ﷺ said, “O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the masjid is also too small.”

Nabī ﷺ then said, “Whoever enters his own home will also be forgiven today.” Sayyidunā Abū Sufyān ﷺ said, “That is big enough.” (Al-Bidāyah Wan-Nihāyah)

Nabī ﷺ practically taught us to forgive those who oppress us and also forget their wrongdoings. He ﷺ forgave the very people who had continually persecuted him for many years. Let us also learn not only to forgive, but to also forget.

Three Principles Related to Forgiveness

There are three principles we should all hold fast to with regards to forgiveness. By learning them and adhering to them, we will be able to acquire happiness in this world and the hereafter:

- 1)** We should never do anything for which we have to ask for forgiveness. Why violate the rights of the Creation of Allāh ﷺ so that we have to ask for forgiveness?
- 2)** If however we make a mistake, we should not hesitate to ask for forgiveness. And remember that only saying sorry and apologising to someone is not sufficient as far as the hereafter is concerned. It is necessary for the person whose right we have violated to be genuinely satisfied and actually forgive us. Nowadays, we send a text, letter or email and write, “I am sorry,” but we do not know how the person we have wronged feels about our apology. Until we know for sure that we have been forgiven, we should not expect to be forgiven for that particular mistake in the hereafter.

- 3) If someone makes a mistake in our regard, we should forgive without waiting for him to ask for forgiveness. If we readily forgive others, *inshā'ullāh*, Allāh ﷺ will forgive us and cause others to also forgive us.

Virtues of Controlling Anger and Forgiving

Those people who forgive others are forgiven by Allāh ﷺ and will be granted bounties in Jannah. Allāh ﷺ says:

إِنْ تُبْدِلُوا أَخْيْرًا وَتُخْفِيْهُ وَتَعْفُوْا عَنْ سُوءِ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ عَفْوًا قَدِيرًا

If you show (your) good or hide it, or if you forgive evil, then indeed Allāh is Forgiving, Powerful. (4:149)

In another verse, Allāh ﷺ says:

وَلَا يَغْفِلُوا وَلَا يَصْفَحُوا لَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ كُلُّ مُكْفِرٍ

They (the men of grace and wealth among you) should forgive and pardon. Do you not want Allāh to forgive you? (24:22)

Another verse states:

فَمَنْ عَفَأَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَآجِرَةٌ عَلَى اللَّهِ

The one who forgives and makes amends, his reward is with Allāh. (42:40)

Nabī ﷺ has said:

مَنْ كَفَّ غَضَبَهُ كَفَّ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَذَابَهُ

He who restrains his anger (and forgives), Allāh will hold His punishment from him. (Al-Bayhaqī)

In other Ahādīth, Nabī ﷺ has said:

مَنْ كَظِمَ غَيْظًا وَهُوَ يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُنْفَذَ دَعَاهُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى رُغْوُسِ الْخَلَائِقِ حَتَّىٰ يُخَيِّرُ فِي أَيِّ الْحُورِ شَاءَ

He who swallows his anger despite having the ability to put it into effect, Allāh will call him in front of the whole of creation on the Day of Qiyāmah and let him choose whichever hūr (maiden of Jannah) he desires. (At-Tirmidhī)

مَا تَحِرَّعَ عَبْدٌ جَرْعَةً أَفْضَلَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ مِنْ جَرْعَةٍ غَيْظٍ يَكْظِمُهَا ابْتِغَاءً وَجْهَ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

A person does not swallow anything more virtuous in the Sight of Allāh than the swallowing of anger that he suppresses solely in search of the Pleasure of Allāh. (Ahmad)

Sayyidunā Mūsā ﷺ once asked Allāh ﷺ:

مَنْ أَعْزَ عِبَادِكَ عِنْدَكَ؟

From amongst your servants, who is the most honourable in Your sight?

Allāh ﷺ replied:

مَنْ إِذَا قَدَرَ غَفَرَ

The one who forgives when he has the upper hand. (Al-Bayhaqī)

Our Nabī ﷺ has said in another ḥadīth:

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُشْرَفَ لَهُ الْبُنْيَانُ وَتُرْفَعَ لَهُ الدَّرَجَاتُ فَلْيَعْفُ عَمَّنْ ظَلَمَهُ

He who desires that buildings are erected for him (in Jannah) and his status is elevated for him (in the hereafter), should forgive those who oppress him. (Al-Hākim)

Unparalleled Forgiveness During the Liberation of Makkah

After liberating Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Nabi ﷺ entered the sacred Ka'bah and performed nafl salah. Thereafter, he ﷺ emerged and stood at the door of the Ka'bah. Before him were the Sahabah ﷺ as well as those who, up to that point, had been his enemies. He ﷺ could see those who used to spread thorns in his path; those who used to throw stones at him; those who used to persecute his companions such as Sayyidunā Bilāl ﷺ, Sayyidunā 'Ammār ﷺ, Sayyidunā Yásir ﷺ and Sayyidunā Suhayb ﷺ; those who forced him to leave Makkah Al-Mukarramah and who did not let him live in peace even after he migrated to Al-Madīnah Al-Munawwarah. They were all in front of him. The very first thing he ﷺ said was:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ أَنْجَزَ وَعْدَهُ وَنَصَرَ عَبْدَهُ وَهَزَمَ الْأَخْرَابَ وَحْدَهُ

There is no deity except Allāh alone. It is He who has fulfilled His promise, assisted His servant and single-handedly defeated the combined forces of the enemy.

Nabi ﷺ reiterated Tawhīd (Oneness of Allāh ﷺ) to his Companions ﷺ and reminded them that whatever happened was only by the Grace of Allāh ﷺ and could not be attributed to himself or to them. Thereafter, he ﷺ asked his former enemies gathered in front of him, "O people of the Quraysh! What do you expect from me today?" They said:

أَخْ كَرِيمٌ وَابْنُ أَخِ كَرِيمٍ

(You are) a noble brother, the son of a noble brother (i.e. 'Abdullāh, the father of Nabi ﷺ).

This was an indirect appeal from them that, since they regarded

him to be noble, they hoped he would forgive them. Nabī ﷺ then repeated the same words that Sayyidunā Yūsuf ﷺ said to his brothers:

لَا تَشْرِينَ عَيْنَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

*There is no blame upon you today. May Allāh forgive you.
He is the Most-Merciful.*

The defeated enemies feared being taken as captives of war or being enslaved, yet Nabī ﷺ said to them:

إِذْهَبُوا فَأَنْتُمُ الظَّلَقَاءُ

Go, for you are all free. (As-Sīrah An-Nabawiyyah)

Nabī ﷺ Forgives a Person Intending to Kill Him

Once Nabī ﷺ was performing Ṭawāf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) when he was joined by Fudālah, a hypocrite at the time (who had only outwardly accepted Islām). He had come to Nabī ﷺ with the intention of assassinating him. Despite knowing this, Nabī ﷺ calmly performed Ṭawāf. He ﷺ then called out, “O Fudālah.”

“Yes, O Rasūlullāh ﷺ, I am here,” Fudālah replied (to indicate that he was nearby). Nabī ﷺ turned towards him and asked with a smile, “What is in your heart?”

Fudālah replied, “The Name of Allāh ﷺ is in my heart.” Nabī ﷺ placed his hand on Fudālah’s chest and he immediately felt its coolness in his heart. He says, “Immediately, there was no person more beloved to me than Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and I accepted Islām wholeheartedly.” (Al-Isābah)

How did we come to know of the intention of Sayyidunā

Fudālah ﷺ to kill Nabī ﷺ? Did Nabī ﷺ expose him? No! Sayyidunā Fudālah ﷺ himself disclosed what had happened after he had genuinely accepted Islām. Nabī ﷺ did not expose him nor take any action against him.

Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ

Those who followed in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh ﷺ had the same quality of forgiving those who caused them harm. Once a man profusely insulted Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ, who quietly listened to whatever the man had to say and waited for him to finish. As there was no reaction from Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ, he eventually calmed down. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr ﷺ asked him, “Have you finished?” The man replied in the affirmative. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq ﷺ said to him, “I pray to Allāh ﷺ that if I am as you have described me, then may Allāh ﷺ forgive me. And if I am not like you have described me, then (you are at fault for accusing me, so) I pray to Allāh that He forgives you.” (Al-Qurṭubī)

Aḥnaf ibn Qays ﷺ

Aḥnaf ibn Qays ﷺ was a great Tābi‘ī (companion of the Ṣahābah ﷺ). His greatest virtue is that Nabī ﷺ had made the following du‘ā for him,

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِلْأَخْنَفِ

O Allāh, forgive Aḥnaf. (Ahmad, Al-Hākim)

He used to say, “There is nothing from my own deeds that I have more hope (of salvation) in than this (supplication that Nabī ﷺ made for me).”

The qualities of forgiveness and mercy were outstanding in him. Once somebody had a small misunderstanding with him and said:

وَاللّٰهُ! لَئِنْ قُلْتَ لِيْ وَاحِدَةً لَتَسْمَعَنَّ بِدَلَالَهَا عَشْرًا

By Allāh, if you insult me once, you will hear ten (insults from me) in return for it.

This was a common Arabic phrase that people used when angry. Aḥnaf ibn Qays ﷺ replied to the man:

إِنَّكَ إِنْ قُلْتَ لِيْ عَشْرًا لَا تَسْمَعُ مِنِّيْ وَاحِدَةً

If you say ten (insults) to me, you will not hear even one from me. (Al-Bidāyah Wan-Nihāyah)

Hasan Al-Baṣrī ﷺ

Once a person said to Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī ﷺ, “O transgressor!” He replied “May Allāh grant you blessings.” He then said to him, “O hypocrite!” he replied, “May Allāh pardon you.” He then said to him, “O heretic!” he replied, “May Allāh honour you with His mercy.” The man then said, “He appears to be an emotionless person who does not get angry.” Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī ﷺ said to him, “You have informed me of three bad qualities only, I have many others apart from them. Would you like to know them?” The man said to him, “If you insult me once then I will reply to you with ten.” Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī ﷺ said, “And if you were to say 100 insults to me then I would not even say one to you.” (Silsilat-ud-Dār Al-Ākhirah)

Third Lesson

وَأَحْسِنْ إِلَى مَنْ أَسَاءَ إِلَيْكَ

Do Good to Those Who Do Bad to You
(Mu'jam Ibn-ul-A'rabi)

The merciful teachings of our beloved Nabī ﷺ encourage us to also be good to those who do bad to us. Allāh ﷺ says:

إِذْفَعْ بِالْتَّقْوَى هُنَّ أَحْسَنُ

Repel (evil) with that which is best... (41:34)

It is narrated regarding Ma'rūf Al-Karkhī رضي الله عنه that he was walking on the seashore with a few of his friends. They came across some drunk young men from wealthy families who were cruising on a boat. When they saw the Shaykh with his associates and students, they started making fun of them. The students said to the Shaykh, “These Muslim youths, intoxicated and cruising on the ocean, are making fun of a person as pious as you. Why don’t you curse them?”

The Shaykh said, “OK, but all of you join me.” He raised his hands and started beseeching, “O Allāh, they are intoxicated and at this very moment they are assuming that they are in a very enjoyable condition. O Allāh, grant them the ability to sincerely repent so that they may experience the everlasting enjoyments of the hereafter.” (İslahî Khuṭubât)

Shaykh Shibli رضي الله عنه and the Date Palm

Shaykh Shibli رضي الله عنه was once persecuted by some people and had

to leave town. Shaykh Shibli ﷺ went out into the wilderness. Exhausted and in a state of anxiety, he rested against the trunk of a date palm.

In order to give consolation to the Shaykh, Allāh ﷺ gave the date palm the ability to speak. It said:

يَا شِبْلِيْ كُنْ مِثْلِيْ يَرْمُونِيْ بِالْأَحْجَارِ فَأَرْمِيْهُمْ بِأَطَابِ الْأَشْمَارِ

O Shibli! Become like me! They throw stones at me and I throw fresh and delicious dates at them. (Bahjat-un-Nufusi Wal-Alhdāq)

When we behave with good manners with those who treat us badly, Allāh ﷺ will soften their hearts and instil love for us, as stated in the Glorious Qur’ān.

إِذْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا اللَّذِيْ بَيْتَكَ وَبَيْتَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَانَتْ وَلِيْ حَمِيمٌ

Repel (evil) with that which is best and the one with whom you had mutual enmity will become like a very close friend. (41:34)

Summary

There are three lessons we have learnt from this discussion:

1) Tie the bonds of kinship

We need to be good to our relatives. If we have made errors in the past, let us mend our ways, apologise and be good towards them. Let us give importance to our parents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, cousins, etc. and let us try our best to fulfil their rights.

2) Forgive those who oppress you

Remember the principles mentioned earlier:

- a) We should not do anything which results in us having to ask forgiveness from anyone.
- b) If we do make a mistake, we should not hesitate in asking for forgiveness.
- c) If other people make a mistake in our regard, we should forgive them without them having to ask us.

3) Do good to those who do bad to you.

If others may have done wrong to us, it does not mean that we should reciprocate. Rather we should be the bigger person and behave in a cordial manner with them. This will lead to a positive relationship, *inshā'allāh*.

These three qualities are such that they soften the hearts of all those we encounter. *Inshā'allāh*, if we adopt them, we will acquire immense peace in our hearts, success in this world, at the time of death, in the grave, on the day of Judgement and forever in Jannah.

وَآخِرُ دَعْوَانَا أَنَّ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ،
وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى نَبِيِّنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَلِيٍّ وَصَحْبِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

